

NORTHERN PAIUTE HISTORY PROJECT PAPER COLLECTION 2014

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON HONORS COLLEGE COURSE
HC 444 DECOLONIZING RESEARCH: THE NORTHERN PAIUTE HISTORY PROJECT



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON



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Northern Paiute History Project Paper Collection 2014

University of Oregon Honors College Course Student Papers

Introduction

It is with the deepest honor that the course instructors, Kevin Hatfield and Jennifer O'Neal, and Visiting Scholar James Gardner, share this collection of five student research papers from the fall 2013 University of Oregon Honors College course "Race and Ethnicity in the American West: The Cultural History of the Northern Great Basin" with our Northern Paiute community partners from Warm Springs and Burns. Soo Hwang, Kimi Lerner, Jan Raether, Simone Smith, and Madeline Weissman exemplified the community-based, intercultural, decolonizing philosophy of the course. Following the high aspirations of the course instructors, the students' original research combined oral history and archival materials, to contribute new knowledge to the field of Northern Paiute history. The generous collaboration and tribal knowledge of the community partners—Wilson Wewa, Myra Johnson-Orange, Julie Johnson, Ruth Lewis, Randall Lewis, and Valerie Switzler—ensured that the student exploration of Northern Paiute history honors and reflects Native American perspectives and research protocols. We wish to reaffirm our gratitude for our community partners' dedication to the class, students, and the history of the Northern Paiute people—their knowledge and involvement ensured the success of the course and enriched and deepened the students' scholarship.

We designed a learning environment for the course that intentionally reached beyond the traditional history classroom and instruction. One of the many thinkers inspiring the pedagogy of the course was Eva Marie Garroutte and her concept of "Radical Indigenism" articulated in her book: *Real Indians: Identity and Survival of Native America*. Garroutte contends:

By asking scholars to enter (rather than merely study) tribal philosophies, Radical Indigenism asks them to abandon any notion that mainstream academic philosophies, interpretations, and approaches based upon them are, in principle, superior. The demand that researchers enter tribal philosophies cannot stand by itself. If the adoption of those philosophies is to be something more than mere appropriation and exploitation of Native cultures, it must be accompanied by researchers entering tribal relations. Entering tribal relations implies maintaining respect for community values in the search for knowledge. This respect is much more than an attitude, it requires real commitments and real sacrifices on the part of those who practice it.

The course also incorporated the methodological insights and wisdom of Linda Tuhiwai Smith. In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* Smith asserts:

Indigenous methodologies tend to approach cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology. They are 'factors' to be built into research explicitly, to be thought about reflexively, to be declared openly as part of the research design, to be discussed as part of the final results of a study and to be disseminated back to the people in culturally appropriate ways and in a language that can be understood. This does not preclude writing for academic publications but is simply part of an ethical and respectful approach. There are diverse ways of disseminating knowledge and of ensuring that research reaches the people who have helped make it. Two important ways not always addressed by scientific research are to do with 'reporting back' to the people and 'sharing knowledge'. Both ways assume a principle of reciprocity and feedback.

With this ethical framework in mind, the instructors explored how historically the educational system, and often particularly the writing and teaching of history, has functioned as a site of oppression, assimilation, and ethnocide controlled by dominant culture voices and misrepresentations. Consequently, the students examined how the course research projects could challenge triumphalist, military, and imperial paradigms, and avoid functioning as an act of appropriation or neo-colonialism—in other words the practice of extracting, alienating, and distributing knowledge for uses and purposes external to the indigenous source community. Rather, we wanted the students to understand the importance of their work to the tribal communities, the role it fills in the scholarship, and then as a form of reciprocity, share the papers with the course partners and larger tribal communities.

The development of the course began in 2012 with the decade-long research of James Gardner on Northern Paiute history and his longstanding relationships with Wilson Wewa, Minerva Soucie, and Northern Paiute tribal elders and community

members. Drawing from Gardner's research and in collaboration with several tribal community partners, a list of approximately 30 research questions was collectively generated for the 19 students to choose from for their research. James shared customized course summaries of his forthcoming books, *Oregon Apocalypse: The Hidden History of the Northern Paiutes* and *Legends of the Northern Paiute as told by Wilson Wewa*, as well as 30 original maps illustrating the natural and cultural geography and history of the Northern Paiute and Northern Great Basin. These research questions, and the broader themes of identity, sovereignty, self-determination, resistance, rights, and restoration encompassing them, held particular meaning for our community partners. We also established a protocol for shared decision-making about research agendas, modes of inquiry, categories of analysis, dissemination of knowledge, and philosophies of scholarship. These research protocols confronted the dichotomy between the authorized "academic expert" and the "subordinated subject," and worked in good faith in the challenging and promising enterprise of intercultural exploration and the seminal research insights it may yield.

Based on this set of research questions, we devoted several months to identifying and assembling primary source collections for the students' research. Gardner shared his personal library of books, maps, and manuscripts with the class, and explored with students their individual research projects and writing. Kevin spent several days at the National Archives in Seattle Washington in August 2013 researching materials housed in the Malheur, Warm Springs, and Yakima Agency Records, and the files of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs files, and digitized about 2,200 pages of documents and photographs. Kevin also conferred with colleagues at the National Archives in Seattle to make an exception to their loaning policy, and allow the class to house about 40 reels of microfilm at the UO Libraries for the entire term. During their research students digitized several hundred pages of materials from these microfilm rolls. Jennifer culled the vast primary and secondary source collections at the University of Oregon Libraries' Special Collection and University Archives and identified numerous collections for use in the students' research papers. Most recently, in August 2014, Jennifer devoted two days of research at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. in the Warm Spring records, and digitized over 2,500 pages of additional materials available only at this location.

Jennifer continues the development of a comprehensive annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources on Northern Paiute History, including manuscript collections (e.g. correspondence, reports, diaries, memoirs, court records, treaties, photographs); rare books; journal articles; historic newspapers; thesis and dissertations; microfilm series; and original maps. Jennifer and Kevin also continue to develop two websites to facilitate the Northern Paiute History Project and the sharing of knowledge, sources, and research. The UO Libraries [website](http://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/18228) (scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/18228) functions as a digital archive for the ongoing collection and dissemination of source materials and student work, whereas the [course website](http://blogs.uoregon.edu/hc444f13hatfield/) (blogs.uoregon.edu/hc444f13hatfield/) serves as a portal of communication and interaction between the students and community partners, and hosts the following resources:

- Biographies of all Course Community Partners
- Field Research Itinerary
- Photographs from Fall 2013 Course
- Suggested Research Topics List
- Student Research Topics from Fall 2013
- Primary Source Guides and Maps
- Fall 2013 Student Spotlights
- Northern Paiute Primary Source Annotated Bibliography

The centerpiece of the fall 2013 course and ongoing research project revolved around the sustained interactions between the students, experienced instructors, researchers, and tribal and community partners. The Fall 2013 course received \$5,000 in funding from the Robert D. Clark Honors College, the Carlton and Wilberta Ripley Savage Endowment, and Department of History, as well as generous in-kind contributions from Ranch at the Canyons, James Gardner, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and the Des Chutes County Historical Museum to support our three-day research trip to central Oregon and to host community partners and visiting scholars such as James Gardner, Myra Johnson-Orange, and Valerie Switzler on campus. The students also conferred with course partners throughout the course as they composed their theses, conducted their research, finished rough drafts, and delivered their final oral presentations. Students listened to presentations and engaged in dialogue throughout the field research trip, and performed oral interviews, corresponded via email, and arranged conference calls during the remaining eight weeks of the term.

This course invites students to participate in an “apprenticeship” in the historian’s craft, and breaks-down the research process into seven, not necessarily lineal, steps—each providing a milestone or check-in point with instructors for guidance and feedback. In preparation for the research, students critically examine the ethics, methodology, historiography, and epistemology imperative to academic historians engaging in inquiry with indigenous communities. Additionally, Jennifer and David Lewis, The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Tribal Historian, teaches students appropriate protocols for researching, analyzing, and interacting with cultural heritage collections and local community members. Ultimately, 19 research papers were completed in fall 2013, and students delivered oral presentations as a course capstone in the Many Nations Longhouse at the University of Oregon with the campus community, as well as Native faculty, staff, and students, invited to attend. The five papers showcased in this collection illustrate the power of community-based historical research. We hope the presentation of these student research papers will act as a countervailing narrative to much of the distorted secondary literature. With this objective underlying the students’ work, many of the papers combined both original primary source research projects and critical “historiographical” reviews of secondary sources. With the students’ enthusiastic and grateful consent, the instructors selected these five papers for this collection because they embodied the most meaningful collaborations with tribal members, rigorous analysis of research questions, critical interpretation of primary sources, and incisive interrogation of secondary literature.

Soo Hwang: “Addressing the Elephant in the Room Called Genocide: A Discussion on American Prejudice Towards the Northern Paiutes in Mid Nineteenth Century Oregon” (pp. 6-30)

Soo’s research paper, “Addressing the Elephant in the Room Called Genocide: A Discussion on American Prejudice Towards the Northern Paiutes in Mid Nineteenth Century Oregon” examined a question presented to the class for research by historian James Gardner and Wilson Wewa, great-great-Grandson of Chief Paulina and Chief Weahwewa, members of the “Juniper Deer Eater Band” of central Oregon. Gardner and Wilson posed the inquiry of the relationship between a unique form of ethnic prejudice against the Northern Paiute and the genocidal “Snake War” of the late 1850s and 1860s. Soo’s thoughtful application of the critical theory of eminent psychologist Gordon Allport on prejudice to this case study illuminates the complex convergence of inter-tribal prejudice and white racism in the creation and persistence of the dehumanizing “Snake” narrative and identity imposed on the Northern Paiute. Soo investigated this nuanced and vast question by interrogating the documentary records authored by white historical actors in the Nineteenth Century, such as military officers, federal officials, and settler-colonizers; and engaging the living memory, oral history, and community knowledge of our course partners. Soo truly embraced this “apprenticeship” in the historian’s craft, and demonstrated her ability to function metacognitively—to reflect critically on her own thinking and learning process as she was progressing through the course. Soo incorporated a “meta-discourse” into her essay that layered a candid assessment of the limitations and challenges of both her source materials and position as a non-Native scholar upon her empirical historical analysis. This maturing sense of self in relation to the course community partners enabled Soo to practice ethical methodology and confront questions of the “activist scholar,” indigenous ways of knowing/rationalities, and contested cultural paradigms of scholarship.

Kimi Lerner: “A History of Racism and Prejudice: The Untold Story of the Northern Paiute” (pp. 31-60)

Kimi’s research paper, titled, “A History of Racism and Prejudice: The Untold Story of the Northern Paiute” won a prestigious University of Oregon Libraries Undergraduate Research Award. Her paper examined perhaps the most complex and *ambitious* question framed by our community partners. Wilson Wewa, the great-great-Grandson of Chief Paulina and Chief Weahwewa, presented the class with a question about the origin, development, and *persistence* of a uniquely derogatory and dehumanizing identity of the Northern Paiute as “Snakes” or “Snake Indians”—a racial epithet equally offensive to the Northern Paiute community as any applied to other cultural or racial groups. Kimi’s paper intentionally pairs the concepts of “racism” and “prejudice” to illuminate the convergence of *inter-tribal prejudice* and *white racism* in the creation and endurance of the “Snake” narrative. Kimi traces how this identity, *which* originated in mid-19th century first-hand accounts of the Northern Paiutes in journals, reports, correspondence, and newspapers; *subsequently reverberated* within the scholarship that has been published about the Northern Paiute over the last 130 years. Kimi’s paper dovetails both an archival and oral research project on one hand, and a sophisticated literature review of the historical scholarship on the other. Either one of those two elements would represent an impressive accomplishment for a term paper, and yet it is also important to bear in mind that Kimi, like most of the students in the course, was not a history major.

Jan Raether: “Colonists, Fences, and Conflict of the American West: An Analysis of the Infrastructure of American Colonialism in the Northern Great Basin” (pp. 61-95)

Jan presented his research findings and reflected on his research experience at the Alternative Sovereignties Conference as part of the panel “The Northern Paiute History Project: Engaging Undergraduates in De-colonizing Research with Tribal Community Members” along with course instructors Kevin Hatfield and Jennifer O’Neal and Northern Paiute Tribal Elder and community partner, Myra Johnson Orange on May 9, 2014. Jan’s research paper, “Colonists, Fences, and Conflict of the American West: An Analysis of the Infrastructure of American Colonialism in the Northern Great Basin,” examined a rich body of primary source materials, encompassing manuscript collections, federal records, and cadastral survey maps. Jan also engaged in extensive dialogue with tribal elders Myra Johnson-Orange, Wilson Wewa, and Ruth Lewis in Central Oregon and on campus. The tribal partners presented the topic of “fences” and their unique impact on the Northern Paiute—a non-Treaty tribe in the 19th Century—to the class, and were especially interested in researching the cultural and physical influence of this expression of conquest and colonization on forms of sovereignty, traditional seasonal rounds, healing/medicinal practices, and inter-tribal relations.

Simone Smith: “Governor George L. Woods: ‘The Exterminator’ Governor” (pp. 96-118)

Simone also presented her research findings and reflected on her research experience at the Alternative Sovereignties Conference as part of the panel “The Northern Paiute History Project: Engaging Undergraduates in De-colonizing Research with Tribal Community Members” along with Kevin, Jennifer and Myra on May 9, 2014. Simone presented her research at the Fourth Annual University of Oregon Undergraduate Symposium on Thursday, May 15, 2014. Finally, Simone will deliver her paper to an international audience at the 129th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association as a presenter on the panel, “The Northern Paiute History Project: Engaging Undergraduates in Decolonizing Research with Tribal Community Members” accompanied by the instructors and Jim Gardner. Simone’s research paper titled, “Governor George L. Woods: ‘The Exterminator’ Governor,” transcends a simple biography of one of Oregon’s most important, yet un-studied, political figures. Through a nuanced application of historian Richard White’s “kindergarten thesis,” Simone examines the complex local-federal relationship between Oregon’s third state governor (1866-1870) and federal executive officials and military officers during the culmination of the “Snake War” (1855-1868) against the Northern Paiutes. Specifically, Simone investigates the divergence in ideology and objectives between Woods and U.S. Army Generals Frederick Steele and Henry Halleck, and his alliance with Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton and General George Crook. Simone’s research illuminates how Woods’ reframed the conflict into a truly genocidal and ethnocidal war of physical and cultural “extermination,” underpinned by his legalization and mobilization of the “Warm Springs Scouts”—mercenary detachments of Wasco and Tenino commandos enlisted from the Warm Springs reservation. Although the impressment of indigenous peoples into imperialistic conquest had global historical precedent even by the 1860s, Simone has unearthed a unique infrastructure of colonization erected by Woods. Ostensibly under the command of Crook, the “Warm Spring Scouts” operated autonomously under mixed-race non-commissioned officers and dispatched from Fort Steel, a similarly hybrid Indian-Army alliance and fort-reservation Affiliation.

Madeline Weissman: “Disease and Space: An Historical Epidemiology Investigating Northern Paiute Cultural Patterns Pre and Post Reservation” (pp. 119-144)

Madeline was selected to present her research at the Fourth Annual University of Oregon Undergraduate Symposium on Thursday, May 15, 2014. Madeline’s research paper, “Disease and Space: An Historical Epidemiology Investigating Northern Paiute Cultural Patterns Pre and Post Reservation,” boldly confronted the most challenging, neglected, and original topic of the seventeen research projects performed in the course. Madeline faced twin hurdles that would intimidate a seasoned academic historian. First, outside of a small body of essentializing “salvage anthropology” literature on Paiute “shamanism” and “sorcery,” no historiographical corpus on Northern Paiute traditional ecological knowledge, ethnobotany, healing, or disease exists—especially within a post-colonial, indigenous context. Consequently, Madeline’s narrative does not simply interrogate or problematize prevailing schools of thought or interpretations of this topic. Instead, she constructed an interdisciplinary analytical framework for her narrative by interweaving disparately focused secondary sources, including historical epidemiology of regional tribes, the season rounds and subsistence patterns of the Northern Paiute; the cultural geography of the Columbia Plateau/Northern Great Basin, and inter-tribal and inter-cultural relations between the Northern Paiutes and Columbia Plateau tribes. Second, unlike topics focusing on wars, slavery, treaties, removal, reservation, education, or allotment, no corresponding coherent collection of primary sources awaited Madeline in a federal record group created by agencies such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Oregon Superintendency, or Adjutant General’s Office. Although “public health” reports and files appear occasionally in federal records, no single state institution documented the process or management of “disease” as they did other functions defining federal-Indian relations. Hence, mirroring the sophisticated strategy she adopted for engaging the secondary literature, Madeline

employed a painstakingly meticulous approach to sifting pay dirt—in the form of germane empirical evidence—from the ore of a diffuse range of source materials encompassing manuscripts, microfilm, maps, and oral interviews.

This spirit of collaboration in this ongoing community-based course and research project is eloquently expressed by Debra Croswell in the introduction to *As Days Go By: Our History, Our Land, and Our People: The Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla*:

For centuries, authors have documented the history of societies from around the world. Most often these histories are developed from the outside. An author—not one of the peoples being documented—studies the people, their culture, and their history and then writes a book about that society. While we have and can continue to learn much from these documented histories, they are often without the depth and point of view that can only be provided by people who are part of a particular society.

Several authors have written about the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla tribal people, including our history and culture. We appreciate those efforts and are forever grateful to writers such as Theodore Stern, Robert Ruby, John Brown, and Alvin M. Josephy, Jr. These individuals have done much to help our Tribes preserve vital pieces of our history, and they continue to be important scholars that we consult and honor. In fact, Ruby and Josephy played key roles in making this tribal history book happen. They encouraged us to tell our own story and assisted with this project.

But our time has come – time for our people to write about our history, our culture, our way of life, and our future. We are now our own authors, and we exercise the right of telling our own history. We need not rely solely on professional authors like those who have written about us previously, although they will certainly continue to be a valuable part of this and future projects.

The authors of this book were chosen for their experience and interest in the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Some of the authors are our own people who have intimate knowledge of our traditions, customs, and language. Some of the authors are tribal members who have lived the stories they share. Some of the authors are scholars and attorneys who have become part of our tribal family over the years. Each has close ties to the CTUIR, and each brings a unique perspective and background to this project.

It is with this conviction for cooperation and partnership that we embark on our course journey again in fall 2014 with 18 new students. The instructors are honored to announce that the fall 2014 course has received \$3,000 from the Robert D. Clark Honors College and \$2,500 from the Office of President of the University of Oregon through the support of Dr. Jason Younker, Assistant Vice President and Advisor to the President on Sovereignty and Government-to-Government Relations. We wish to acknowledge personally the unwavering support and advocacy of our Clark Honors College sponsors: Professor David Frank, immediate past Dean, Professor Louise Bishop, immediate past Associate Dean, and Professor Terry Hunt, Dean of the Clark Honors College. The field research trip to the Warm Springs Reservation with 16 new students on October 17-18, 2014 will be the occasion for the sharing of this collection with the tribal community. We look forward to expanding our collaborations with our course partners and visiting scholars as the 2014 students begin a new chapter in this important transformative research, and continue to create new knowledge and advance understanding.

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**Addressing the Elephant in the Room Called Genocide: A
Discussion on American Prejudice towards the Northern
Paiutes in the Mid Nineteenth Century**

I. Introduction – A Preview of the Prejudice against the Northern Paiutes

Imagine on a great expanse of land a large house, having existed for as long as one can remember, beautiful in the tremendous care and love poured into it, and all was in perfect harmony. Holding all claims to the house since it was his from the day he was born, the happy inhabitant lived with peace in his heart, knowing no other place he could call home. Then one terrible day broke this smooth flow of day-to-day life, when he was told he must evacuate the place forever, a matter in which he was given no say. A manager of a neighborhood company had come to the conclusion from the rising number of incoming people who needed a home that he must build a townhouse somewhere new, and to his eyes, no other place served his purpose better than the location of this old house that appeared to be wearing out anyway. Aghast and unbelieving of this turn of events, the inhabitant refused to give up what was rightfully his and fought with every ounce of his being to keep his home. Time passed, and like the leaves that fell from the trees every year, the patience of the manager dropped to reveal the harsh, barren soul that he truly was, and after deciding he could not put up with the frustrating inhabitant with a resolve as firm as a mountain, he sent a group of men on a mission to kill the man and end this matter once and for all. The brutal murder of the inhabitant became known to all surrounding the land who had known nothing about him, nothing at all, and the eager, incoming people with thoughts of only the townhouse silenced all talk about the occurrence with their overpowering voices about the new, glistening building that they could now call home.

Without any context, this story carries merely sentimental value and nothing more but when told along with real historical accounts, is clothed with power that brings the past into the present and the unknown into the known. Although it may serve as an analogy for several, different events that have occurred, it most strongly connects with what not many people are aware of as being an actual part of North American history: the genocide of a people in Oregon called the Northern Paiutes during the “Snake War” of 1866-1868. What the Americans had first intended to be a conquest for land seamlessly and consciously turned into a war of extermination of these Native American people in southeastern Oregon.

A tribe consisting of about 7,500 people with approximately twenty-four bands, the Northern Paiutes rightfully considered the vast area called the Great Basin by settlers their home.¹ Covering an expanse of land composed of four states, Nevada, Oregon, northeast California and southwest Idaho, the Great Basin saw a general peace and collaboration that allowed the Northern Paiutes to live on generally agreeable terms with each other. Although in every location the Paiutes endured hardships, the varying conditions of the different locations diverged to give unique histories that open up deep wounds in different people. The Paiutes in Oregon specifically experienced many sufferings even long before the Americans arrived and added to the pain. Enemies surrounded the Northern Paiutes from many sides: “a number of the major tribes immediately surrounding the Paiutes . . . held profoundly prejudicial and hostile attitudes” towards them, and the list grew to include the Euro-Americans who invaded their land and viewed the Northern Paiutes with disdain.² The history of the Northern Paiutes is

1. Jim Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: The Hidden History of the Northern Paiutes*, (Manuscript, 2013), 22.

2. Jim Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: The Hidden History of the Northern Paiutes*, 30.

greatly marred by years of slave raiding by these nearby tribes, all of which occurred before the Americans had even arrived, as well as what the Americans called the “Snake War” during the years 1866-1868, the culmination of American animosity towards the Northern Paiutes in the form of mass extermination.

What compelled and justified the American army to carry out an intentional extermination of the Paiutes in the Northern Great Basin, a group already victimized by a large system of slave raiding by nearby tribal enemies? Where was their sense of humanity that would have otherwise directed them off this violent, bloody path? Despite its grandness in scale little is known of the “Snake War” against the Northern Paiutes, which had one intention-- to eliminate the Paiutes in Oregon without any regard to age or gender. Both neighboring Columbia Plateau tribes and Euro-American settler-colonizers detested the Northern Paiute as primitive “Snake” Indians, and the Paiute bands seemed to have no support that disclaimed this negative and dehumanizing image.

Onto the fierce hatred that influenced the dynamics of the tense relationships among tribes, referred to as “tribalism” by some Northern Paiutes, the Americans added to the flames that would attempt to consume the Northern Paiutes with what I believe and will contend as the main contributing factor to genocide: dehumanizing prejudice. A dangerous combination of a lack of understanding of the Northern Paiutes and a consuming desire for their land blocked any hesitation on the Americans’ part to exterminate this tribe that they viewed to be filled with primitive, hostile savages in the way of what they ultimately wanted. This intangible concept of prejudice that seems too large to grasp can be pinned down to a certain level by

looking at intertribal slavery and the “Snake War” as representations of the extreme end of prejudice.

To truly understand how prejudice played a significant role in the genocide of the Oregon Paiutes, one must follow a historical sequence, beginning from the origins of longstanding tribalism that pitted the Native American tribes against one another, and ending with the genocide. Similar to how Jeffrey Ostler formatted his book *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee*, I will also “[move] steadily backward in time,” unraveling a portion of the scroll containing Northern Paiute history that has been bound up for too long.³ Drawing more attention to these disquieting events in the history of the Northern Paiutes is highly necessary if we ever hope to atone to some degree for the many injustices committed against these people who are very much alive today. In his essay titled “Ethics and Responsibilities in Writing American Indian History,” Donald Fixico affirms this and adds more important points to keep in mind when contributing to research on Native American history:

One significant responsibility of all scholarship is to pursue the unknown, especially as it relates to the known. Specifically, mainstream American history presents ‘one’ perspective, which is the known. However, the known history of this particular mainstream perspective fails to challenge itself to experience the unknown or little-known history of American Indians.⁴

A present issue that can be found at the heart of nearly all history classes in schools across America is the lack of education on the American Indians from the viewpoint of an American

3. Jeffrey Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1.

4. Donald L. Fixico, “Ethics and Responsibilities in Writing American Indian History,” in *Native and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians*, ed. Devon A. Mihesuah (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 92.

Indian, rather than from the dominating viewpoint of the white people. Consequently, I am not using merely written sources but also the accounts and the words spoken by Wilson Wewa, an oral historian whose great, great grandfathers are Chief Paulina and Chief Weahwewa, two of the most influential chiefs in the Northern Paiute tribe, and Myra Johnson-Orange, a tribal elder of the Warm Springs Reservation whose great, great grandfather is the Northern Paiute spiritual leader Oytes. In “the debate against oral history” that “for many years . . . has gone on,” I choose to side with Fixico and avoid “the problem for those who write about American Indians,” which is “that written sources have been produced almost exclusively by non-Indians.”⁵ The oral interviews that have been conducted with these two respectable leaders provide insight and direct accounts of Native American history without any filtering through non-Native lenses or mediation.

Myra Johnson-Orange emphasized during the oral interview that people “need to know the history that has been buried for so many years. The Paiute people are no longer history; we still live our lives, we still gather the natural foods of the ground and of the earth and we still know a lot of things. People think we’re history...we’re not history and I think that should be an important part of your papers.”⁶ With this research, I hope not only to bring more awareness of the terrible acts committed against the Oregon Paiutes in the past, but also to demonstrate that these people have survived the furious storms and are definitely not fictional characters one reads about in historical stories. Jeffrey Ostler voices my purpose with this research: “Rather than choosing between a narrative of agency and persistence on the one hand and

5. Ibid.

6. Myra Johnson Orange, interview by students in HC444: Race and Ethnicity in the American West course, personal interview, 21 November 2013, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

power, domination, and genocide on the other, my goal has been to write a history that combines these elements and explores their relations.”⁷ He goes on further to say, “Of all the insights from the past generation of scholarship, none is more important than the persistence of Native peoples and the ways of life. It is no longer possible to think of the ‘closing of the frontier’ . . . as signifying ‘the last days’.” The more these generally overlooked accounts concerning the Paiutes are brought to the public’s attention, the more apparent it will become to all that they have survived in spite of everything that has happened to them and that the occurrences in the past are far from being the end to their history.

II. Tribalism – The Bitter Truth about Inter-tribal Slavery

The history of the Native American people began long before the Americans arrived from Europe and is composed of the relationships among the various tribes living in close proximity with one another. Counteracting the general tendency to define Native American history as simply filled with “Indian-white relations,” the fact “that the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere already possessed histories of thousands of years’ time depth before the arrival of Columbus” deserves more attention if we are to better understand the Native Americans, or, in the context of this research, the Northern Paiutes.⁸ Directly surrounding the Paiutes to the north and west were a number of tribes, such as the Wasco, Tenino, Umatilla, Cayuse, Nez Perce, which were comparatively wealthier due to the Columbia Plateau trade and fisheries.⁹ This great contrast between these tribes and the Northern Paiutes fed the condescending attitude of the former towards the latter, enlarging the cultural boundary

7. Jeffrey Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee*, 5.

8. Donald L. Fixico, “Ethics and Responsibilities in Writing American Indian History,” 88.

9. Jim Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: The Hidden History of the Northern Paiutes*, 30.

between them even further. The Northern Paiutes were viewed as having “a more primitive culture,” as well as being “ancient, feared and hated enemies.” This prejudice against the Northern Paiutes made them a target, or a source of potential slaves, during a time when slavery held a significant role in the economy and social status of the Native American tribes in the Pacific Northwest.

What not many people are aware of is this intertribal slavery that took place and cast burdens upon the Northern Paiute people.¹⁰ Wilson Wewa explains that his people’s “oral history talks about the Warm Springs, Wascos, Klamath, [and] those tribes that were somewhat related linguistically and even the Northern California tribes...were very active in slave trade and they kept slaves as a source of status.”¹¹ One of the primary economic sources for these powerful tribes surrounding the Northern Paiutes was the selling of slaves along the northwest coast, resulting in frequent war expeditions against groups that were seen to possess less strength.¹² The slave trade was possibly the most prominent in the Columbia region located north of the Great Basin, where the stable Columbia River tribes – “the entrepreneurial Wasco, the aggressive and expansive Tenino, the imperial Cayuse, the equestrian Umatilla and iconic Nez Perce” – thrived from raiding the Northern Paiutes and molding central and eastern Oregon

10. Leland Donald informs the reader in his work that although inter-tribal slavery may have been brought up in historical and ethnographic sources on the Northwest Coast of America, there are only a handful of studies that primarily focus on the topic of slavery with great interest; Leland Donald, *Aboriginal Slavery on the Northwest Coast of North America*, 41.

11. Wilson Wewa, interview by students in HC444: Race and Ethnicity in the American West course, phone interview, 13 November 2013, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

12. Jim Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: The Hidden History of the Northern Paiutes*, 31.

into a primary source of slaves.¹³ Introducing the derogatory term “Snakes” as an alternative name for the Northern Paiutes in the Great Basin, these Columbia River tribes contributed to tribalism and the hatred that tore the tribes apart through unceasing fighting and killing that characterized the slave raids.¹⁴ The violence that dictated the level of tribalism occurred constantly, and by the 1830s, “slave raids had become relatively common in the northern part of the culture area if not elsewhere”.¹⁵

The treatment of the slaves was by no means less harsh than the means by which they were obtained. The prejudice against the Northern Paiutes brought about a noticeable social inequality among the Northwest tribes, which even the Europeans took note of, and as slaves, they were treated in whatever manner the owners pleased. Historian Leland Donald asserts that “the definition advanced was that a slave was a person over whom another person exercised all the powers attached to the right of ownership. In the Northwest Coast context, powers over an object owned would include the right to dispose of or to destroy the object.”¹⁶ The number of slaves killed, whether for the sake of ritual or of revenge against other tribes, have been recorded to be quite large when taking into consideration the size of the communities in the Pacific Northwest.¹⁷ The condescension directed towards the slaves never

13. Ibid., 32, 36.

14. Leland Donald, *Aboriginal Slavery on the Northwest Coast of North America*, 27.

15. Ibid., 113.

16. Ibid., 3, 71-72.

17. Ibid., 80.

let them forget that they were considered less human than their enemies, which continues to exist and affect the lives of the Paiutes, according to Myra Johnson-Orange:

Tribalism has been a strong factor . . . especially to the Paiutes mostly because of the raids, because of the wars that occurred. There's a lot of tribalism...in that area in that the Paiutes in the past were led to believe that they were in the lower caste system. They called them slaves; I remember in my childhood days of being called black Paiute you dirty Paiute. It was a difficult way to grow up like that.¹⁸

The long history of intertribal slavery and this prejudice that negatively influenced the various Pacific Northwest tribes' view of the Paiutes explains the events that sparked the beginning of the genocide of the Northern Paiutes. As the number of interactions between the Americans and the Native Americans increased, the tribalism that separated the ancient enemies was sustained.¹⁹

III. The Emergence of American Prejudice towards the Northern Paiutes

The demeaning attitudes of the slave raiders towards the Northern Paiutes transcended the relations between tribes and dominated the American perspectives upon initial sight. This American perspective I will term as "ethnic prejudice" rather than the expected "racism" due to the significant fact that the condescending views held by the Americans were the most extreme towards the Northern Paiutes within the Pacific Northwest, and it would be quite unjust not to make this distinction between them and the other tribes of this region. The more specific term "ethnic" serves more appropriately within this research than the general term "race" if I wish to

18. Myra Johnson-Orange, interview by students in HC444: Race and Ethnicity in the American West course.

19. During the time frame from the 1840s to the end of the nineteenth century, the reservations encouraged the formation of tribal identities that were more powerful than they were previously. The intention of the United States with forming reservations was to assimilate Native Americans into "civilized" culture, but this intensified tribalism was one of the unforeseen consequences; William T. Hagan, "Tribalism Rejuvenated: The Native American Since the Era of Termination," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (January 1981): 6.

prevent the perpetuation of prejudice towards the Northern Paiutes that blurs the lines between the unique identities and histories of each tribe. Psychologist Gordon Allport contends: “Ethnic refers to characteristics of groups that may be, in different proportions, physical, national, cultural, linguistic, religious, or ideological in character. Unlike ‘race,’ the term does not imply biological unity, a condition which in reality seldom marks the groups that are the targets of prejudice.”²⁰ Although this may run the risk of being misinterpreted as an attempt to deepen the tribalism among the tribes all the more, for the sake of this paper’s purpose that is focused on the American attitudes towards the Northern Paiutes specifically, grouping the Northern Paiutes with the other Pacific Northwest tribes as one “race” would not do justice to these people with the unique set of hardships and sufferings that they have experienced.

The first explorers who entered the homeland of the Northern Paiutes did not see what they were expecting:

As reflected in early journals, maps and observations, both the environment and the culture of the Northern Paiutes appeared to be inconsistent with American images of the “noble savage” and widespread American stereotypes of an idealized Indian culture . . . the American explorers looked down on the Paiutes of the interior as an inferior race and people, and developed highly prejudicial perceptions of them.²¹

Indian Agent Edward R. Geary’s 1 October 1860 letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs reflected this commonly held opinion:

These Indians, though known as Snakes, are by no means to be confounded with the Bannocks and Shoshones of the Rocky Mountains. The latter are well mounted and annually hunt buffalo on the headwaters of the Yellow Stone, while the former are a miserable race, clad in skins, without houses or enclosures, hiding like wild beasts in the

20. Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co, 1954), xv-xvi.

21. Jim Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: The Hidden History of the Northern Paiutes*, 33.

rocks, or cowering beneath the sage brush, and deriving a precarious substance from roots and insects.²²

Myra Johnson-Orange provides an explanation as to why the Americans may have formed these opinions of the Paiutes: "I believe because of the harsh way of life we used to be able to survive under made us look like dirty Indians, so dirty Indians is what we became. Because to live in the harsh desert lifestyle . . . to survive in that environment, we look like a dirty Indian."²³ When the reality of the Northern Paiute image did not fit well with their preconceived, romanticized notions, whereas members of other tribes did, the Americans consequently adopted a perspective that was more negative towards them than towards other tribes. Consequently the ethnic prejudice that would dominate the history of the Northern Paiutes was born. Instead of trying to understand that the way they live is a unique culture that should be respected, the Americans reviled unfamiliar behavior that did not make sense to them. If it were not for their deeply rooted prejudice, the Americans could have appreciated the culture of the Paiutes that entailed seasonal rounds of moving through their territory while living in man-made shelters of grass, reed, or sage to obtain food and support their economy.²⁴ Instead, they chose to create inaccurate labels to rationalize in their minds this unfamiliar group of people, dehumanizing them in the process.

What leads to such ugly prejudice and inability to accept people the way they are? In this case, how did the majority of the Americans view the Northern Paiutes with such derision

22. Edward Geary, Office of Superintendency of Indian Affairs, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Greenwood, 1 October 1860, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1848-1873*, microfilm. University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR.

23. Myra Johnson-Orange, interview by students in HC444: Race and Ethnicity in the American West course.

24. Jim Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: The Hidden History of the Northern Paiutes*, 25.

when they did not know the Northern Paiutes? Analysis on the workings of prejudice reveals the dark side of all humanity and the weak tendency of humans to label the unknown with the known even if accuracy cannot be maintained when doing so. When humans encounter something new and unfamiliar, a momentary sense of discomfort from this arising uncertainty compels one to fence it “into a mental field,” and when it does not fit, “the exception is acknowledged, but the field is hastily fenced in again and not allowed to remain dangerously open.”²⁵ We have a tendency to generalize, categorize, and simplify the world so that we may hold it in the palm of our hands and have nothing sway us back and forth with a sense of insecurity. What results from hastily placing false labels on the unknown is, however, the formation of a large barrier that pushes us even further from truly knowing the unknown in all its unique complexity. The Northern Paiutes as a whole experienced such prejudice first from the other Native American tribes and then the Americans – they were never accepted for who they were but rather rejected for who they were not.

IV. The Rapid Accumulation of American Prejudice

Misunderstanding between the Americans and the Northern Paiutes grew at an uncontrollable speed, and there would be no turning back to make friendly amends. A letter written by Joel Palmer, Oregon superintendent of Indian Affairs, reveals the general perception of the Northern Paiutes in 1854: that “part of Oregon lying east of the Cascade Mountains” houses “the hostile character of its savage inhabitants . . . the Indians on Snake River.”²⁶ Admitting that they had “limited knowledge” of the location and of the Northern Paiutes,

25. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 23.

26. Joel Palmer, Office of Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 28 September 1854, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR.

Palmer's words demonstrate that prejudice had taken hold of his views. He solely focused on the "late outrages" committed by the Paiutes without even considering the causes of their actions. He immediately jumped to a conclusion regarding "the impurity with which these savages have, for years, robbed and murdered defenseless immigrants." Palmer strongly believed that the Northern Paiutes continued to attack due to their "opinion that [the Americans] are weak, or indifferent to the wrongs inflicted on . . . citizens," which in his view "has rendered them more insolent and audacious." He advocated for punishment that "should plainly appear to be the dictate of stern justice, rather than of revenge" so that "it should not be forgotten that [the Americans] are a civilized and Christian people, and they savage and ignorant." Whether Palmer truly did not understand the motives behind the Northern Paiutes' actions or he simply refused to accept the truth is uncertain. However, it appears clear that the more he blamed their actions on a savage character, the more distance he placed between them and the Americans, and the less likely he made any form of peace possible to amend the relationship with the Northern Paiutes. Palmer was not the only authority figure who encouraged such prejudiced views. In a letter on December 15, 1859 composed by Palmer's successor, Edward Geary, he describes the "Snakes" as having a "hostile and predatory spirit" that "evidently had an unfavorable influence on [other] bands, and excited an appetite for blood and plunder."²⁷ Geary feared this would "manifest itself in deeds of violence, on [the] exposed frontier, early next summer unless the timely presence of a military force prevents

27. Edward Geary, Office of Superintendency of Indian Affairs, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Greenwood, 15 Dec. 1859, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1848-1873*, microfilm. University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR.

it..²⁸ On October 11, 1859, he had sent a letter about the “property stolen and destroyed by the Sho-sho-ne or Snake Indians at the Warm Spring Reservation on the 6th of August last,” which was “but one of a series of aggressions.”²⁹ Authority figures such as Edward Geary instigated falsehoods and spread an inaccurate image of the Native Americans influencing other ignorant Americans to believe in this dangerous character of all members of the Northern Paiute bands, They allowed their prejudice to take a hold of them and did not pause to contemplate the causes of the actions of the Northern Paiutes.

During this time, the suggestions written in the letters in the Superintendency of Indian Affairs on how to counteract the violence of the Northern Paiutes did not mention the need to investigate whether there may be a different motive behind their actions rather than a savage hunger for blood. Edward Geary made attempts to better understand the Northern Paiutes, but he set himself up for failure by clinging on to his prejudiced view of them as being dangerous savages. He ordered Sub-Indian Agent G. H. Abbott to “improve all opportunities to discover the state of feeling towards both whites and Indians on the part of the Snakes, and to fathom their plans for their future . . . to enable the proper authorities to determine the amount of military protection that may be required.”³⁰ The only reason why Geary deemed it necessary to find out more about the mysterious Northern Paiutes was to gauge how much more hostile they planned on being rather than to grasp the true nature of these people. William H. Rector,

28. Ibid.

29. Edward Geary, Office of Superintendency of Indian Affairs, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Greenwood, 11 Oct. 1859.

30. Edward Geary, Office of Superintendency of Indian Affairs, to Sub-Indian Agent G.H. Abbott, 7 Nov. 1859, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1848-1873*, microfilm. University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR.

a superintendent of Indian Affairs, even called this attempt to “establish friendly relations with [the Northern Paiutes] . . . by availing himself at the protection of the military expedition ... a serious mistake.”³¹ The fence that the majority of Americans rapidly built around their narrow mental field containing their prejudiced perception of the Northern Paiutes remained unwavering, and stubbornly prevented any other opposing notions from entering. Prejudice was so deeply rooted in their perspectives that it was difficult for them to come to terms with the idea that perhaps the Paiutes had intentions other than purely hostile ones.

V. A Wasted Opportunity for the Americans to Give up Prejudicial Attitudes

It was only the year 1860 when letters reveal that the Americans finally discovered the real reason why the Northern Paiutes had been aggressive towards the Warm Springs Reservation. In a letter written on February 6, 1860 by Edward Geary to General William Harney, he explained,

I would here beg leave to sustain my impression as to the real source of the inveterate hostility of the Snake Indians towards those placed on the Reservation, secured to the Wascoes and other bands by treaty, [that] lies within the limits of the Territory not only claimed by the Snakes themselves, but admitted by the Indian parties to the treaty to belong to them. The Snakes claim that the Whites had no right to give to their ancient enemies their favorite hunting grounds, without consulting and compensating them the true and original owners, therefore.³²

The attacks that the Northern Paiutes were inflicting upon the Reservation were not out of a desire to kill and bring destruction, as the prejudiced American perspective claimed, but rather

31. William Rector, Office of Superintendency of Indian Affairs, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Dole, 25 Sept. 1861, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1848-1873*, microfilm. University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR.

32. Edward Geary, Office of Superintendency of Indian Affairs, to General William Harney, 6 Feb. 1859, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1848-1873*, microfilm. University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR.

out of righteous anger towards the injustices committed against them. Bluntly speaking, the Americans were invading and stealing what was rightfully the Paiutes' property and possessions. In addition, the same Columbia Plateau tribes that shared a tense history with the Northern Paiutes were suddenly impinging on their traditional territory. The treaty of June 25, 1855 formed between Americans and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of Indians in Middle Oregon had created the Warm Springs Reservation without Paiute consent and relocated the Columbia Plateau tribes to the Great Basin. Wilson Wewa confirms, "The Warm Springs Reservation was within Paiute territory, and so when the reservation was put here and not knowing a treaty was signed giving this land as the Warm Springs Reservation and having the Warm Springs people and the soldiers and the cattle and the horses . . . moved into their territory, that was an invasion of our Northern Paiute territory."³³ In light of the ideas posed by Gordon Allport in his *The Nature of Prejudice*, how the Northern Paiutes reacted was "psychologically . . . the simplest response of all" because "frustration [breeds] aggression," and "minority group members will refuse to 'take it'."³⁴ Without any regard towards the original owners of the land, the Americans had been blinded by their voracious appetite for land as well as the prejudice that led them to believe that the Northern Paiutes were less than humans, to which the oppressed people refused acquiesce.

Even with this knowledge, however, the Americans allowed Manifest Destiny to shape their attitudes, and they agitated for more treaties to obtain the land east of the Cascade

33. Wilson Wewa, interview by students in HC444: Race and Ethnicity in the American West course.

34. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 155.

Mountains in Oregon as early as 1853.³⁵ These calls did not result in successful talks with the Northern Paiutes, and further attempts were not made.³⁶ As gold discoveries began within eastern Oregon and a wagon road from The Dalles to Canyon City was established without the consent of the Northern Paiutes, the Americans forced their way into land the Northern Paiutes had not relinquished.³⁷ William Rector, a superintendent of Indian Affairs expressed his outrage about the massacre of a party of Americans gold prospectors on the John Day River in a letter on March 16, 1862. His correspondence reveals how the Northern Paiutes' ownership of the land had been forgotten or dismissed. Rector depicted the Northern Paiutes inaccurately as "the guilty ones" who desired "to satiate their murderous desire at once," and promoted American prejudice against Northern Paiute.³⁸ With inferences made from prejudice, the majority of the Americans believed that this "depredation had been committed by some roving band of Snake Indians who had come this side of the Blue Mountains for the purpose of murder and robbery, and to harass the Warm Spring Reservation."³⁹ This was certainly not the motive

35. To headquarters in Dalles of the Columbia, 21 March 1853; Edward Geary, Office of Superintendency of Indian Affairs, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Greenwood, 15 Dec. 1859; Edward Geary, to Sub-agent of Fort Umpqua, 10 May 1860; Edward Geary to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Greenwood, 14 May 1860; William Rector to General Alvord, 11 July 1862, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1848-1873*, microfilm. University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR.

36. Edward Geary had made an attempt to visit the Northern Paiutes only to return with the same prejudiced view. In the letter, he says that he was not able to have a conference with them without any explanation; Edward Geary to Indian Agent General Newcomb, 5 July 1860. In addition, in the year 1862 Special Agent Kirkpatrick was ordered to go into the land of the Northern Paiutes to initiate treaty negotiations, but he ultimately failed and instead became in awe at the gold fields and the prosperous agriculture he saw; Jim Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: The Hidden History of the Northern Paiutes*, 28.

37. Donna Clark and Keith Clark, "William McKay's Journal, 1866-67: Indian Scouts, Part I," 121, 123.

38. William Rector, Office of Superintendency of Indian Affairs, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Dole, 16 March 1862, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1848-1873*, microfilm. University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR.

behind the attack, and instead, the Paiutes were defending what was rightfully theirs.

Thousands of miners had “already entered the mineral region, as well as the many thousands who [were] on their way” before any negotiations with the Northern Paiutes were made.⁴⁰ This lack of respect and consideration leads to the question of why the same amount of attention and scorn placed upon the actions of the Northern Paiutes was not given to – using the words of Geary himself – the “depredations” of the white people.⁴¹ Dictating the actions of the Americans as they invaded Paiute land, prejudice was real and terrible in the way it united the Americans against the unknown, or the Northern Paiutes, and together they stamped their approval on their own objectionable actions. This hatred mixed with clamors for more land faced no inhibition and grew uncontrollably to reach a climax in history that to this day remains generally unknown to the public – the so-called “Snake War” of 1866-68, or more rightfully termed as the genocide of the Northern Paiutes.

VI. American Prejudice Gives Way to Genocide of the Northern Paiutes

As early as the year 1782, the idea of genocide was supported as a way to clear the path of anybody who stood in the way of the American goal of acquiring more land in accordance with Manifest Destiny. George Washington, the first President of the United States, had set the stage in the year 1782 for future actions taken by Americans by molding “the objective of

39. Annual Report 1862, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1848-1873*, microfilm. University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR.

40. William Rector, Office of Superintendency of Indian Affairs, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Dole, 16 March 1862, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1848-1873*, microfilm. University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR.

41. A man by the name of Courtney M. Walker, who was a member of the Jason Lee missionary party in 1834 and the head of Fort Hall, viewed the Northern Paiutes “as people more trespassed against than trespassers”. He brought up the overlooked fact that tribes such as the Nez Perce, Cayuse, and the Walla Walla had previously entered the land of the Northern Paiutes and brought destruction to the people and the land, yet they faced no punishment; Donna Clark and Keith Clark, “William McKay’s Journal, 1866-67: Indian Scouts, Part I,” 122-123.

federal policy” to be “to force the entire indigenous population east of the Mississippi River into the ‘illimitable regions of the West’ to which the United States was not yet pressing claims.”⁴²

Thomas Jefferson, another well-known leader in U.S. history, revealed his opinion of the matter rather bluntly, which was to have “those who physically resisted such a fate in any way...‘exterminated’.”⁴³ As one continues to turn the hands of the clock to the mid-19th century, it becomes shockingly clear that this merciless mindset had withstood the tests of time, targeting various indigenous tribes while settlers plowed their way westward to claim land that Manifest Destiny supported as being theirs.⁴⁴ In his work titled *A Little Matter of Genocide*, Ward Churchill explains, “As pronouncements of Angloamerica’s ‘Manifest Destiny’ to enjoy limitless expansion intensified, so too did calls for the outright eradication of Indians, or at least large numbers of them, *wherever* they might be encountered.”⁴⁵ The Northern Paiute tribe was not exempted of this, and the undying demands of voracious Americans in western Oregon initiated the devastating oppression of these people in the yet unclaimed eastern part of Oregon. The words of Edward Geary represent clearly the adamant perspective of the majority of the Americans who desired to expand eastward in Oregon: “Approached by the advancing and the effluent wave of civilization, there is neither respite nor escape. They must rise with the billows or sink beneath them. The alternative is civilization or annihilation.”⁴⁶ Prejudice paired

42. Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas, 1492 to the Present* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1997), 211.

43. Thomas Jefferson.

44. More information is given on these tribes in Churchill’s work; Ward, Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas, 1492 to the Present*, 212-220.

45. Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide*, 219.

up with frustration at the Northern Paiutes' obstinate refusal to comply with the Americans' desires and, to the Americans who were quickly losing patience, the Northern Paiute would never be anything more than a savage. This cannot be more clearly seen than in a letter written by Edward Geary to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on October 1, 1860, which makes a clear distinction between two Native Americans with differing levels of obedience. The one who is "a fugitive" and who "has declined to return to the reservations" is regarded "as of a suspicious and treacherous native and strongly attached to the habits and customs of savage life," whereas the other has been "temporarily designated . . . an intelligent and friendly . . . chief" who "has always been well disposed to the whites...noted for integrity and temperance."⁴⁷ In his lecture at Oxford on "The Relations of the Advanced and Backward Race of Mankind," James Bryce, a distinguished political scientist, assumed the same viewpoint as Edward Geary by "[invoking] the Darwinian theory of evolution in such a way as to justify the aggressions of the 'fit' and strong races of mankind against the weaker" and "[chiding] the American Indians for their stubborn refusal to conform to the white man's standards."⁴⁸ He concluded that "massacres became the inevitable (and, he implies, justifiable) result."⁴⁹ This prejudiced view held by Americans in the mid-19th century of the unrelenting Northern Paiutes

46. Edward Geary, Office of Superintendency of Indian Affairs, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Greenwood, 1 Sept. 1859, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1848-1873*, microfilm. University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR.

47. Edward Geary, Office of Superintendency of Indian Affairs, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Greenwood, 1 Oct. 1860, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1848-1873*, microfilm. University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR.

48. Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide*, 86.

49. *Ibid.*

encouraged calls for a genocide, and justified such a horrific act in the minds of the Americans who desired their land.

How can prejudice intensify to the point of desiring to murder many individuals of a certain ethnicity? Gordon Allport provides a step-by-step process that both offers an answer and perfectly aligns with this particular situation regarding the Americans and the Northern Paiutes.⁵⁰ The seeds of extermination, “or the ultimate degree of violent expression of prejudice,” are planted from the moment people begin “to lose the power to think of the members of an out-group as individuals.”⁵¹ As people persist in complaining verbally “against the victimized minority” and “the habits of suspicion and blaming [become] firmly rooted,” discrimination grows unchecked, and the long-lasting clashes that people face with the minority group push them into “a state of explosion.”⁵² Levels of prejudice steadily increase, directing the progression from a “milder [state] of mind” to “discrimination” and eventually to “physical violence.”⁵³ The precise analysis made by Allport accurately describes tense relationship between the Americans and the Northern Paiutes in mid-19th century that culminated in genocide.

VII. Conclusion – With Knowledge Comes the Power to Change the World’s Path

An undeniably dark time in U.S. history that deserves much more attention than it is presently receiving, the “Snake War” of 1866-68 was an outgrowth of maximized American

50. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 57-58.

51. *Ibid.*, 15, 57.

52. *Ibid.*, 58.

53. *Ibid.*, 57.

prejudice against the Northern Paiutes, a people who had already faced afflictions in the form of slave raids from neighboring tribes. Such hatred grew from the moment Americans set their eyes on the Northern Paiutes, whose lifestyle did not match their unrealistic expectations, and decided that they, in contrast to other tribes, were of a low form of beings. It was further exaggerated as the Northern Paiutes continued to resist American invasion of their land until eventually calls for extermination of the Northern Paiutes culminated in the “Snake War.” The lack of knowledge of this significant event in history cannot persist for any longer – more people need to know about what the Americans did to the Northern Paiutes under the influence of this consuming prejudice that brought hardship after hardship upon these innocent people from all sides, including the tribes who were their ancient enemies.

Thanks to the Robert D. Clark Honors College colloquium taught by Dr. Kevin Hatfield and Ms. Jennifer O’Neal, I came across James Gardner’s discussion draft of his work *Oregon Apocalypse: The Hidden History of the Northern Paiutes*, which extensively filled the gaps within my knowledge of Native American history with information on the “Snake War” and the inter-tribal slavery among the tribes in the Northwest. How I was so unaware of a genocide that occurred in a state I have been living in for the past fourteen years of my life is a serious problem that alludes to the general ignorance of such an event. It is my sincere hope that this research I have undertaken has not been in vain and instead will serve as a source of enlightenment for those who – like I once was – are unaware of the oppressions the Northern Paiutes faced from the Americans as well as from their neighboring tribes in the past. From the analogous story that this paper began with, the man who was ruthlessly killed for resisting those who wanted his land can live on forever in memory if the injustices committed against

him are revealed more and more to the public. Not only will some atonement be achieved (not all since it is difficult to completely atone for such terrible occurrences) but also resistance to the repetition of murders akin to this one can be built as a result. In the same way, the accounts of what happened to the Northern Paiutes must be spread throughout this country, so that the resilience of these Native American people who have overcome these battles against prejudice can be known to all and that the likelihood of recurrences of a genocide like the “Snake War” can be diminished to nothing by those who hold knowledge of it. As Ward Churchill says in his *A Little Matter of Genocide*, “the purpose of studying history is not so much to understand it – although that is certainly important enough in its own right – as it is to acquire the conceptual/intellectual tools with which to change it.”⁵⁴ Knowledge is power, made beneficial by those who choose to use it to change the course of humanity for the better, and with the knowledge that my research offers, I believe that a world refusing to relive the dark moments in our past is within our grasp, once we choose to stop looking at all things under the lens of prejudice.

54. Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide*, 250-51.

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Kimi Lerner

**A History of Racism and Prejudice:
The Untold Story of the Northern Paiute**

The Role of the Historian

Historians hold the key role in presenting information from the past – how they choose to present this information is vital to how we, as readers, perceive history. Since there is no opportunity to revisit times and places of the past, historians must rely on limited resources to construct an accurate depiction of events long ago. In the case of the Northern Paiute people, government records, letters, reports, and oral histories will have to suffice. As white settlers came and colonized, the Paiutes faced racism and prejudice from the Euro-Americans and the U.S. government. Likewise, the Paiutes have historically faced prejudice, and even enslavement from other tribes.¹ These feelings of prejudice and racism eventually culminated in an extermination campaign of the Paiute people that can be labeled as genocide.

A historian must present a view of Native Americans that is not biased toward telling a history of savagery, nor conversely romanticized by telling a history that is so overwhelmingly sympathetic that it retains minimal scholarly value.² There are a few differing views on how best to conduct research on Native Americans. One argument is that the scholar must remain emotionally removed from the subject, so that the final work remains as objective as possible, or else the work becomes blinded. Another line of reasoning states that the best work comes from being as involved as possible; this allows the scholar to obtain valuable information and to allow the subject of the material – the native people – to become involved.³ This latter method

1. James Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: The Hidden History of the Northern Paiutes* (Summary prepared for HC 441/431 class), 21-37.

2. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn. *A Separate Country: Postcoloniality and American Indian Nations*. (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011), 15-16.

3. Eva Marie Garrouette. *Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native America*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 104-106.

can help to correct an important problem in current research that views native people as “objects” of research, and creates a lack of interaction between the author and subject that leads to misrepresentation. When anthropologists and historians are completely uninvolved with the process, the resulting work simply reflects the author’s perception with no connection to the subject.⁴

Another aphorism states that the winning side writes history, and the history of the settlement and colonization of the United States is no different. The story that is written in textbooks often paints Native Americans negatively, or excludes them from the history completely. For historians of the period, given that little has been documented from indigenous knowledge, this further exacerbates the problem of limited resource material.

As you read through this paper, please consider the difficulties in writing about this subject, and the struggle of writing a reasonably objective, but somewhat involved, history. This history in particular is marred with accounts of bloody wars and examples of murders upon murders, which is never easy to investigate. The prejudice and racism the Northern Paiute people faced throughout much of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century is terrible. I am naturally more inclined to become involved with my subject as I write, and I think engaging with people is an invaluable source of information. However, my heritage is neither Northern Paiute nor Native American, I was not raised on a reservation, and I do not face the cultural prejudices that native peoples face. I cannot pretend to write an account that clearly reflects the Paiute perspective. In this paper, I will attempt to remain relatively objective, while still empathetically

4. Linda Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (New York: Zed Books, 2012), 64.

examining a side of history that has been rarely explored and then sometimes inaccurately portrayed by historians. I hope to correct some common misconceptions and synthesize my findings in an account of a history that is generally unknown.

Beginning during the settlement of the American West and Oregon in the 1850s, many Indian agents, settlers, government officials, early ethnographers, and public and academic historians have dealt with some aspect of the Northern Paiutes in their writing. These documented accounts comprise the few records that have been kept. Although that writing has come from many different sources and many different time periods, the portrayal of the Northern Paiutes has changed little, if at all. The Northern Paiutes have continuously been regarded as a savage and primitive people, which reflects both Euro-American racism and inter-tribal prejudice. From primary documents such as letters, to the work of early historians such as George Bancroft, to recent accounts from modern authors such as Gale Ontko, a uniquely negative and derogatory image of the Northern Paiute has been passed down. Modern authors and historians use the same language as the early settlers, and call the Northern Paiutes the “Snake Indians,” a pejorative epithet that is both unacceptable and insulting to the tribe.⁵ Members of many Columbia Plateau tribes traditionally characterized and deprecated the Northern Paiutes as “non-treaty signers,” which contributed to the overwhelmingly negative perception.⁶ This externally constructed identity of the Northern Paiute represents an extreme example of the cultural process of “othering” by both Euroamericans and some members of neighboring tribes. Over time both real and imaged Northern Paiute physical and cultural

5. Garder, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 32.

6. Myra Johnson-Orange, HC 441/431 classroom discussion, November 21, 2013.

attributes were essentialized and objectified to define the group as inferior to both white settler-colonizers and Columbia Plateau tribes.

There is little documentation of the Northern Paiute perspective during the arrival of white settlers in Oregon, which makes historical evidence extremely one-sided. Looking back through past accounts of the genocide provides insight into the beliefs of the Euro-Americans during the settlement of Oregon. These past accounts, though full of racist remarks and prejudice, are often the only written documents available to historians. Current historians must critically interpret these dominant-culture sources and carefully consider how to cite and qualify empirical evidence drawn from such materials. Events like the genocide of the Northern Paiute people that are so hidden from our well-known history are essential in creating a representative narrative. By looking to understand past events that challenge and disfigure the popular understanding of history, the public can gain a better appreciation of native peoples, particularly the Northern Paiutes.

History of Prejudice and Slavery

The eminent psychologist Gordon Allport defined prejudice as “an avertive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group.”⁷ Two types of prejudices can be discussed in relation to the Northern Paiutes; firstly, the prejudice of the white settlers, and secondly, the prejudice of different tribes, or inter-tribal prejudice. Those with strong racist feelings may carry out actions in five stages: 1) talking about their prejudice; 2) avoiding the disliked group; 3) discriminating against the group; 4) performing physical

7. Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, (Cambridge: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1954), 7.

violence that may occur from heightened emotions; and 5) extermination.⁸ In the case of the Northern Paiute people, the prejudice felt from Euro-Americans was so extreme that the last stage of extermination was used as an answer. Most Euro-Americans formed generalizations about all Native Americans from either limited or no interactions at all.

The Northern Paiute people were often looked at as a lower caste system, as lesser beings.⁹

This view was even true for some people Northern Paiutes who were ashamed of their identity.

Northern Paiute tribal elder Myra Johnson-Orange remembers neighbors who came daily to

beat up her Grandmother for being Paiute, even though she was an old woman.¹⁰ People were

embarrassed about being Paiute, and taunted for not being treaty signers. However, this was

not a reason to be ashamed, as the Northern Paiute people were bravely fighting for their lands

and trying to defend their homes.¹¹ The arrival of the Euro-American settlers changed the

dynamics between tribes and within tribes. According to Johnson-Orange, “somebody had to

do the domestic work, and that’s what [the Euro-Americans] groomed our people for.”¹² She

believes that Manifest Destiny is arguably the worst event to happen to the Northern Paiutes—

and with the settlers came a new prejudice.

8. Ibid., 14-15.

9. Myra Johnson-Orange, class discussion. Myra Johnson Orange is a tribal elder of the Northern Paiute from the Warm Springs Reservation. We were lucky to have her join us and allow answer questions about the history of the Paiute people. Her great-great grandfather is Oytes, a powerful spiritual leader in Northern Paiute history.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

Where did this prejudice originate? In regard to inter-tribal prejudice, Johnson-Orange believes it may have stemmed from the harsh environmental conditions in which the Northern Paiutes lived. As a people who were historically nomadic and desert dwellers, Johnson-Orange remarks, “we were made to look like dirty Indians, dirty Indians was what we became.”¹³ The idea of the surrounding area contributing to the impression of the Paiutes is again visited in more current works, naming the Paiutes as “Earth Eaters, Walking People, and Diggers,” and describing them as “Hav[ing] No Meat . . . They grubbed a meager living from the hostile environment of the Great Basin . . . a land so poorly suited to survival that the best use they could put a horse was to eat him.”¹⁴ These assessments are insulting and incorrect, and this quote is from a biased source. However, it does point to the environment as a reflection of the people, and the word “hostile” is used to describe the environment as it is likewise used to describe the Northern Paiute people in many prejudiced accounts.

Northern Paiute tribal elder and spiritual leader Wilson Wewa remarks that “[prejudice] does affect the way our people are treated today, and it’s probably no different than the prejudice that happened in the South, between the white people and the black people.”¹⁵ The racism applied to the Native Americans during this time draws many parallels to the racism between African-Americans and whites in the South. Both included accounts of a white feeling of superiority over a race that looked different and had different customs. Also, the Northern

13. Ibid.

14. Andrew Gale Ontko, *Thunder Over the Ochoco, Volume 1*. (Maverick Publications, Inc., 1993), 31.

15. Wilson Wewa, interview by author, November 13, 2013. Wilson Wewa is the great-great grandson of Chief Weahwewa and Chief Paulina, two extremely important and powerful chiefs in Paiute history. He is a member of the Northern Paiute of Oregon and a member of the Warm Springs Tribal Council.

Paiutes were regarded by neighboring tribes as a weak people, and thus as potential slaves.¹⁶ The occurrence of inter-tribal slavery again reinforces a comparison to African-American experiences in the South. It has been said that “slavery was as important to Northwest culture as it was to antebellum southern U.S. culture: in both areas what best and most typically represents these cultures are the lives, actions, and values of their elites, and in both regions the elites built their lives on slavery.”¹⁷ However, there were also many differences between the forms of hereditary chattel slavery in the Trans-Atlantic world and American South, and forms of inter-tribal indigenous slavery in the Pacific Northwest and these two uses of the same word cannot necessarily be viewed as reflecting synonymous experiences.

Inter-tribal prejudice and conflict led to the capturing of war prisoners turned slaves. An unfriendly relationship between the Northern Paiutes and their neighbors, the Klamath, Tenino, Wasco, Cayuse, Umatilla, and Nez Perce, led to slave raids.¹⁸ It was these neighboring tribes that branded the Northern Paiutes as the “Snake People” or “Rattle Snake people.”¹⁹ Although the Northern Paiutes never accepted these monikers they were nonetheless adopted by Euro-Americans of the time, and are, in fact, still often used today. Women and children were often kept as slaves after battles, but men were usually killed because they were more dangerous and their heads provided bigger trophies to bring back.²⁰ Captured women and children were

16. Garder, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 78.

17. Leland Donald, *Aboriginal Slavery on the Northwest Coast of North America*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 311-312.

18. *Ibid.*, 33.

19. *Ibid.*, 37.

20. Donald, *Aboriginal Slavery*, 112.

subject to torture and to ceremonies that celebrated the victor's killings and scalplings.²¹ It has been suggested that slaves were kept more for status and prestige than for economic value; indeed, it has even been reported that keeping slaves was economically draining.²² Tribes in close proximity and with similar languages and cultures often enslaved one another after battles.²³

The history of slavery within the Northern Paiute people was different, and may not be thought of as harshly as their external slavery. If children were captured as part of a war, and the children were well behaved (i.e. did not attempt to escape), those children were raised as Northern Paiute.²⁴ An example of this is the story of Chief Egan, who was captured as a child from the Umatilla people. Chief Egan was well-behaved as a child and grew up as a Northern Paiute. He eventually married a Northern Paiute woman (sister of Chief Shenkah) and had Paiute children. Later, he even became a respected chief of the Paiute people, and leader in a great war against the attack of the white settlers.²⁵ This case shows compassion by the Northern Paiute people. This is not to say that the Northern Paiutes never captured war prisoners, but indicates that the Northern Paiutes were not always as animalistic and savage as they are frequently described.

Another common practice by native tribes in the Northwest was the custom of "roasting." Roasting, or the act of burning intruders, was practiced by the Northern Paiute

21. Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 38.

22. Donald, *Aboriginal Slavery*, 295-296.

23. *Ibid.*, 106.

24. Wewa, interview by author.

25. J. F. Santee, "Egan of the Piutes", *The Washington Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Jan., 1935): 17-19, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40475707>.

people and other tribes.²⁶ This practice may have caused increased tensions between tribes and led to the labeling of the Northern Paiutes as a violent people. According to Wewa, inter-tribal prejudice, like white prejudice, has not completely disappeared today. Marriages between different tribes on the reservation do occur today, which can cause some discomfort among in-laws.²⁷ There is still some deeply rooted inter-tribal animosity over events that occurred long ago. However, this may be more present in the older members of the tribes, as many of the children are of blended ancestry and are learning about many different cultures in their family. The current three tribes on Warm Springs Reservation: the Northern Paiute, Wasco, and Sahaptin, are all together known as the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and it is possible now to consider the three tribes together as one. This mixing of tribes and new generation of children surely reduces some of the old inter-tribal prejudices.²⁸

Genocide and War Tactics – The Use of Native American Scouts

The “Snake” identity imposed on the Northern Paiutes contributed to the genocidal violence they endured in the latter-half of the Nineteenth Century. Historiographically, a limitation in the existing scholarship on the settlement of the Pacific Northwest has been the traditional hesitance to acknowledge the extermination of Native Americans. Most historians and scholars do not call it for what it is – a genocide. When most people think of genocide, they remember what happened to Jews in Nazi Germany. The quest of the U.S. Army during the so-called “Snake War” can be categorized in the same way as the quest of the Nazis in Germany, in

26. Myra Johnson- Orange, class discussion.

27. Wewa, interview by author.

28. Myra Johnson-Orange, class discussion.

that the goal was to exterminate all of the “Snake Indians” or Paiute people. The genocide of the Paiute people was justified by Oregon Governor Woods who “contended that the 1854 Ward massacre, perpetrated by Snakes, had demonstrated that Indian women were even more fiendish than the men--that they had initiated particularly revolting tortures for white women and children, and that without extermination there would be no peace.”²⁹ As he expressly called for the extermination of an entire people, women and children were not exempt from Governor Woods’ campaign. Furthermore, Governor Woods based his entire opinion of a people from a few examples, which did not reflect all tribes in the area. This massacre must be acknowledged as a historical fact, regardless of how ashamed and disturbed one might be to learn about a history of genocide in Oregon. Some people feel that the failures of the past should not be discussed, because remembering failure is not constructive for the future, and consider this “anti-American slander.”³⁰ But if we choose to ignore horrible events in our past, how can we base future actions on reflection and learning?

Major General H. W. Halleck provided a description of the unfolding war for the Secretary of War’s annual report for 1866-67, wherein he painted the genocide as inevitable.

Halleck asserted:

It is useless to expect whites and Indians to live together in peace. In revenge for savage barbarities, the frontier settlers kill the Indians without regard to their individual innocence or guilt. The military are powerless to prevent this, and the civil courts will not punish a white man for killing an Indian. Consequently, the Indians retaliate by murdering innocent whites, without regard to sex or age.³¹

29. Clark, Donna and Keith Clark, “William McKay’s Journal, 1866-67: Indian Scouts, Part I,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (Summer, 1978), pp. 129, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20613623>.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*, 121-122.

This statement represents one of the more balanced descriptions by a white military officer. Halleck acknowledged that the courts will not punish a white person for the killing of a Native American, and that the frontier settlers would happily kill innocent natives. While the statement surely does not paint the Native Americans positively, citing “savage barbarities” and the murdering of innocent whites, it does at least recognize that the Native Americans have a reason to be angry. However, in the beginning of the statement, Halleck defends the frontier settlers’ actions and implies that the Native Americans are responsible for the hostilities. In reality, the native people possessed land that the white settlers coveted, and the notion of Manifest Density and desire to obtain land made conflict between the groups inevitable.³² This new prejudice by the white settlers seemed to exacerbate the old inter-tribal prejudices, the awful effects of which are visible during the genocide.

The U.S. Army employed Native American Scouts (also known as Indian Scouts) as mercenaries or commandos during the “Snake War” to hunt the Northern Paiutes and to carry out their extermination campaign. Judge Humason from The Dalles suggested a “plan to fight Greeks with Greeks and Indians with Indians.”³³ Most white settlers favored the use of Native Americans in the army.³⁴ Placing Native Americans into the middle of a vicious war meant fewer white members of the army were at risk of injury and death. Instead, more Native Americans were killed. From the racist white perspective, this was a win-win situation. Native Americans in

32. Ibid., 122.

33. Letter from the McKay Papers, 1839-1892, Reel # F880 .M166 1948, Microfilm Collection, University of Oregon Microfilm, University of Oregon, Oregon, 8.

34. Ibid., 129.

the army “offered the advantages of practicality, economy, and the substitution of Indian risk for white risk.”³⁵ By entering the U.S. Army, Indian Scouts received livestock taken from the Northern Paiutes, pay equal to cavalry soldiers, and a two-to-three week leave of absence in both fall and spring to care for their farms.³⁶

It is suggested that the Northern Paiute people feared Native Scouts more than Euro-American members of the U.S. Army. In one documented account, a Northern Paiute chief supposedly “told the pale-faced commander it was not he whom he feared, nor his blue-coated soldiers . . . ‘It is there,’ and he pointed to McKay and the Warm-Springs Scouts.” This story cannot be confirmed, but it speaks to the fears of the Northern Paiutes and suggests that inter-tribal animosity was a major contributor to their genocide.³⁷

It may be thought that the emergence of Euro-American settlers would drive the rival tribes closer together to defend themselves. Psychological analyses of prejudice have indicated that “acute and lethal persecution may drive all in-group members together, so that local animosities are dropped.”³⁸ On the other hand, the presence of the Euro-Americans could drive the tribes further apart, as it did by the use of Indian Scouts. Both of these effects can be observed at different times in this history. In more recent times, many of the tribes do work together and recognize the commonality of their situations and goals. However, in the Nineteenth Century, Native Americans were pitted against the other as Army Scouts, increasing both intra- and inter-tribal tensions between people of the same tribe and between people in

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., 132.

37. McKay Papers, Microfilm Collection, University of Oregon, 9.

38. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 152-153.

different tribes. Myra Johnson-Orange explains that Indian Scouts “were to commit genocide on the Paiute people. They went out there to kill babies, old people, women . . . It’s a sad thing that was a real part of history that made racism a real thing in our community.”³⁹ The use of Native American Scouts was an effective war tactic in preventing the Native Americans from joining forces. This tactic was part of a broader system of colonization of the indigenous people. Euro-Americans exploited inter-tribal prejudice and used this animosity to forward their own territorial aims.

One of these Army Scouts, William McKay, was part Native American and part Euro-American. He was born in Oregon, but received medical training in the eastern U.S. Despite his “part white” status, McKay did not enjoy the same rights and privileges as other white colonizers. He was not wealthy in his later years, and did not obtain a position of power equivalent to many successful Euro-American war heroes, but instead had to work hard to retain his job as agency physician. His journal entries contain repeated instances of killing and imprisoning Northern Paiute men, women, and children. Women and children were killed along with the men. Most entries intermingle details on the weather, food, and killing Paiutes. There is little emotion behind his statements; indeed the journal is more log than diary. There is no indication of any guilt or remorse about his killing, even regarding the murders of women and children. After successfully commanding a group for the army during General Crook’s 1866-68 campaign against the Northern Paiutes, McKay was asked to command again but deferred and

39. Myra Johnson-Orange, class discussion.

became an agency physician at Umatilla reservation.⁴⁰ Another scout, a Wasco named Louis Simpson, describes the instructions he received during the campaign: “The order was given to us, the chief gave it to us soldiers: ‘You shall slay the Paiutes. You shall rip open their bellies and cut their heads; you shall take hold of their scalps. And then you shall cut through their necks; you shall put the head of the Paiutes ten paces off.’”⁴¹ These instructions speak for themselves and leave little to be misunderstood about the purpose of the campaign.

It is difficult to discern McKay’s motives for joining the U.S. Army. It is possible this was his best job opportunity and to provide for his family. Indian Scouts may have viewed joining the military as a chance to join the winning side of a bloody war. However, we cannot discount that underlying their service record of violence and murder was a hatred and prejudice towards the Paiutes. This example of how inter-tribal prejudices played out would prove devastating for the Northern Paiute people. Moreover, the political and geographic consolidation of multiple tribes into “confederated” structures on single reservations by the federal government through the treaty-making process intensified these inter-tribal tensions. From the Euro-American perspective, Native Americans tribes were treated as a single people with a common culture. The generic label of “Native Americans” comes strictly from the Euro-American point of view.⁴²

40. Donna Clark and Keith Clark, “William McKay’s Journal, 1866-67: Indian Scouts, Part 2,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (Fall, 1978), 305-308. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20613635>.

41. George Aguilar Sr. and Jarold Ramsey, *When the River Ran Wild!: Indian Traditions on the Mid-Columbia and the Warm Springs Reservation* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 211.

42. Background information from HC 444/431 class discussion.

Sarah Winnemucca is another controversial Native American in this history. She worked for the U.S. government as an interpreter.⁴³ She was a great advocate for her people, and through the writing of her autobiography, *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*, she is one of few documented Paiute voices to provide a written history. Although initially afraid of white people, she was instructed to trust them by her Grandfather. In describing her own people, she said: "I can't tell about all Indians; but I know my own people are kind to everybody that does not do them harm; but they will not be imposed upon, and when people are too bad they rise up and resist them. This seems to me all right. It is different from being revengeful. There is nothing cruel about our people. They never scalped a human being."⁴⁴ Her evident pride in her people, and faith that they are good and righteous, is very different from the Indian Scouts. This voice lies in stark contrast to the dominant negative portrayal of the Northern Paiutes offered by so many other primary source voices during this time. She also describes how bad habits (such as swearing) are learned behaviors from the Euro-Americans:

Coyote is the name of a mean, crafty little animal, half wolf, half dog, and stands for everything low. It is the greatest term of reproach one Indian has for another. Indians do not swear,—they have no words for swearing till they learn them of white men. The worst they call each is bad or coyote; but they are very sincere with one another, and if they think each other in the wrong they say so.⁴⁵

This presentation of the Paiutes as a sincere people without even the vocabulary for derogatory remarks lies in complete opposition to the typical portrayal of the Paiutes during that period. The specific example of name-calling may seem inconsequential, but it is indeed highly relevant

43. Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*, 1883, http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/life_among_the_piutes/.

44. *Ibid.*, Chapter 2.

45. *Ibid.*

and illuminating, given the pervasiveness of the derogatory epithet of “Snakes” imposed on the Northern Paiutes. Winnemucca addresses how such behaviors were a Euro-American introduction, rather than an inherent part of Paiute culture. Her love of her people drove her to work with the government and led her to Washington – where she devoted her life to improving life for her people. In contrast to the Indian Scouts, who may have joined the U.S. Army out of shame for their people and inter-tribal hatred, Winnemucca’s motivations feel honorable and heroic.

The Origin of Prejudice in Primary Sources – Indian Agents and Government

Indian agents were placed on reservations for two very different reasons - to help their “charges” learn useful, and assimilating, skills, and to act as monitors. These agents provided the direct connection between the Native Americans and the federal government. They oversaw the purchase and distribution of rations, and taught the Native Americans how to perform “proper” forms of labor. Unfortunately, more often than not the agents proved to be harsh and cruel overseers who treated the Native Americans as less than human.⁴⁶ Such was the case of Malheur Reservation Agent William Rinehart, a white man with little evident intent to help the Paiutes. The Malheur Reservation located in eastern Oregon was created by executive order and concentrated the many Northern Paiute bands of Oregon. In his letters, Rinehart describes the Paiutes as being difficult to understand, and with no clear relationship to the government. He uses words such as “loafers” and “gamblers” to describe any Paiutes not relocated onto the reservation, where he felt they belonged.⁴⁷ Rinehart writes of denying

46. Background information on Indian Agents from HC 441/443 class discussions.

47. William Rinehart, from Special Collections and University Archives, 195.

rations to those who refused to labor, which could have had devastating consequences at a time when the people on reservations were entirely dependent on government rations for survival through the harsh winters.⁴⁸

This picture of Rinehart drawn from the documentary record reinforces oral history accounts from Wewa of times when Rinehart did not distribute the blankets, sugar, flour, and other necessities from the government on the reservation.⁴⁹ Rinehart implemented the use of corporal punishment, and there are many accounts of Rinehart whipping men and even children on the agency. He justified his actions by claiming he was “with the military.”⁵⁰ He was known to charge the people for the produce that they had grown themselves, and he was certainly mistrusted by the people living on the reservation. Rinehart is similarly thought to have sold produce to local miners and livestock to a local ranch. The trail of money obtained from these sales remains unknown, but according to oral history, when confronted Rinehart lied and said that the beef had been distributed throughout the agency.⁵¹

When spring came, many of the Northern Paiute people annually headed to the meadows, where their people had gathered different varieties of edible roots as food for thousands of years as part of their subsistence cycle. As the weather warmed, they also went into the mountains to hunt antelope and mule deer.⁵² In his reports, Rinehart reported to the government that these Indians were abandoning the reservation. In his judgment, these

48. Ibid., 210.

49. Wewa, interview by author.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

traditional activities constituted abandonment. However, the boundaries of the one-million-plus acre reservation actually extended to include many of these sites, so the people had often not even technically left the boundaries of the Malheur Reservation. This alleged abandonment undermined the longterm stability of the Malheur Reservation. In the absence of a Senate-ratified treaty establishing the reservation a subsequent executive order could dissolve the reservation at any time.⁵³ Also, in a letter from Lindsay Applegate, a Sub-Agent at Yainax (located near Klamath Falls, Oregon), the so-called disappearance of the Native Americans from reservation meant “they left with hostile intent...and are now far from harboring feelings of amity towards whites.”⁵⁴ Their movement to practice old traditions was used by Applegate to impute that the Paiutes contemplated new hostility against white people. In this way, Rinehart’s reporting had a large and negative impact, further stalling the progress by which Native Americans could regain their footing. Although a few good agents have appeared in history, such cruel and unhelpful treatment of Native Americans by agents was all too common.

One of those benevolent agents, Sam Parrish, had preceded Rinehart and represented one of the few white voices that articulated a countervailing positive identity and image of the Northern Paiutes. His removal, in fact, was most likely a consequence of his sympathetic leanings towards the Paiutes.⁵⁵ Parrish served as an advocate for the tribe. He wrote letters to the government to help explain the Native American response to an allegation “that their lives

53. Ibid.

54. Clark, *William McKay's Journal*, 128.

55. Wewa, conference call.

have been spent plundering and murdering immigrants and settlers.”⁵⁶ Parrish explained that there were two sides to the story, and “when parties of whites came through their country, Indian men, women and children were shot down on sight and that they the Indians therefore looked upon all whites (and with good reason too) as enemies who wanted to do them all the harm they could, and therefore they were compelled to fight.”⁵⁷ In his letters, Parrish often refers to the Native Americans paternalistically as “my Indians,” and displays a caring affection towards the Paiute people.⁵⁸ As opposed to complaining about their incompetence, he instead lobbies for the addition of a teacher and a blacksmith on the reservation. He inquires about building materials for a schoolhouse, hospital, and barn. This picture of kindness is consistent with oral histories, which tell of a man who taught the Paiutes to farm, and of a brief time of trust on the reservation.⁵⁹ Sadly, Parrish is one of few agents who have shown such kindness to the Native Americans throughout history. Unfortunately, his letters and portrayal of the Paiute people did not negate the dominant image of the Paiutes that was prevalent at the time, and that continues to prevail. His limited impact seems to reflect the dominance of the opposing view, and, in fact, Parrish was not well liked by the government due to these sympathies, and this led to his removal from the reservation.⁶⁰ Agents with empathy for their tribes were both

56. Samuel Parrish, from Special Collections and University Archives, 155-156.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. Wewa, interview by author.

60. Ibid.

uncommon and unpopular at the time, and accounts like his are by far the exception rather than the rule.

Joel Palmer, Bureau of Indian Affairs administrator and Oregon Superintendent during this time period, is another example of a white man in charge of tribal affairs whose accounts lack any sense of compassion and instead project an air of superiority. In a letter sent to a new special agent, he refers to the Northern Paiutes as hostile, savage, and ignorant.⁶¹ His letter depicts the “Snake River Indians” as robbers and murderers of defenseless immigrants, which has instilled in them a sense of white weakness.⁶² Palmer advises cooperation with military force, and throughout the letter an overwhelming sense of white superiority is evident, describing Euro-American citizens as “a civilized and Christian people.”⁶³ Palmer seems intent on displaying this white authority, and suggests saving women and children in order to impress on them the power and generosity of Euro-Americans. This severe display of prejudice was common, and is documented by many of the government officials who supposedly were advocates for the tribes they oversaw.

The Work of Early Historians

Early historical accounts of the state of Oregon severely misrepresent local tribes and the events that involved them. Hubert Howe Bancroft wrote the *History of Oregon*, which was published in 1886. His main sources include Oregon newspapers (published by Euro-Americans), Indian Affairs Reports, and documents from the U.S. Senate. Given his exclusive use of Euro-

61. Joel Palmer, Letter, from Special Collections and University Archives.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

American sources it is clear that Bancroft's work is biased, and he often uses the terms "Snake" and "savage" when referring to Northern Paiute bands.⁶⁴ One of the most disturbing aspects of Bancroft's history is his explanation of his usage of the term "Snake". Bancroft writes:

I use the term Snake in its popular sense and for convenience. The several bands of this tribe, the Bannacks, and the wandering Pah Utes were all classed as Snakes by the people who reported their acts, and as it is impossible for me to separate them, the reader will understand that by Snakes is meant in general the predatory bands from the region of the Snakes and Owyhee rivers.⁶⁵

This lack of distinction between the Paiute and Bannock tribes reflects a carelessness that is all too common in historical writing of this time period. Bancroft's refusal to clearly distinguish the Paiutes from the Bannocks set an invidious precedent for future authors who also liberally use the term "Snake" and apply it to the Northern Paiute and other neighboring tribes. This generalization has not only introduced misnomers into historical accounts, but also contributed to negative representations of the Paiute people by blaming them for the actions of other tribes that share the "Snake" label. His description of the Paiutes as predatory is also general and subjective. The Paiutes in Bancroft's account are depicted as cruel murderers, who killed many other Native Americans on reservations in revenge.⁶⁶ His portrayal of the Paiutes in his history of Oregon is overwhelmingly negative, which is a continued theme by present authors.

Prejudice in Modern Times

More current work (published within the last decade) about the settlement of Oregon draws some unfortunate parallels to letters that date back to the Nineteenth Century. Books

64. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The History of Oregon, volume 2*, The History Company, 1886, 237.

65. *Ibid.*, 462.

66. *Ibid.*, 464.

such as the series *Thunder Over the Ochoco* by Gale Ontko only reinforce stereotypes and dehumanization of Native Americans, especially the Northern Paiute. The word “Snake” is used in reference to the Northern Paiutes in this series, the same way that the term Snake was used to describe the Paiutes in the 1800s. *Thunder Over the Ochoco* compares natives to wild animals while discussing how “the Oregon settlers assembled in early 1843 to organize a vendetta against wolves, bears, mountain lions and stray Indians.”⁶⁷ The comparison goes even further, with the natives being described as “perfectly naked, and wild as an animal.”⁶⁸ This continued depiction of the Northern Paiute people as less than human and ranked below other Native Americans represents an unchanged theme from a much earlier time.

A look at the bibliography confirms that Ontko’s work is built on one-sided narratives similar to the ones discussed earlier. He uses many sources from the non-Native perspective, such as journals from the North West Company (who were European traders). He also uses reports from the U.S. government and *Snake Country Journals*, which are written about interactions with the Native Americans again from the non-native perspective.⁶⁹ Sources from the U.S. government at this time are largely anti-Native American and pro-colonization and expansion, and clearly do not provide much support for the Native perspective. Ontko also uses

67. Andrew Gale Ontko, *Thunder Over the Ochoco: Distant Thunder, Volume 2*, (Maverick Publications, Inc., 1994), 2. The author of this book is not Native, but grew up in an area with Native Americans. It is important to note that the information from this book does not come from a Native perspective, although one of the other more modern accounts I look at (*When the River Ran Wild!: Indian Traditions on the Mid-Columbia and the Warm Springs Reservation*) is written from a native voice.

68. *Ibid.*, 17.

69. Andrew Gale Ontko, *Thunder Over the Ochoco Vol. 1*, 1994, 16, 72, 74.

newspapers from this era, which were run solely by Euro-Americans and reflected the popular negative view.

In addition to his Euro-American sources, Ontko takes the time to thank Wilson Wewa in the acknowledgements section of his book. This is very puzzling to Wewa, considering that he is a Northern Paiute tribal elder and the book is severely prejudiced against the Paiutes. In an e-mail, Wewa explains that “[t]here are also fabricated names in the acknowledgements. I asked descendants about the names mentioned in the book and we did ancestral research to corroborate names and we could find no evidence to substantiate the mentioned names.”⁷⁰ Although Ontko’s work appears scholarly, this is a major discrepancy that undermines the credibility of his book. Wewa also notes that Ontko never mentions the name of his supposed “befriended” Paiute informant, whom Ontko claims lived a solitary existence on Ontko’s property in central Oregon hiding from civilization. Moreover, although this seemingly fictional informant did not speak English he somehow still managed to convey knowledge of the Paiute to Ontko. It is unlikely that such a person ever existed. Wewa’s best explanation for these inconsistencies is “that Ontko more than likely never thought that Paiute scholars would read his book and find the untruths and fabrications. . . My grandfather knew many of the old Paiutes that lived out there in the backwoods communities and would have had contact with this elusive figure, if he existed.”⁷¹ Given that Ontko’s sources are either from the Euro-American perspective or romanticized and primitivist fabrications of the Paiute perspective, it is unsurprising that the resulting work is full of racist remarks and blatant prejudice.

70. Wilson Wewa, e-mail message to Kevin Hatfield, December 12, 2013.

71. Ibid.

Even a book that explicitly claims to be from a Native American perspective retains many of the same themes as above. Although *When the River Ran Wild!: Indian Traditions on the Mid-Columbia and Warm Springs Reservation* is written by a native author, George Aguilar, Sr. who is a member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, he is of Wasco descent. The Wascos and Paiutes have a long and complicated history due to inter-tribal prejudice, and someone from the Wasco tribe may view the Paiutes negatively. This book similarly depicts the Northern Paiute as being a savage and violent people.⁷² While it is acknowledged that the Wasco people wanted to retain “Snake” Indians as slaves, which is accurate according to other findings, the Paiutes are described as having been deserving of being enslaved.⁷³ One story discusses a raid and resulting murder of a pregnant woman and grandmother by the Paiutes.⁷⁴ This story is one of the few direct references in the book to the Paiutes, and is an unfair way to portray all Paiutes, as it contributes to the image imposed on them. Modern authors are responsible for providing the whole story – not just slanting history to exist in the way they want others to see it. These modern works of literature omit the majority of the story, and still claim to be reporting history.

Yet another modern work, *The Deadliest Indian War in the West* by Gregory Michno, further displays the same prejudice. He uses the same language of “Snake,” hostile, and savage;

72. The author, George Aguilar Sr., of *When the River Ran Wild!: Indian Traditions on the Mid-Columbia and the Warm Springs Reservation* is native and from Warm Springs. He is of the Wasco tribe, and directed his book to the Kikst Chinooks.

73. Aguilar, *When the River Ran Wild!*, 169-170.

74. *Ibid.*, 208.

and describes the Paiutes as murderers and thieves.⁷⁵ One of the most intriguing parts of Michno's book is his use of sources. Two of his main sources are Bancroft's *History of Oregon* and Ontko's entire *Thunder Over the Ochoco* series.⁷⁶ By using these obviously biased secondary accounts as two of the main sources in his writing, Michno severely increases the prejudice in his own work. The trickle-down effect of biased historical accounts of the Northern Paiutes is glaringly clear in this example. Primary sources from the Euro-American perspective first document the "Snake" Indians and establish the initial image. These primary sources were in turn cited in the published works of early historians such as Bancroft, which credentialed this negative portrayal of Northern Paiutes in scholarship. Finally, over time, modern historians such as Ontko, Aguilar, and Michno constructs their narratives upon the work of early historians and primary sources of white historical actors without a critical, anti-racist, or de-colonizing re-evaluation of this history or depiction of the Northern Paiute.

The books of Ontko, Aguilar, and Michno all adopted a similar format in their professional and scholarly appearance. Although the books are easy to read and accessible to a lay audience, they also appear to cite many facts drawn from credible primary sources and previous scholars. Even the use of footnotes and many citations makes the work appear to be more accurate, which easily can mislead readers into thinking this is the true story of Western colonization. Without any previous knowledge of the Northern Paiute, a reader can easily believe the negative portrayal pictured in these books.

75. Gregory Michno, *The Deadliest Indian War in the West: the Snake Conflict, 1864-1868*. (Caxton Press, 2007), 24.

76. *Ibid.*, 78, 359.

Does prejudice still exist today? Arguably yes, although not necessarily to the same extent as the rampant prejudice once was. The effects of inter-tribal prejudice have also slightly diminished over time. As Johnson-Orange points out, the new generations living on the reservations are mostly mixed, and her grandchildren have blood from many different tribes, and are also part Caucasian and Hispanic. As a full-blooded Native American, she has blood from two different tribes, and is three-quarters Sahaptin and one-quarter Paiute. Although only one-quarter Paiute, she identifies strongly with the Paiute people.⁷⁷ The mixing of cultures may contribute to the reduced prejudice between tribes, which is still held in some older members. Euro-American prejudice may still be prevalent, although not to the genocidal extent that it once was. Johnson-Orange remarks, “in the greater society, that racism and prejudice is still there”.⁷⁸ She feels that outside of the reservations, in the rest of Oregon, Euro-American prejudice is alive today. Many Euro-Americans and people of other ethnicities living in nearby towns adjacent to the reservation will not cross the bridge into Warm Springs. When visiting an elementary school in one of these communities, Johnson-Orange points out that all the kids are aware of is that Native Americans live in teepees.⁷⁹ This lack of education and awareness contributes to the problem of prejudice and racism in our society.

In order to counteract the trickle-down effect of prejudice reverberating from primary sources into secondary literature, historians and authors must interact with multiple sources and both sides of the story. It is incorrect to write about the Northern Paiutes after having read

77. Myra Johnson-Orange, class discussion.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

only primary source documents from government officials and Euro-Americans. Although documents from the Paiute perspective during this time are largely unavailable, conducting current interviews and listening to oral histories can help provide missing perspectives and information. Looking at accounts from past advocates for the Paiute people such as Sam Parrish and Sarah Winnemucca can help combat this one-sided view. As shown earlier, even sources from Native authors can paint an unfair portrait, due to the lingering effects of inter-tribal prejudice. Therefore, it is up to the author and historian to weed through biased accounts and search for a narrative that represents all groups, even if looking into the past brings a painful reality.

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Jan Raether

**Colonists, Fences, and Conflict of the American West:
An Analysis of the Infrastructure of American
Colonialism in the Northern Great Basin**

I. Foreword

While the research for and the analysis in this paper is solely my own, I would like to thank the people who have made this project possible. To Kevin and Jennifer for granting me the opportunity as well as ensuring that I would develop the skills and tools to complete this project “the right way”. To Jim Gardner for sharing his knowledge, scholarship, and resources with myself and the other students. To Wilson Wewa and Myra Johnson-Orange, for taking the time to share their experiences and wisdom. To my classmates for their continued drive and passion, their engaging discussion in class, as well as their support. And to the Northern Paiute people who have expressed their desire for a “correct” history.

Just over two months ago I was told I would be doing my research on the Northern Paiute people. Before that moment I had little to no knowledge regarding the Northern Paiute, or any other Native American tribes for that matter. My knowledge base was the product of a high school curriculum that teaches what I refer to as “The Victor’s History,” a history written not by the so-called “losers” of colonial conquest, but rather by the conquerors themselves. What we are left with is a one-sided history of a time period that was much more dynamic than to deserve only one perspective. My experiences are not those of the Northern Paiutes but my research and research methodology has focused on telling this history from another perspective. This is not the perspective of the Northern Paiute, but rather a history written with not only their input, but also with the best intention of preserving a history that has been neglected.

II. Introduction

In early August 1878, Abner Robbins left his wife and children in Ochoco, Oregon to go to John Day. Abner and his family had been living in Oregon since 1868 when they decided to leave the Massachusetts home to settle the frontier. Abner and his wife used their land claim from the Homestead Act of 1862 to start a small 160 acre farm which they would use to keep and raise livestock. While Abner was able to keep his livestock in the modest confines of his fenced-off farm he also maintained some of his stock in John Day, Oregon. As a part of the Bannock War of 1878 the Northern Paiutes had raided and released or stolen many of the horse kept at John Day, including those of Abner Robbins. Kate Robbins wrote a letter home regarding those events.

Abner has gone to John Days [sic] to look after his horses there, he had fifty head of fine young animals from one to three years old and he thinks that the Indians took them all, and as he could not find out much about it without going himself he started up there over two weeks ago and I have not heard from him since. He said he would be back in two weeks, unless he hear of his horses being somewhere where he thought he could get them again and I begin to feel a little uneasy for fear he is following the Indians, and he is so daring and reckless, he might ride right into an Indian camp if he thought they had anything that belonged to him and try to get away with it. He has done such things in times past, but he may not always come out safe as he has done.¹

The letter shows Kate Robbins fear of losing her husband, but also shows a glimpse into a greater conflict. The Bannock War of 1878 is an issue in and of itself, but the mention of horses as a contested possession introduces another conflict. In a letter dated July 7th, 1878 Abner and Kate's daughter, Eunice, mentions the same conflict.

I fear times will be very hard next winter as there will be no harvesting done worth speaking of and the savages are staying and driving off cattle and horses by the thousand. My father has given up his trip to Montana and will remain at home for the

1. Letter Dated: August 15th, 1878 Kate L. Robbins Papers, A 105, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon.

present. He has about thirty head of young horses on John Days [sic] which he is very likely to lose. We have here over a hundred including colts. The men are well armed. Every house in the neighborhood that is not abandoned resembles a small arsenal and we rarely see a man pass without a gun.²

These excerpts from letters share the widespread hysteria surrounding the conflicts between the Northern Paiute-Bannocks and the United States Military. While these letters represent only one opinion, it is observations, feelings, and opinions like these upon which a major portion of the history of the Northern Paiutes is based upon.

The history of the American West begins, for most people, with Lewis and Clark. From the time children reach elementary school until the day they leave high school, and sometimes beyond, students hear the same stories of “Manifest Destiny.” The late 1700s through the 1800s were a time of significant westward expansion and exploration in American History. Much like the history of colonies, the history of the American West has been taught from a Euro-American perspective, which is to say that the indigenous voices have been ignored. The history of the Great Basin and the Northern Paiute bands, which called that area home, is much older than Lewis and Clark, and much older than the history of the United States of America.

The Northern Paiute history has been passed down, orally, from generation to generation which has given researchers some idea of the Northern Paiute origins. Paired with archaeological information it can be proven that the Northern Paiute, or some other indigenous tribe have occupied the Great Basin “for well over a thousand years.”³ Because of the climatological and environmental conditions of the Great Basin, the Northern Paiutes were

2. Letter Dated: July 17th, 1878 Kate L. Robbins Papers, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon.

3. Laura Berg, *The First Oregonians* (Portland, Or: Oregon Council for the Humanities, 2007), 275.

highly nomadic.⁴ At different points in the year the Northern Paiutes travelled from one place to another to hunt, gather, and live. The so-called “Seasonal Round” was an integral part of Northern Paiute lifestyle and culture for hundreds if not thousands of years.⁵ Because of their nomadic lifestyle the Northern Paiutes rarely occupied the same space, instead the tribes of the Northern Paiute formed distinct bands, each named for primary food sources. The names of the Northern Paiute bands include the *Wada Tika*, meaning “Wada-Eaters”, the Elk Eaters, the Yapa Eaters, and Salmon- or Trout-Eaters, among others.⁶ These traditional band names further show the importance of food, and food gathering, to the Northern Paiute people.

The Euro-American history of the Northern Paiute focuses heavily on the Snake and Bannock Wars, the closing of the Malheur Reservation, and signing and non-signing of various treaties. While these are important factors in Northern Paiute history, it is hard to believe that treaties and war make up the entirety of the oppression which the Northern Paiutes faced, and which limited their lifestyle and culture. Historical opinions and perspectives such as those shared in the Robbins’ letters have created the foundation upon which the history of the American west has been based.

Why have Native American perspectives been ignored? What other factors played a role in the limitation of Northern Paiute culture and lifestyle? How did the Northern Paiutes adapt to strange people, strange animals, and strange practices? What types of Euro-American infrastructure played a role in Northern Paiute history? And most importantly, how can we

4. Susan Jane Stowell, “The Wada-Tika of the former Malheur Indian Reservation” (PhD diss., University of California, Davis, 2008), 42

5. *Ibid.*, 41-58.

6. Berg, *The First Oregonians*, 278

reincorporate Native American perspectives into their own history, but also into the greater history of the United States of America. These are all questions that arise when examining other circumstances of Euro-America expansion and exploration of the American West and, specifically, the Great Basin.

Throughout my research, the word “fences” was repeated numerous times not only in books, but in the oral histories of the Northern Paiutes as well. One of the most inconspicuous, and overlooked aspects of Euro-American culture is that of land-ownership and domain. It seems that it is often forgotten because ownership and property are such integral parts of Euro-American culture today, but historically as well.⁷ To bands of nomadic tribes these symbols of ownership meant nothing more than an obstruction between them and their nomadic lifestyle of hunting and gathering. The animals and people contained by these fences were nothing more than destroyers of the land, which the Northern Paiutes so heavily relied upon.⁸

Throughout the latter half of the 19th century the federal government was busy drafting treaties with tribes of Native Americans. The Organic Act, which was passed on August 14th, 1848, established the groundwork upon which treaties would be established. “The law created the Oregon Territory and laid out new federal policies for dealing with those who lived there.”⁹ The federal policy also established that the Native Americans would retain all of their rights “so long as such rights shall remain unextinguished by treaty between the United States and such

7. William F. Willingham, *Starting Over: Community Building on the Eastern Oregon Frontier* (Portland, Or: Oregon Historical Society Press, 2005), 16-17.

8. Stowell, “The Wada-Tika of the former Malheur Indian Reservation,” 112.

9. Berg, *The First Oregonians*, 211.

Indians.”¹⁰ These policies applied to all Native Americans in the Oregon Territory but tribes such as the Northern Paiute were not tied to treaties in which their rights were extinguished because they were never treaty signatories. Examples of rights ceded by other tribes include land, hunting, fishing, as well as many others.¹¹

This analysis of Northern Paiute history will look not only at the people, places, and events, but also at the impact of objects, specifically fences, borders, and boundaries on the Northern Paiute. The introduction of fences, borders, and boundaries, and a lack of treaties, divided the landscape of the Northern Great Basin and denied the Northern Paiutes legal access to their historic hunting and gathering lands. The introduction of fences also increased the number of conflicts between colonists and Paiutes and limited the Northern Paiutes’ ability to maintain their traditions, serving as a method of cultural genocide. Finally, the government’s poor surveying of public land made it nearly impossible to uphold invisible boundaries, leading to increased tension and anger in the Northern Paiute communities of the Malheur Reservation.

III. The Seasonal Round

The history of the Northern Paiute relationship with fences began long before the introduction of the barriers. Northern Paiute lifestyle was heavily dependent on a seasonal round of food gathering. Bands of Northern Paiutes were named after their primary food source but archaeological data, as well as oral history indicates that most, if not all of the bands

10. Ibid., 211.

11. Ibid., 215-16. The Woll-pah-pe Band of Snakes are identified as a singular Northern Paiute band by some historians but others view them as Shoshone. In either case the Woll-pah-pe people did not represent the entire population of Shoshone or Northern Paiute people.

had a variety of food sources which they gathered from throughout the Harney Basin showing that they were highly or at least semi-nomadic¹².

In the time before Euro-American contact bands of Northern Paiutes travelled several times per year to hunt and gather foods when and where they were most prevalent. Perhaps the best summary of the seasonal round is written by Melvin Aikens and Marilyn Couture and can be found in Laura Berg's *The First Oregonians*. In their chapter Couture and Aikens examine the seasonal round of the *Wada Tika* Band of the Northern Paiutes, the same tribe which later became the Burns Paiute. The *Wada Tika*, meaning Wada-seed Eaters, primarily occupied the area around Malheur Lake in Malheur County Oregon, but travelled great distances as a part of the seasonal round of hunting and gathering¹³.

Springtime meant digging for sprouts and roots including bitterroot, yarrow, wild onion, wada, and camas, which were either used as food sources or for medicines. These roots were commonly harvested in the area around Malheur Lake. Susan Jane Stowell calls this place "Root Camp" in her doctoral thesis¹⁴. While the women were busy digging roots, the men were also fishing for salmon in nearby streams using spears or trap¹⁵. Marilyn Couture mentions in her dissertation "there was a tendency to frequent the same hunting and gathering grounds from year to year, and they kept pretty much to these marginal limits in their seasonal migrations."¹⁶

12. Stowell, "The Wada-Tika of the former Malheur Indian Reservation," 41-42.

13. Berg, *The First Oregonians*, 276.

14. Stowell, "The Wada-Tika of the former Malheur Indian Reservation," 42.

15. Marilyn Dunlap Couture, "Recent and Contemporary Foraging Practices of the Harney Valley Paiute" (master's thesis, Portland State University, 1978), 29.

16. *Ibid.*, 8.

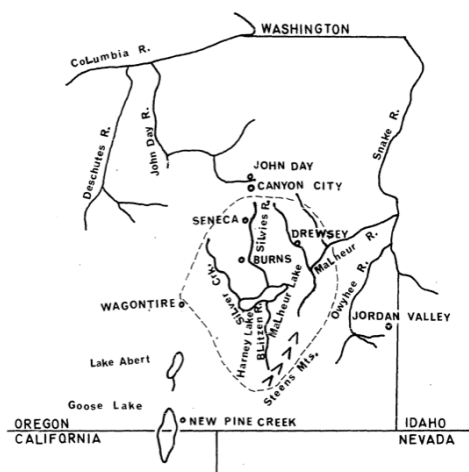


Figure 1. Couture's Map of the *Wada Tika* Territory

hunt for deer while women continued to gather nuts, roots, seeds, and berries in similar areas. Couture mentions that the tendency to hunt larger game only began “in the post-horse days.”¹⁸

In the early autumn time the *Wada Tika* would migrate again. They would return closer to Malheur Lake where they would winter over. Fall presented the last opportunity to hunt and gather enough food to survive the winter. The women would collect pinenuts while the men continued to hunt for bighorn sheep, antelope, and rabbits. When the collection of seeds and nuts was complete women would help prepare and dry the various pieces of game for use over the winter¹⁹. In Figure 1. Couture has drawn the area which the *Wada Tika* occupied.

17. Ibid., 34.

18., Ibid. 33.

19. Stowell, “The Wada-Tika of the former Malheur Indian Reservation,” 46.

remaining areas that the Northern Paiute occupies²³. With the exception of the Burns Reservation, Northern Paiute land is shared with a number of other tribes indigenous to Oregon and Nevada. At various times in Northern Paiute history, however, the various bands covered an area a third the size of Oregon²⁴.

V. Setting the Stage

Because of the geography of the Great Basin, the Northern Paiute were relatively



Figure 3. Steen's Map Oregon East of the Willamette River

protected during the first wave of Euro-American conquest in the Pacific Northwest. The first settlers passed through the Great Basin but found the geography, climate, and living conditions to harsh.²⁵ Later, however, settlers would be attracted to the Great Basin because it had long been so isolated and had remained seemingly

untouched.²⁶ Major Enoch Steen's map of Oregon in 1860 shows the treacherous terrain and those areas which were "Unexplored."²⁷ Still, evidence of the Euro-American conquest preceded the first contact with permanent settlers themselves.

23. Stowell, "The Wada-Tika of the former Malheur Indian Reservation," 146-55.

24. James Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: The Hidden History of the Northern Paiutes* (Forthcoming, 2014).

25. Ibid.

26. Willingham, *Starting Over*, 27.

27. Ibid.

Horses and disease were both introduced to the region by fur trappers and explorers prior to the establishment of permanent settlements. For many tribes in the Pacific Northwest, including the Northern Paiute, horses were obtained in the early 19th century.²⁸ Horses added to the livelihoods of the Northern Paiute and were used for travel, but also for hunting deer, elk, and antelope as a part of the seasonal round.²⁹ The addition of horses was a result of the westward movement of settlers. In some cases the Native Americans would trade for horses, but in some cases horses were stolen as well. Peter Skene Ogden kept a journal during his journeys west. In an entry from October 16th he writes “the night before last 3 Snake Indians stole 7 horses.” Later these encounters would lead to violence.³⁰

The Indians offered 2 boats. This did not satisfy Baptiste who said "let us beat them well but not kill them" began with his whip handle. The Indians endured but becoming vexed one seized Bap. the other Payette. A scuffle ensued. One Indian was killed, both our men severely wounded, only saved themselves by flight leaving arms and horses.³¹

Encounters such as this are mentioned several times throughout Ogden’s diary. Based on the description of the region, and the annotations done by K.G. Davies, this example seems to have occurred between Skene’s men and the Northern Paiutes.

While the effects of Euro-American colonialism could be noticed before encountering permanent settlers, the effects would be escalated in the mid-19th century, just prior to the creation of the first permanent Euro-American Colonies. As mentioned before, trade, horses,

28. Peter Skene Ogden and Kenneth Gordon Davies, *Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journal, 1826-27* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1961).

29. Stowell, “The Wada-Tika of the former Malheur Indian Reservation,” 146-55.

30. Ogden and Davies, *Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journal, 1826-27*, 1961.

31. Ibid.

and conflict affected the Northern Paiute. On the far opposite coast, however, another element of change was being developed. Politicians and citizens had plans which would further affect the Great Basin and its Northern Paiute residents. In the mid-1800s the United States had recently acquired large swaths of land which included Oregon and the Great Basin.³² Still, few people were interested in settling the newly acquired land. Several federal laws including the Homestead Act of 1862 and the Swamp Land Act of 1860 were passed in the hopes of promoting western settlement.³³ The Homestead Act granted any American citizen who had not taken up arms against the United States military 160 acres in the American West, leading to a land grab throughout the American West.³⁴ The U.S. Geological Survey says that in its first iteration the Swamp Land Act was meant to aid in the repurposing of the Florida Everglades, but later editions included land in Oregon³⁵. In Oregon the Swamp Land Act was particularly useful to cattle ranchers in the area around Malheur Lake, an area which had been historically marshy.³⁶ In some cases the land was sold to ranchers as cheaply as \$1.25 per acre.³⁷ While

32. Howard McKinley Corning, *Dictionary of Oregon History* (Portland, Or: Binford & Mort Publishers, 1989), 208.

33. Joanne S. Liu, *Barbed Wire: The Fence that Changed the West* (Missoula, Mont: Mountain Press Pub. Co., 2009).

34. Willingham, *Starting Over*, 22.

35. SWAMP LAND ACTS OF 1849, 1850, AND 1860.
<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/wetlands/uswetlan/century.htm#swamp>. Last Modified Feb. 2, 2013.

36. Margaret Justine Lo Piccolo, "Some Aspects of the Range Cattle Industry of Harney County, Oregon, 1870-1900" (master's thesis, University of Oregon, 1962), 54.

37. Willingham, *Starting Over*, 22.

companies could not cash in on the Homestead Act, several companies found ways to use the Homestead Act to their advantage.³⁸

Miller and Lux were one of the companies which capitalized on the Homestead Act of 1862. “When the Homestead Act was passed, Miller found several ways of circumventing the letter and spirit of the law. He would pay employees of the corporation to file homestead claims under agreement to sell it to him when proved up,” writes Alton Pryor in his book *California's Hidden Gold: Nuggets from the State's Rich History*. Alone in Merced County, California 287 land transfers took place between employees and the Miller and Lux Cattle Company.³⁹

The Homestead Act and Swamp Act were only two of the federal laws which made the procurement of land so simple for early western settlers. Later, the Desert Land Act of 1877 and the Timber Culture Act of 1873 would make even more land available to businessmen and settlers. Oregon’s more fertile lands were quickly claimed and settled under the Homestead Act but it wasn’t until the Desert Land Act offered 640 acres to willing settlers that Oregon’s more arid land in the southwest was settled.⁴⁰ Looking back, many of the laws granting land to settlers and businessmen were revised in part because of the fraudulent actions of the claimants. Desert Land Act claims could be had if “it had been placed un irrigation within three years after the original entry,” a stipulation which was oftentimes not met.⁴¹

38. Lo Piccolo, “Some Aspects of the Range Cattle Industry of Harney County, Oregon, 1870-1900”, 54.

39. Alton Pryor, *California's Hidden Gold: Nuggets from the State's Rich History* (Roseville, CA: Stagecoach Pub., 2002), 94-95.

40. Willingham, *Starting Over*, 23.

41. Ibid.

Further laying the framework for conflict were the cadastral surveys and executive orders which established the invisible boundaries which would later be replaced by fences. For the land policies of the Federal Government to operate the land had to be surveyed and divided into equal-area allotments which could be claimed. Land in the American West, and in the Great Basin was divided on the system of Township, Range, and Section. Townships were measured at 36 square miles, further split into 36 individual sections each measuring one square mile. During the survey, surveyors “walk(ed) the land, blazing trees to mark section lines and setting stones to designate corners,” while also being drawn on plats “which also were to show all watercourses, lakes, mountains, springs, timber, mines, ‘and other remarkable things over or near which such [section] lines shall pass.”⁴² Despite the stipulations of survey orders many were done inaccurately, fraudulently, or carelessly. Surveys were often “marked only by perishable or easily corners such as blazes on trees, wooden stakes lightly driven into the soil, or small mounds of earth...” says Paul Gates, “Cattle tramped down mounds of earth and Indians pulled up the stakes for fuel.”⁴³

The land around Harney and Malheur Lakes, as well as the Malheur reservation was surveyed in the 1870s before being resurveyed in the 1880s. Like all survey maps, the plat maps depicting Southeastern Oregon were accompanied by a description of the land. One such description reads:

The quality of land in this township is up to the common average. The uplands are rolling and in places stony and covered with an ordinary growth of bunch grass and sage. The lowlands near and bordering on Harney Lake are covered with greasewood

42. Willingham, *Starting Over*, 23-24.

43. Paul Wallace Gates, *History of Public Land Law Development* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1968), 421.

and salt grass. Harney Lake is from 10 to 15 feet lower than Malheur Lake. By digging a ditch or canal (which could be easily done) through the sand ridge between and separating the lakes, thousands of acres of swamp land could doubtless be drained.⁴⁴

These comments describe not only the land, but spell out the scope of actions which would soon befall the township (See Figure 4. in the appendix). Surveys such as these doubtlessly attracted businesses with the capacity to manipulate the environment and specifically the swamps lands. As if pre-ordained the swamp land surrounding Malheur lake would soon be occupied by cattle owned by Peter French.⁴⁵ Cattle Barons such as Peter French were attracted to the land because of the availability of land though the aforementioned land-claim policies and attractive cadastral survey descriptions, one of which read:

Rolling table land forms the greater portion of this township. The soil is sandy and supports a splendid growth of bunch grass. The spring in sec. 22 furnishes enough of water to subsist a large number of stock while the situation and land adjacent offer a very desirable location to the settler. This township shows evidence of having, anciently, been the bed of a lake. Juniper timber is pretty well distributed along the Eastern part of the township.⁴⁶ (See Figure 5. in the appendix)

Similarly to the cadastral maps and land claims, the boundaries of Native American reservations were created along invisible boundaries. Unlike other reservations, the Malheur Reservation – which the Northern Paiute occupied in the 1870s – was established through

44. Cadastral Survey Map, Township 26 South, Range 30 East, Willamette Meridian, Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records, http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/details/survey/default.aspx?dm_id=341413&sid=15c1hyvc.wys#surveyDetailsTabIndex=1 Last Accessed: December 6, 2013.

45. Michael McGregor, *The Death of Peter French: Clashes of Cattlemen and Settlers* (2004), <http://www.ohs.org/the-oregon-history-project/essays/the-death-of-peter-french.cfm>. Last accessed on December 6, 2013.

46. Cadastral Survey Map, Township 25 South, Range 30 East, Willamette Meridian, Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records, http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/details/survey/default.aspx?dm_id=341411&sid=kggnw03n.fib#surveyDetailsTabIndex=1 Last accessed on December 6, 2013.

executive order. The reservation, which occupied a space of 1,788,560 acres, was defined in the following terms:⁴⁷

Beginning at the mouth of the North Fork of the Malheur River; thence up said North Fork, including the waters thereof, to Castle Rock; thence in a northwesterly direction to Strawberry Butte; thence to Soda Spring, on the Canyon City and Camp Harney Road; thence down Silvie's River to Malheur Lake; thence east to the South Fork of the Malheur River; thence down said South Fork, including the waters thereof, to the place of beginning (to be known as Malheur Reservation), including all lands within said boundaries.⁴⁸

In one paragraph, the Executive Order of September 12, 1872 established the boundaries of the Malheur reservation. There would be no mention of blazing of trees, setting of stones, building of fences, or even of surveying the land on the cadastral maps of the General Land Office (See Figure 6, Figure 7, and Figure 8 in the appendix).^{49, 50, 51}

VI. Cattle, Ranches, and their Fences

While treaties, executive orders, the Homestead Act, Swamp Act, and a handful of other federal laws laid the groundwork for a land grab in the American West, it would be the settlers, ranchers, and other land-owners who would change the landscape. Millions of acres were available to men who had never taken up arms against the United States Military. "Be it

47. Stowell, "The Wada-Tika of the former Malheur Indian Reservation," 151.

48. F. A. Walker, to Office of Indian Affairs, 4 September 1872, Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties. Oklahoma State University Library. http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol1/html_files/ORE0886.html. Last accessed December 6, 2013.

49. Ibid.

50. BLM, GLO Records. http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/details/survey/default.aspx?dm_id=341542&sid=zpz2kp0e.mi2#surveyDetailsTabIndex=1 Last accessed on December 6, 2013.

51. "Malheur Indian Reservation," The Oregon History Project. http://www.ohs.org/education/oregonhistory/historical_records/dspDocument.cfm?doc_ID=63029619-9698-B33E-18180586E8AA762E. Last accessed December 6, 2013.

enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled," reads the Homestead Act.

That any person who is the head of a family, or who has arrived at the age of twenty-one years, and is a citizen of the United States, or who shall have filed his declaration of intention to become such, as required by the naturalization laws of the United States, and who has never borne arms against the United States Government or given aid and comfort to its enemies, shall, from and after the first January, eighteen hundred and sixty-three, be entitled to enter one quarter section or a less quantity of unappropriated public lands.⁵²

In addition to the aforementioned requirements land claimants were required to live on, cultivate, and develop the land for five years consecutively (See Figure 9. in the appendix).⁵³

Thousands of additional acres were available for pennies on the dollar after being labeled as swampland, an opportunity that many large-scale ranchers would capitalize upon. Early businessmen, families, and adventurers looking for a new opportunity had the land upon which to build their homes and businesses. Many of these settlers moved directly from the Great Plains and Eastern coast of the United States, many others, however, travelled up the Western shores to reach Oregon.⁵⁴ The two types of settlers brought with them different styles of living, but among those things held in common was the importance of land ownership.

Land, in Euro-American culture, was considered private, and boundaries were strenuously maintained. John Miller of the Miller and Lux Cattle Company mentions many times in his letters to Henry Fulgham that Fulgham must not let the livestock of other settlers graze

52. "Homestead Act," 2009. *Homestead Act of 1862*. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed December 7, 2013).

53. Ibid.

54. Willingham, *Starting Over*, 26-29.

upon their land.⁵⁵ In her letters home Kate Robbins also mentions that “there has been so much stock brought into the valley that the hills are getting pretty bare and so nearly everyone is cattle is fencing in a pasture to keep the grass for his own use,” another observation of the meticulous control over their own land.⁵⁶

“To understand Paiute Indian culture, one must comprehend the Indian concept of being attached to a commonly held piece of ground without the concept of private ownership to the exclusion of others,” says Marilyn Couture in her research.⁵⁷ This observation of the Northern Paiute culture and lifestyle highlights a difference between the Northern Paiute and the Euro-American colonists who were beginning to move into the Great Basin. Whereas the Northern Paiute and other Native American tribes subscribed to a theory in which private land ownership was not important, the Euro-Americans subscribed to the fee-simple empire. Based on the freehold system, in which ownership was not limited by the government, Homestead Act claimants saw this as the “agrarian utopia”.⁵⁸

As the number of colonists in Oregon increased so too did the prevalence of ownership boundaries. In order for the Homestead Act of 1862 to function land had to be surveyed. The land was surveyed using the cadastral survey mentioned in the previous section. Townships were surveyed and divided into sections, portions of which could be claimed under the

55. Henry Miller, to Henry N. Fulgham, 24 December 1891, Henry Miller Letters to Henry N. Fulgham, 1891-1894 Collection, A 080, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon. Hereafter cited as Henry Miller Letters to Henry N. Fulgham.

56. Letter Dated January 18th, 1878, Kate L. Robbins Papers, 1855-1886, A 105, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon. Hereafter cited as Kate L. Robbins Papers.

57. Couture, “Recent and Contemporary Foraging Practices of the Harney Valley Paiute,” 8.

58. Richard Hofstadter, review of *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, by Henry Nash Smith, *American Quarterly* 2 no. 3 (1950): 279-282.

Homestead Act of 1862. Each deed delivered by the General Land Office to the land-claimant described the boundaries of the land to the new deed holder, establishing imaginary boundaries which the land-holder was responsible for maintaining. While the cultivation of land was a stipulation of the Homestead Act,

One of the homesteader's first tasks after building a dwelling was to put up some sort of barrier around the property to establish boundaries, restrain livestock, and protect crops. Without fences, livestock and large poultry could wander off, and livestock could trample fields and consume crops...Hiring men to continuously herd livestock away from fields and water sources was far too expensive for most farmers.⁵⁹

Willingham claims that settlers, and not cattle ranchers were at fault for the increasing number of fences, which began to litter Eastern Oregon's landscape. "The railroad also brought in hoards of settlers, who proceeded to homestead and fence in the open range," he says.⁶⁰

This excerpt from Kate Robbins shows that settlers were, in fact, fencing in the open range, "Abner is now very busy fencing and plowing. We have one hundred and sixty acres in our claim, but we will only fence and plow ten acres this spring to plant and a large field for his male horse to run in while he is gone."⁶¹ In response to the land-grabs and fencing of smaller homesteads the larger cattle ranches were forced to maintain their livestock as well.

There is still opportunity to increase the acreage of meadow as water is plentiful and it is policy to absorb it as near as possible and prevent it from funning [sic] waste down on peoples; land who are not friendly [sic] to us. Let us know what amount of fencing materials you may want in the spring and give up all idea of hauling cedar posts from anywhere. We have quacking ash and mahogany which will make as good a fence as we desire to have and I shall always blame myself for not knowing better than to spend a

59. Liu, *Barbed Wire*, 27.

60. Willingham, *Starting Over*.

61. Letter Dated: March 31st, 1871, Kate L. Robbins Papers.

small fortune in hauling cedar and juniper posts miles and miles which answer the purpose no better than posts made of the materials above named.⁶²

The quote above was one of many quotes from Henry Miller in his letters to Henry Fulgham regarding the development of fences in Southwestern Oregon. Henry Miller of Miller and Lux remained primarily in San Francisco, the hub of the cattle industry, but kept close tabs on his deputies and the various ranches that they controlled.⁶³

Prior to, and through the beginning of early settlement in Oregon, cattle barons allowed their cattle to travel throughout the open range. The movement of huge herds cattle and other livestock from California and Nevada to Oregon began in the early 1870s and by the early 1880s nearly 100,000 head of cattle were moving about the open range throughout the Great Basin.⁶⁴ Cattle occupied the northern Great Basin and modern day Harney County as early as the 1860s but “by 1872 and 1873, herds largely used the grasslands of the northern Great Basin. Harney County, Oregon, having a common destiny with northern Nevada, felt the swells of this invasion.”⁶⁵

With increasing herd sizes, the pressure to find suitable land for grazing became greater. The cattle barons of the Great Basin competed for land in the areas around Harney and Malheur lakes. The area was known for its grasses and open ranges, but it was also home to the newly established Malheur Reservation where the Northern Paiutes had been moved. Non-

62. Letter Dated: January 30th, 1892, Henry Miller Letters to Henry N. Fulgham.

63. Letter Dated: June 14th, 1893, Henry Miller letters to Henry N. Fulgham, University of Oregon Libraries.

64. Willingham, *Starting Over*, 46.

65. Lo Piccolo, “Some Aspects of the Range Cattle Industry of Harney County, Oregon, 1870-1900,” 15.

violent as well as violent conflict between cattle barons, the Northern Paiutes, and the Indian Agents began to rise.

“During the Bannock War of 1878 there was some loss of life and considerable loss of livestock by both settlers and stockmen,” writes J. Orin Oliphant in his book *On the Cattle Ranges of the Oregon Country*.⁶⁶ The Bannock War of 1878 was perhaps the culminating conflict between the Northern Paiutes and the cattlemen, but the conflict was rooted much deeper in history. Oliphant spends several chapters discussing the conflicts between Native Americans and cattlemen but highlights the fact that “the white men who were then taking possession of the Oregon Country looked forward, more or less hopefully, to the day when Indians would be put where they belonged – either underground or in restricted areas not needed by white men for developing the country.” The key term here is the land not needed for developing the country.

The land surrounding Malheur and Harney lakes, as well as the land containing the Malheur Reservation, was extremely valuable.⁶⁷ Cattlemen of the Oregon Country saw it as their right to hold their cattle on the Malheur Reservation. As noted earlier, the Malheur reservation was outlined in one simple paragraph, and like many cadastral surveys, was poorly marked. “We know more about trespassing on [the Malheur Reservation] than on other reservations in the Pacific Northwest,” write Oliphant. Oliphant argues that historians know this

66. Orin J. Oliphant, *On the Cattle Ranges of the Oregon Country* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), 288.

67. *Ibid.*, 291.

because of Malheur Agent, W.V. Rinehart. Oliphant claims that Rinehart was “interested in the well-being of the Indians,” something we now no longer hold as true⁶⁸.

Despite a curious description of Rinehart as an ally to the Native Americans of the Malheur Reservation, Oliphant’s research on the cattlemen in the area is substantial, and his finding regarding the encroachment of their empires hold true. Rinehart reported often on the cattlemen and said that they “make no secret of their intention to occupy and use the land.” Rhinehart observed that the actions of cattlemen were not atypical, and that “it is simply the old story over.” Orders were passed along from Camp Harney that the cattlemen vacate the Malheur Reservation but “none of them had done so.”⁶⁹ In 1879, after the Northern Paiutes had left the Malheur Reservation, Rinehart continued to defend the reservation from the encroaching cattlemen. He continued to report that the cattlemen continued their movement “deeper into the Malheur Reservation.”⁷⁰

While some cases against the cattlemen were taken to court “it was plainly demonstrated in the trial of the cases reported that juries are averse to the punishment of settlers for grazing their stock upon Indian Land.”⁷¹ When it all boiled down the cattlemen apologized to Rinehart but said that livestock were too dumb to “understand that it is wrong to cross imaginary lines, or air lines, or small streams.”⁷² These comments highlight one of the greatest underlying factors in this historical conflict. While fences would play a role in isolating

68. Ibid., 296.

69. Oliphant, *On the Cattle Ranges of the Oregon Country*, 297.

70. Ibid., 298.

71. Ibid., 299.

72. Ibid., 302.

and hindering the nomadic lifestyles of the Northern Paiute, it was the lack of concrete borders and boundaries which allowed the cattlemen to exploit land previously given to the Northern Paiutes. Ultimately these exploitations, encroachments, and violations may have exacerbated the effects of the Bannock War of 1878. Willingham highlights this fact by saying that “in the summer of 1878, frustration with the inability of the Malheur Indian agent and the U.S. Army to protect their interests led some Paiutes to join similarly abused Bannocks from Idaho in the so-called Bannock War.”⁷³

VII. Modern Implications and Conclusion

The importance of this research may, at first, seem fleeting but it sheds light on a number of important historical contemporary issues. Some of the modern issues include continued cattle ranching, land-use rights, and reserved rights on off-reservation lands. These issues stem from the westward movement of settlers, the establishment of fenced homesteads, poor surveying, and lack of government action in protecting the interests of the Northern Paiutes in the 1800s.

It is important to note that Northern Paiute history shows that the Northern Paiute signed no more than one treaty.⁷⁴ The theory of treaties was that the Native Americans would trade some of their rights in favor of other rights. In many cases this meant that Native Americans would cede their land, and in return Euro-Americans would help the Native

73. Willingham, *Starting Over*, 30.

74. Berg, *First Oregonians*, 215-16.

Americans establish permanent agriculture, construct schools, or teach other trades to the Native Americans.⁷⁵

As non-treaty signers, the Northern Paiutes have, arguably, maintained all of their historic rights and access to land in the Northern Great Basin, specifically those lands around Malheur and Harney Lakes. Additionally, Northern Paiutes have maintained land just outside of Burns, Oregon where the Burns Reservation remains today. While the Northern Paiutes were not at the negotiating table for the creation of the Warm Springs Reservation, they have since been incorporated into the Warm Springs Reservation Charter and are granted equal access to all parts of the Warm Springs Reservation as the Wasco and Warm Springs Tribes.⁷⁶

As mentioned, the Northern Paiutes never signed a treaty in which they ceded land to the Federal or State governments. By all legal accounts the Northern Paiutes should maintain rights to their historic land for hunting and gathering.⁷⁷ Due to the Homestead Act of 1862, the Swamp Act of 1867, the Desert Land Act of 1877, the Timber Culture Act of 1872, and other federal laws offering land to colonists the Northern Paiutes have no deeds or titles maintaining that that land is theirs. The Indian Claim Commission in *The Snake or Piute Indians of for Former Malheur Reservation, in Oregon vs. United States of America*, have addressed this conflict. The Indian Claims Commission found that:

The petitioners, as the descendants and representing all descendants of the bands or tribe of Snake of Piute Indians whose chiefs signed the December 10, 1868 treaty, are

75. Ibid., 211.

76. CORPORATE CHARTER OF THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE WARM SPRINGS RESERVATION OF OREGON. <http://thorpe.ou.edu/IRA/warmchrtr.html>. Date accessed: December 7, 2013.

77. Berg, *First Oregonians*, 211.

entitled to recover the value of the land included in the tract as described in finding No. 3.⁷⁸

These findings were the result of a long process in which the Northern Paiute people showed that they occupied the land within the Malheur Reservation. In previous appearances before the Indian Claims Commission the Northern Paiute had attempted to prove their aboriginal rights to a much larger area, but failed.⁷⁹

Beyond this, research shows that the Northern Paiutes were forced in to conflict and the eventual abandonment of the Malheur Reservation as a result of Euro-American boundary making. As the settlers came west, their system of fences divided the landscape and altered the seasonal round of the Northern Paiute. When the Northern Paiute continued to occupy the Northern Great Basin they were moved within the confines of the Malheur Reservation. Arbitrary boundaries and surveys of the region made it difficult for the Northern Paiute of the Malheur Reservation to uphold their sovereignty, leading to conflict. Meanwhile, ranchers and settlers continued to occupy and physically divide the land along invisible borders which the Homestead Act, Swampland Act, and a handful of other acts established. These borders ensured that no Northern Paiute person could have maintained their historical hunting and gathering rights in the area of the Malheur Reservation, if they had indeed returned to that area.

While some of the Northern Paiute would call their history a historical trauma, others deny that aspect of their identity. The Northern Paiute people were at one time, a tribe on the

78. Indian Claims Commission. December 28, 1956, *The Snake or Piute Indians of for Former Malheur Reservation, in Oregon vs. United States of America*.

79. Ibid.

verge of collapse and extinction. Federal and State governments had mistreated, and even abused the Northern Paiutes for years, but still the Northern Paiutes survive today. While the Burns Reservation is the closest remaining Northern Paiute reservation to the former Malheur Reservation, many of the Northern Paiute people maintain their seasonal round to the best of their ability. The history of the Northern Paiute is long, fascinating, and important not only to the people of the Northern Paiute tribe, but also to the people of Oregon. Still, it is important that we not only keep an eye on the past, but an eye on the future as well.

IX. Appendix

Figure 4. GLO Cadastral Survey Map of Township 26 South Range 30 East

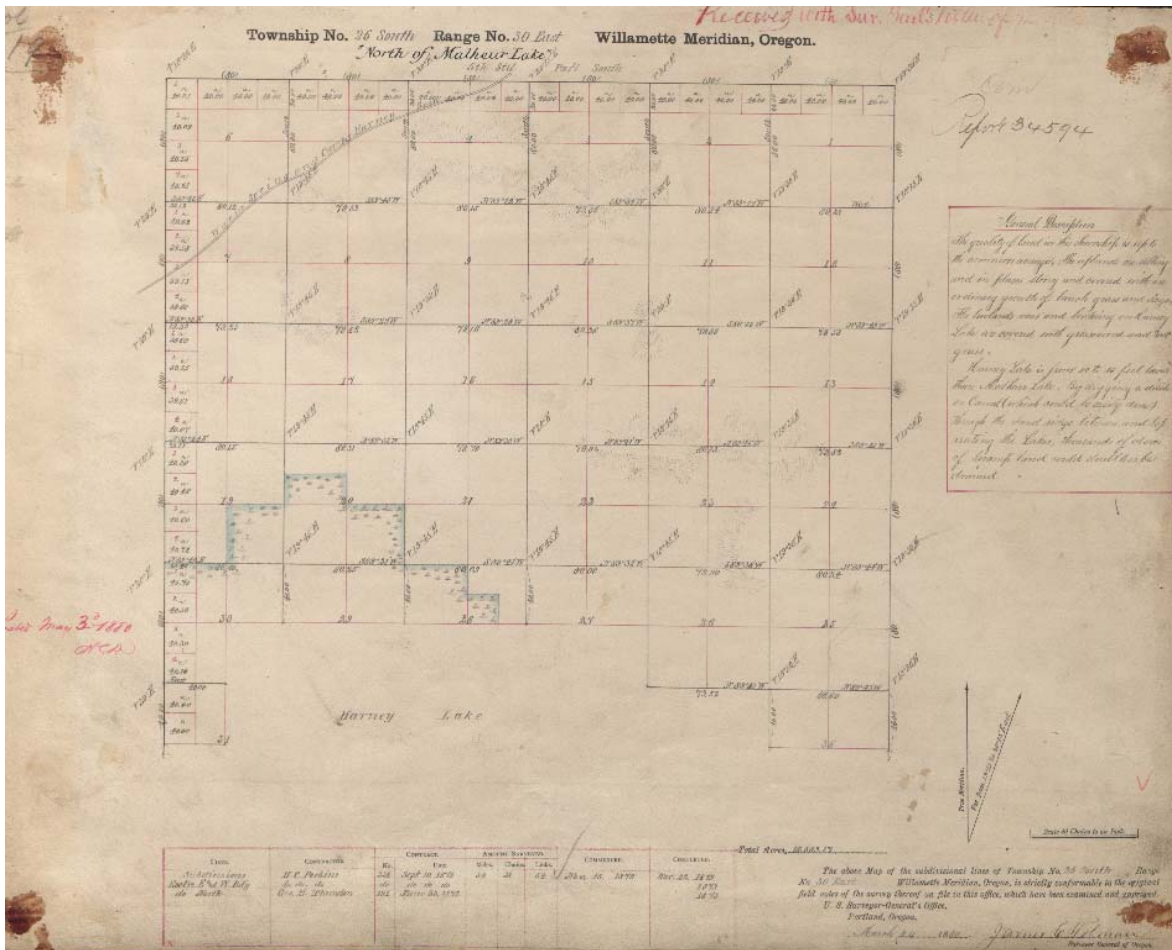


Figure 5. GLO Cadastral Survey Map of Township 25 South Range 30 East

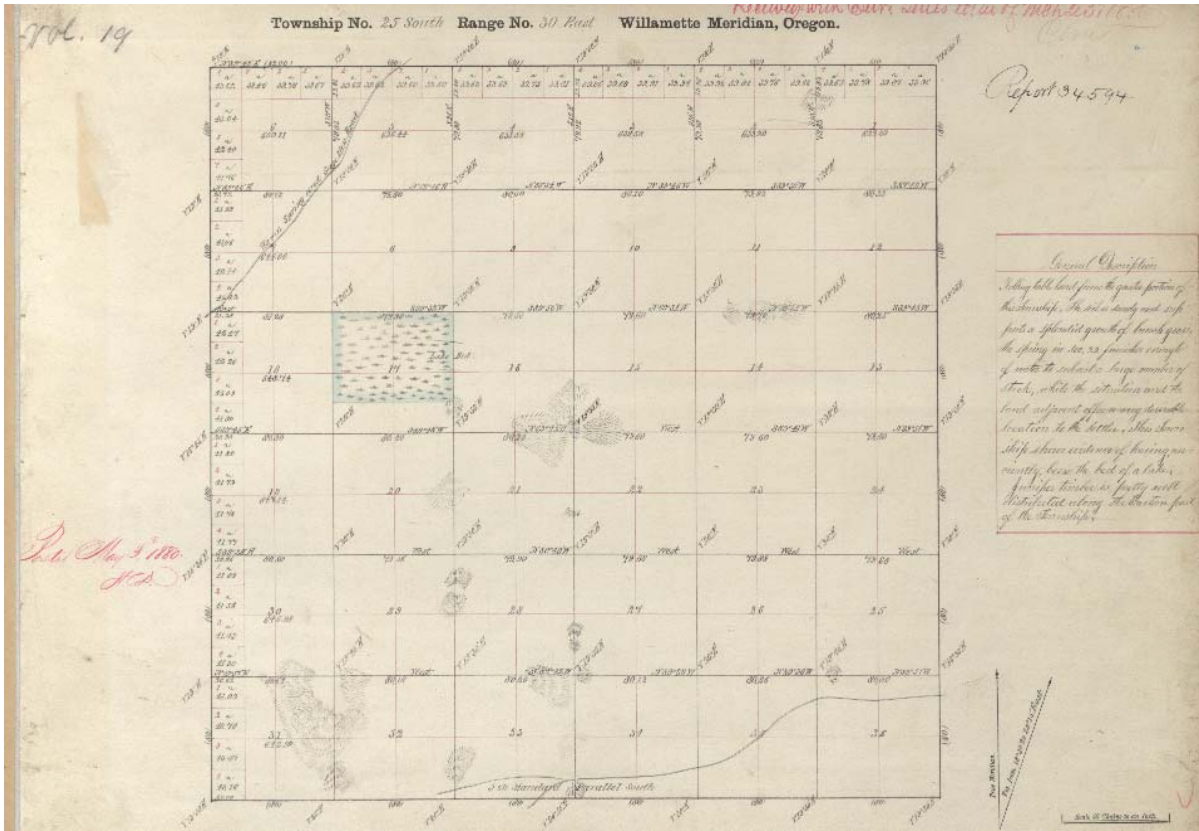


Figure 7. GLO Cadastral Map Showing Surveyed Land Formerly of the Malheur Reservation (1884)

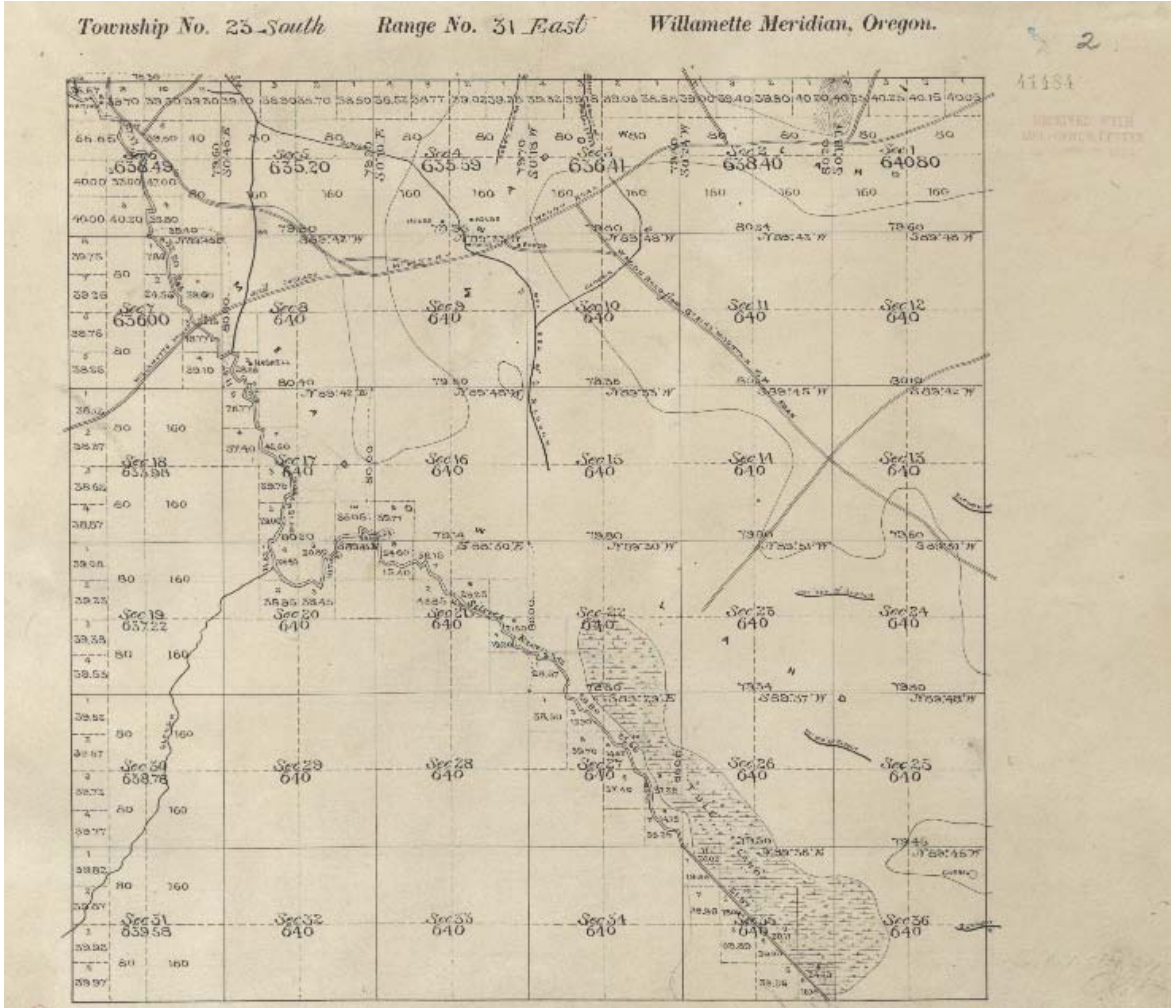


Figure 8. GLO Detail Cadastral Survey Map of the Malheur Reservation

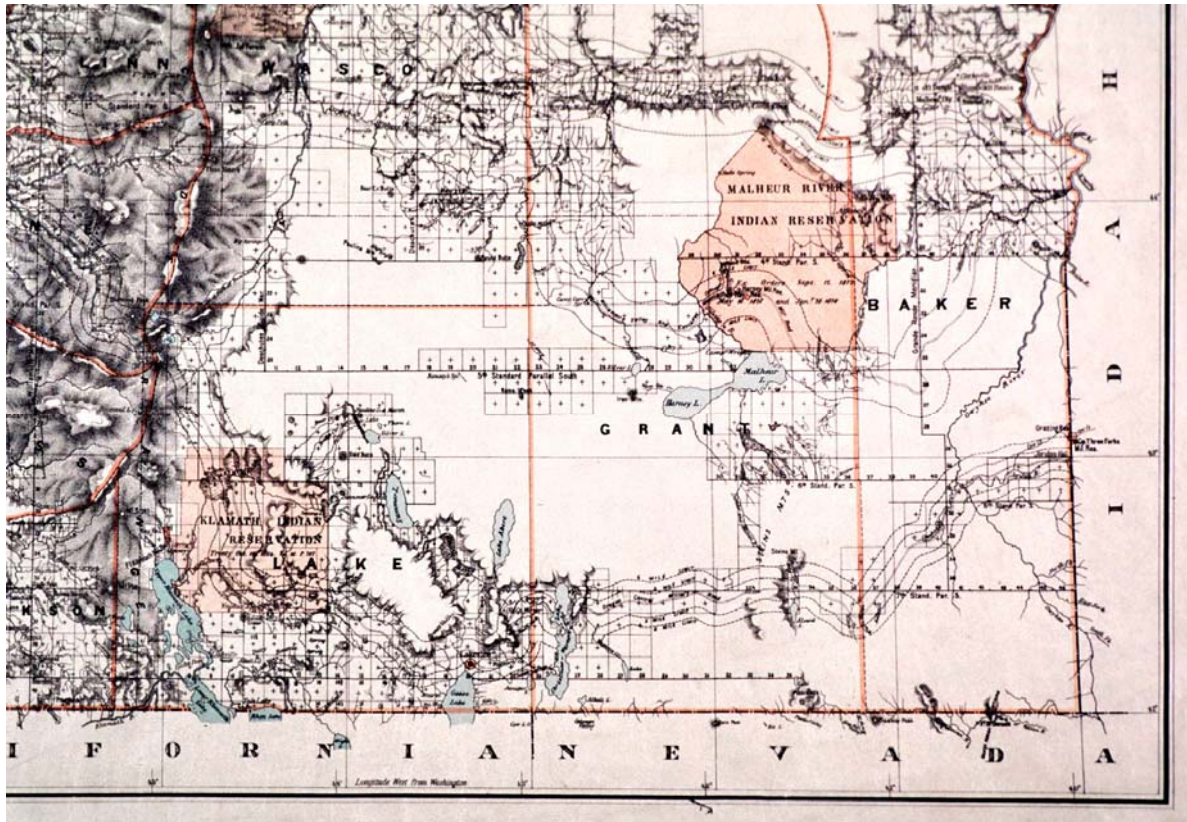
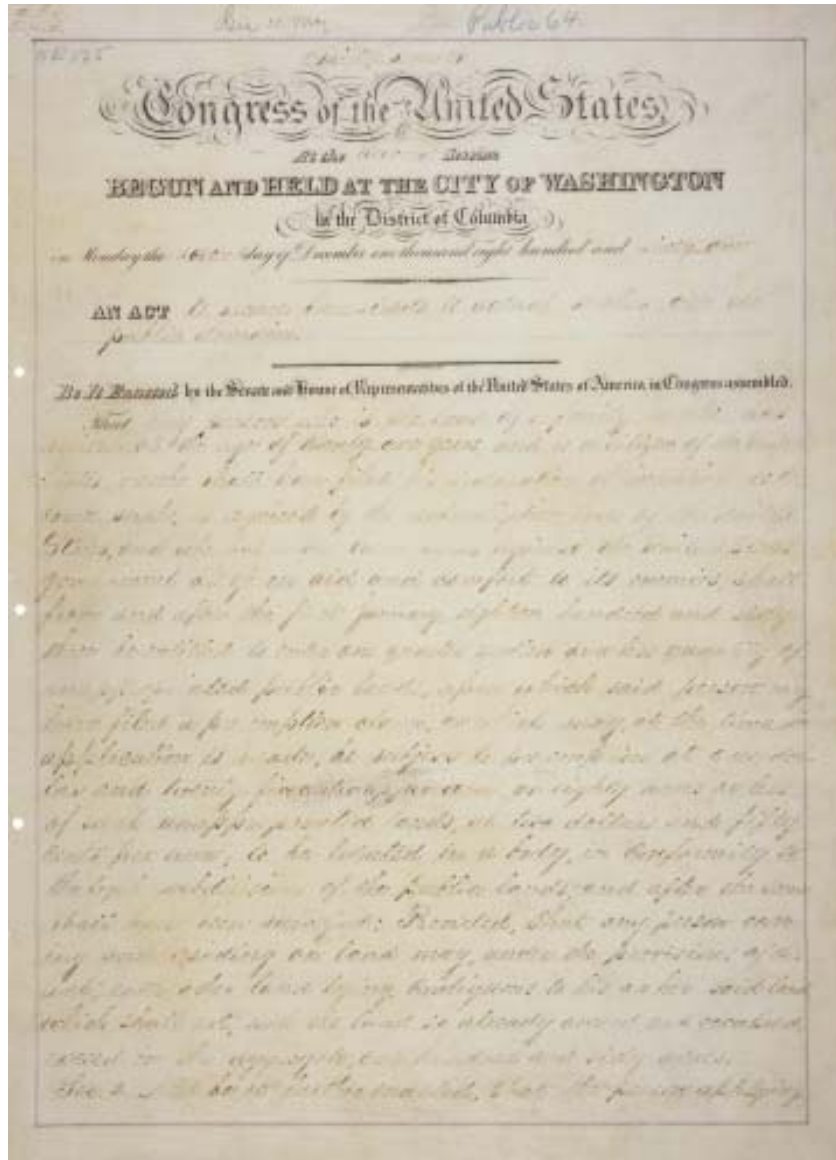


Figure 9. First page of the Homestead Act of 1862



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Simone Smith

Governor George L. Woods

Governor George L. Woods

An abandoned oak tree sits alone. Once standing tall, the tree was reduced to a stump as bullets pelted the tree during the Civil War. It later, through events unknown, found its way on the porch of the United States War Department building. The time is now 1868 and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton looked over at the tree stump and drew Governor George L. Woods' attention to the damaged tree. Stanton offered a remaining bullet to Woods as a souvenir of the struggles they had experienced through war. Woods gladly accepted but was denied the bullet when a guard nearby refused to remove a bullet from the tree stump with his bayonet. It was "against orders" the guard stated repeatedly. Initially angered by the guard's defiance, Stanton ordered the guard to bring the sergeant of the guard over so that Stanton could order the sergeant to order the guard to remove a bullet for Governor Woods. After the process was completed, Woods was left with his Civil War bullet and Stanton was left to conclude that the guard had been noble in refusing to obey his orders and that the guard was a fine addition to the American Army.¹

However, during the Snake War, when Woods proposed to utilize Indian commandos as his souvenir of the war, and was refused by General Frederick Steele and General Henry Halleck, Stanton was called in. Rather than admire and respect General Steele and General Halleck's upholding of the US Army's intentions, Secretary of War Stanton reprimanded the two and ordered them to comply with Woods' wishes. While guards and generals may have stood between the retrieval of a small bullet or a violent campaign against an Indian nation, ultimately the higher ranking US official was able to subvert the system. Although seemingly harmless in the situation of the bullet, the strong federal authority of several actors can

1. George L. Woods, "George L. Woods Recollections," (Hubert Howe Bancroft Collection: University of California Berkeley, 1880), text-fiche, p. 16-17, reel 71. This collection of manuscripts, written by Woods, is the only known autobiography of the governor's life.

easily turn a bullet into a band of Indian commandos and turn a tree stump into a deadly war.

Governor George L. Woods, with the help of various members in the US Army and federal government such as Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and General Crook, created a strong federal presence specifically unique to Oregon. Under Woods' rule, ethnocide along with the use of Indian Scouts were legalized, leading to the attempted extermination of the Northern Paiute and the strengthening of the federal government's control in Oregon in the context of Richard White's "kindergarten" theory. In the context of this paper, ethnocide is defined as:

The commission of acts of specified sorts with the intention to extinguish utterly or in substantial part, a culture. Among such ethnocidal acts are the deprivation of the opportunity to use a language, practice a religion, create art in customary ways, maintain basic social institutions, preserve memories and traditions, work in cooperation toward social goals.²

This definition, first described and defined by scholar Raphael Lemkin after the events of WWII, was derived from the birth of the word "genocide" which, contrary to ethnocide, describes the intent to eliminate a national, ethnic, or racial group entirely or partially.³

Woods' actions in Oregon align with both genocide and ethnocide, with ethnocide evident through the destruction of the Paiute history and genocide evident through the eradication and systematic elimination of the Northern Paiute.

As White suggests through his kindergarten thesis, "the federal government shaped the West, however, the West itself served as the kindergarten of the American state. In

2. Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division for International Law, 1944).

3. "Legal Definition of Genocide," United Nations: Office of the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG), https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/pdf/osapg_analysis_framework.pdf (accessed December 1, 2013)

governing and developing the American West, the state itself grew in power and influence.”⁴ Not only did Woods’ actions lead to the institutionalized eradication of the Northern Paiute, but they also demonstrate a strong and deeply political presence of the federal government in Oregon. White proclaims that the, “federal government created itself in the West”⁵ partially because as the government expanded westward it was able to utilize and expand powers that could not be done within existing states. The expansion of federal power is evident through Woods’ decision to use Indian Scouts during the Snake War from 1866 to 1868. Prior to Woods’ term in office, the government had not legalized the pitting of Indian against Indian for the purpose of extermination.

While Woods has been deemed “the exterminator governor” by scholar Jim Gardner, Governor Woods did not act alone. Acting alongside Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, Woods was able to bypass several military officers in order to eliminate the Northern Paiute during the erroneously named “Snake War” which scholar Gregory Michno proclaims to be “the deadliest Indian war” in terms of Native American casualties. The history of Woods’ genocidal rampage is absent in the common understanding of Oregon’s history and many scholars have overlooked the impact of Woods’ presence in Oregon. In the existing literature surrounding the Snake War and the history of Oregon, Governor Woods is mentioned very briefly despite his substantial impact on the Northern Paiute. Through further inspection of state documents, newspapers, letters, and manuscripts, it becomes evident that this history employs a further discussion of authority and of marginalization. General George Crook, recognized for his distinguished service on behalf of the Union during the Civil War, utilized Indian scouts solely for the purpose of eradicating the Paiute.

4. Richard White. *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A New History of the American West*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 59.

5. Ibid.

This paper seeks to decolonize popular interpretations of the Northern Paiute and to contribute more information on the government's impact on the Northern Paiute community.

Given that there are no published biographies on Governor Woods, and that there is very little information about the Northern Paiute in comparison to other Native American communities, this paper will provide more insight on the government's influence in Oregon, specifically under the Woods Administration. Although there are several existing bodies of work on the Northern Paiute and Snake War, the narratives and interpretations of these events do not provide much insight from the perspective of the American Indian communities involved, are often told through the lens of white imperialism, and neglect to emphasize the severity of the war. Oral histories in this paper provide a perspective from the Northern Paiute and illuminate the issues and desolation of the community, while George L. Woods' memoirs provide direct interpretations of his actions and intent. However, the challenge with this paper is not only the dearth of primary sources to consult on Governor Woods, but also the difficulty of finding a Northern Paiute's perspective on Governor Woods, because he was not directly at the face of the war.

Governor George L. Woods was born on July 30, 1838 in Boone County, Missouri to Caleb and Margaret Woods.⁶ It was not until 1847, that Woods at the age of 15 moved to Oregon with his family to explore the West.⁷ In the spring of 1851, Woods travelled to California with the hopes of finding gold in the mines. It was there that he encountered several groups of Native Americans in the area and found them to be "troublesome," and a

6. George S. Turnbull, "George L. Woods: Brought Youth in Stormy Times," *The Oregonian*, February 3, 1959.

7. Woods, "Recollections," 2.

man close to Woods was even killed by them.⁸ This experience instigated a trend of negative interactions between Woods and Native Americans. Under the Oregon Donation Act of 1850, Woods acquired land and worked to improve his Donation claim in Yamhill County, building houses and fences, and later selling the land so that he could start a family in McMinnville.⁹

Woods married his cousin, Louisa, in 1852 and moved to McMinnville, Oregon where he built a home and the two began attending school.¹⁰ Louisa described Woods as unable to support the family and as a result, Woods got a job as a carpenter and decided to study law, with the money earned from carpentry going towards the family's financial needs and the expense of his books.¹¹ With insufficient earnings to support his family, Woods travelled to the Canyon City mines with the hopes of prospecting for gold once again. After hearing that gold was found near Malheur, Woods set out with a group of others only to be drawn back by the Paiute, or "Snake" Indians.¹² As a result of this encounter, Woods and his colleagues were pushed to the outskirts of the Three Sisters before they reached the Willamette Valley. This would become one of several interactions between Governor Woods and Native Americans that crystallized his Woods' hostile sentiments toward all indigenous peoples that would reach fruition in the Snake War. When his juggernaut endeavors proved fruitless, Woods returned to The Dalles where he was later offered a job as a lawyer, prompting his career in law.

8. Ibid, 3.

9. Woods, "Recollections," 3.

10. Fred Lockley, "Observations and Impressions of the Journal Man," *The Oregonian*, May 20, 1923.

11. Fred Lockley, "Observations and Impressions of the Journal Man," *The Oregonian*, June 12, 1922.

12. Hubert Bancroft. *History of Oregon* (San Francisco: The History Company Publishers, 1888), 470.

Soon after Woods' arrival in The Dalles, he was elected Wasco County judge in 1863. In 1864 Woods was a candidate for the vacant Supreme Court Judge position and lost the election by one vote. However, later that same year Woods was nominated for the Union presidential electoral ticket and was one of the first organizers of the Republican Party.¹³ He was also very well connected with other political leaders and his cousin, John McBride, was a candidate for Congress.¹⁴ In 1865 he was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court by President Andrew Johnson. While still in Washington, D.C., Woods was later nominated by the Union state convention as governor of Oregon.¹⁵ He won the election as a member of the Republican Party and served as the third Governor of Oregon from 1866 to 1870.

During his term in office, Woods was most notable for his involvement in the Snake War during 1866-1868. Oregon had gained statehood in 1859 and leadership in Oregon was still developing as Woods was governor. As a result of this, Woods would later enlist the help of the federal government to assist in the Snake War, strengthening the presence of federal authorities in Oregon. His network of political allies within the Republican Party such as President Andrew Johnson, President Ulysses S. Grant, and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton would assist him throughout his career in politics. As westward expansion left settlers heading into Native American lands, tensions arose between the Northern Paiutes and the settlers. The Paiutes, becoming aggravated with the increased presence of the settlers, began to raid various camps while the settlers retaliated with military force.¹⁶ As

13. Woods, "Recollections", 3.

14. Bancroft, *History of Oregon*, 431 .

15. Lockley, "Observations and Impressions."

16. Bancroft, *History of Oregon* , 530.

this progressed throughout 1865, both US and Oregon troops were called upon to subdue the Indians.¹⁷ A newspaper article depicts the environment in Oregon in 1866:

Indian marauders killed many settlers, inflicting unspeakable barbarities, ran off horses and cattle, and forced many ranchers to abandon their homes. Governor Woods, desperate, urged a war of extermination. The War Department shrank from this extreme severity, but it took a most rigorous [sic] campaign led by Major General George Crook to subdue the Indians.¹⁸

The general public took alarm at the actions of the Paiutes and insisted that Woods take military action. As a result, Woods met with the legislature on October 7, 1866 to pass a resolution that stated if the federal government did “not within thirty days from that date send troops to the protection of eastern Oregon the governor was requested to call a sufficient number of volunteers to afford the necessary aid to citizens of that part of the state.”¹⁹ Clearly, Oregon was on the brink of war with the Northern Paiutes. In the fall of 1866 Governor Woods worked closely with General Steele, Commander of the Department of Columbia, to organize a campaign against the Snake Indians.²⁰ “The Army Bill of 1866,” Woods writes in his recollections, “provided for the attaching of Indian scouts to the US regulars forces for fighting hostile Indians.”²¹ Under the bill, specific numbers of Indian scouts were allocated to the states where hostile Indians were living, and Oregon was entitled to 100 scouts. Knowing this, Woods wrote to General Steele asking to have the 100 Indians “organized into two bands of 50 each under commanders to be selected by myself”

17. Ibid.

18. George S Turnbull, “Crook Leads Campaign,” *The Oregonian*, February 3, 1959.

19. Bancroft, *History of Oregon*, 526 .

20. Woods, *Recollections*, 11.

21. Ibid.

and that the troops be sent into the field in conjunction with the regular US Army troops.²² General Steele immediately refused Woods' proposal, as Woods recalls, due to the fact that the proposal did not comply with the Army Bill of 1866 which "contemplated the employment of Indians as scouts only, in numbers of ten or fifteen to a command."²³

After General Steele's refusal, Woods wrote to General Halleck, who was then commanding the Division of the Pacific, to ask for permission to move forward with his original proposal. General Halleck, similar to General Steele, refused using "insulting language intimating that I ought to know better than ask such a thing" as Woods remembers. After having been denied by both General Steele and General Halleck, Woods was determined to make both men comply with his wishes. Woods wrote to the Secretary of War Edwin Stanton describing his proposal and the refusals of General Steele and General Halleck. A day later Woods was informed by Stanton that General Halleck had been ordered to conform to Woods' requests.²⁴

Upon receiving the authority from General Steele and General Halleck to move forward with organizing Indian scouts with the help of Stanton, Woods set out on organizing 100 friendly Indians into two groups. The first group was comprised of 50 people from the Warm Springs Agency as Woods knew that they were "longtime enemies of the Snakes."²⁵ This group was put under the command of Captain John Darragh who was said to be familiar with their language and habits and had previously worked as a miller at Warm Springs.

22. Ibid, 12.

23. Bancroft, *History of Oregon*, 530.

24. Woods, *Recollections*, 13.

25. Ibid.

The remaining 50 scouts came from the Umatilla Agency and were placed under the command of Captain William McKay. McKay, similarly to Darragh, was also familiar with the language of Warm Springs and had worked as an interpreter for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He had a strong background in working with various Native American tribes, and had even assisted with the negotiations of the 1855 Treaty of Middle Oregon, which led to the establishment of the Warm Springs Reservation.²⁶ Additionally, McKay was part Native American and part Scottish which strengthened his connection with the Warm Springs scouts as he was also a resident physician at the Warm Springs Agency.²⁷ After the Indian scouts had been partitioned, McKay and Darragh were said to have been sent into the field with the orders from Lieutenant William Borrows to take no prisoners and to kill and destroy without regard to age, sex, or condition, starting the genocidal rampage in Oregon.²⁸

However, not all government officials agreed with this strategy. The Secretary of the Interior O.H. Browning recalled some field events of 1866 and recounted that after a surprise attack on the "Snakes," fourteen women and children were held captive. With strict orders to kill all enemies, the scouts were forced to kill the women and children. The Secretary of the Interior recalled his feelings of the event:

I shudder when I recall the fact that this is the first instance on record in which soldiers in service and wearing the uniform of the United States have, by express orders, butchered in cold blood unresisting women and children . . . it may be said that these Indians were savages, waging relentless war upon the white race, and this was only retaliation in kind; but even this is not true, as their habit has been to make prisoners and slaves of women and children captured.²⁹

26. Keith and Donna Clark. "William McKay's Journal 1866-1867: Indian Scouts," *The Oregon Historical Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (1978): 136. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20613623?seq=7>

27. Ibid, 1.

28. House Executive Documents, 40th Congress, 2nd Session 1867-1868, vol. 3. , 70.

29. Ibid.

It becomes apparent that Woods was very adamant in his campaign against the Northern Paiutes, and that the severity of the event was one never before seen. It was under his orders that General Steele was told by W.I. Sanborn, Second Lieutenant of the 13th Infantry, to impress upon the scouts the necessity of exterminating their old enemies as the only means of seeing their peace and safety in their homes. Initially, Major Marshall of the U.S. Army and commander of troops in Oregon and Idaho, asked the Secretary of the Interior for the permission to hire scouts from the Warm Springs Agency. Marshall had even made the suggestion that the Indian scouts be compensated by horses, mules, and property captured from the Snakes. The Secretary of the Interior was alarmed by such a suggestion and met with General Steele to protest against the offering of plunder as an incentive for the service of the Indian scouts. However, although the Secretary of the Interior was opposed to the utilization of plunder as a form of payment, he wrote in his own words that he was responsible for urging General Steele to make the war one of extermination.³⁰ Even though Woods' campaign against the Paiutes was not supported by Halleck and Steele initially, Woods was able to continue his war with the help of Stanton.

Throughout the winter of 1866 federal and local troops sought to eradicate the Paiutes. Woods recalls that the two commands "destroyed the villages of the hostiles not leaving one to tell the story, and we had peace before spring more than half the tribe being killed and the remnant cried for quarters."³¹ Under the Woods Administration, a sort of ethnic cleansing was performed with the hope of leading the Northern Paiutes to extinction. Generals under Woods' command were instructed to kill every Paiute they encountered.

30. House Executive Documents, 70.

31. Woods, *Recollections*, 14.

Although Woods did not act alone, his recollections demonstrate his startlingly triumphalist attitude to the massive deaths of the Northern Paiutes. The governor of Oregon not only supported a campaign of genocide against the Paiutes, but he was also extremely proud of it. It continues to remain unknown that any governor legalized genocide and subsequently, ethnocide, in the state of Oregon.

Woods had indeed waged a war of extermination. Not only did Woods have a clear intent not only to kill the Northern Paiutes, but annihilate the Paiute culture, the public sentiment was supportive of his actions. In an article written in 1866, the narrator recognizes General Halleck's refusal to honor Woods' proposal and criticizes Halleck by mentioning that "old Halleck has never interfered to render that assistance that he should, except so far as he was able to protect the Cheek-ho route, and this action, brought about through General Woods is quite refreshing."³² It is very evident that during the Woods Administration many people were pushing the eradication of the Paiutes. This mentality reverberates even more prominently in an article published in the *Oregon City Enterprise* on November 10, 1866, which mentions that "it is sincerely hoped that not a red skin will be spared in all that great scope of country. Exterminate the race is the word, and we hope it may be fully done."³³ This act of genocide came about from pressure from the public and support from the government.

Although Woods does not directly state his desire to "exterminate" the Paiutes, there is a distinct, public understanding that Woods' campaign against the Paiutes is to do

32. *Oregon City Enterprise*. (Oregon City, Or.) 1866-1868, November 10, 1866, <http://oregonnews.uoregon.edu/lccn/sn84022660/1866-11-10/ed-1/seq-2/#date1=1846&date1=&index=18&date2=1877&date2=&words=Governor+Woods&searchType=advanced&sequence=0&lccn=&proxdistance=5&rows=20&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasertext=Governor+Woods&andtext=&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1>

33. Ibid.

just that. Throughout the final two years of the Snake War corresponding with Woods Administration, newspapers continued the coverage of the war, stating most notably, that it was a war intended to exterminate. One article mentions that “the ‘noble red men’ left here yesterday under Mr. J. Darragh to wage a war of extermination against their hereditary enemies; the Snakes. We hope to be able to chronicle the success of the expedition.”³⁴ Other articles revel in the hope that the Northern Paiutes would be “wholly exterminated.”³⁵ Not only did the governor of Oregon seek to commit genocide, but the general public was in full support of it as well.

With public sentiment on his side, Woods was able to generate much support for his campaign against the Northern Paiutes. While he never directly states his exact reasons for going to war, he references the Ward Massacre as an example of Native American brutality against settlers. The Ward Massacre resulted from increased emigration to the West and frustrations between the Shoshone and the settlers in 1854. Allegedly, Boise Shoshones attacked the Ward wagon train, killing 17 people.³⁶ Woods repeatedly referenced this event as a means of justifying his relentless campaign against the Paiutes, saying that “the women of the tribe were the most brutal of murderers, and had assisted in the fiendish tortures of Mrs. and Miss Ward, and other immigrant women, for which they deserved to suffer equally with men” and used this argument to justify his decision to kill all Paiutes including women and children. However, Woods erroneously made this statement as it was not the Paiutes

34. *Oregon City Enterprise*. (Oregon City, Or.) 1866-1868, December 29, 1866, <http://oregonnews.uoregon.edu/lccn/sn84022660/1866-12-29/ed-1/seq-2/#date1=1846&date1=&sort=date&date2=1873&date2=&words=Indian+Scouts&searchType=advanced&sequence=0&lccn=&index=1&proxdistance=5&rows=20&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasertext=Indian+Scouts&andtext=&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1>

35. *Oregon City Enterprise*. (Oregon City, Or.) 1866-1868, February 16, 1867,

36. George Michno, *Deadliest Indian War in the West: The Snake Conflict, 1864-1868* (Caldwell: Caxton Press, 2007), 279.

who were involved in this event, but the Shoshones.³⁷ Regardless of Woods' false accusation of Paiute brutality, the Ward Massacre was well known at the time and fueled the popularity of the war and the incorporation of Indian scouts.

Although the usage of Indian scouts generated a debate from the general public, the general consensus was favorable despite the Warm Springs Indians' initial opposition to killing the Paiutes.³⁸ George Aguilar, member of the Confederated tribes of Warm Springs, writes in his book that the Wascos wanted to keep captive Paiutes for other reasons than the purpose of preventing future retaliation from the Paiutes. He notes that, "it is documented that during the Snake War Campaign, the Wascos wished to retain the Snake captives for the purpose of using them as slaves. The government's policy was extermination, however, which carried the order of the day."³⁹ The Indian commandos hired by the government were well aware of Woods' eradication agenda. While some scouts opposed wholesale killing of the Northern Paiutes in favor of enslavement, many were proponents of the genocidal orders given to them. Louis Simpson, a Wasco scout from 1867-1868 recalls orders given to him:

The order was given to us, the chief gave it to us soldiers: "You shall slay the Paiutes. You shall rip open their bellies and cut their heads; you shall take hold of their scalps. And then you shall cut through their necks, you shall put the head of the Paiutes ten paces off."⁴⁰

Clearly the sentiment of many Indian commandos aligned with that of Governor Woods. The Warm Springs, Wasco, and Umatilla communities had a long history of conflict with the Northern Paiutes. Although Governor Woods and the numerous military officials assisting

37. Bancroft, *History of Oregon*, 531.

38. Clark and Clark, "William McKay," 121-171.

39. George Aguilar, *When the River Ran Wild* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 170.

40. *Ibid.*, 211.

him garnered much praise, many of the scouts hired during the war were just as blood thirsty.

Despite the accolades showered on Woods and the Warm Springs commandos by local newspaper editors and public letters, the effect that the commandos had on the Northern Paiutes was devastating. Northern Paiute elder Myra Johnson-Orange recalled through oral histories that, “the commandos were sent out to kill women and babies—to commit genocide on the Paiute people.”⁴¹ The hiring of Native American commandos exacerbated longstanding tribalism between the Northern Paiutes and the Columbia Plateau tribes. Warm Springs member George Aguilar recalls that the oral histories of the Cascades, Wasco, and Warm Springs communities only accepted the Northern Paiutes onto their reservations if the Paiutes were to become slaves after the Snake War.⁴² The inter-tribal prejudice intensified as the Northern Paiutes were not only seen as inferior to the Columbia Plateau tribes, but to the government as well. With total death tolls for both sides breaking into 1,000 deaths, the Paiutes took devastating hits to their population and the aftermath of the war would lead to the eventual loss of land.

General Crook, although enthusiastic about the war, was noted to have been “very indignant” as women and children were killed upon executive order.⁴³ Secretary of the Interior O. H. Browning even noted that the scouts:

They have been employed against the hostile Snakes, have proved very efficient warriors, and have doubtless rendered more actual service than the same number of white soldiers would have done. But whatever benefit to the whites may have

41. Myra Johnson-Orange, interview by the author, November 11, 2013.

42. Aguilar, *When the River Ran Wild*, 169.

43. House Executive Documents, 101.

accrued, it is unquestionable that the effect upon these Indians is, and will be, deplorable.⁴⁴

However, even after Indian scouts and military troops deployed, many argued that Woods' actions were not enough.⁴⁵ In an article written in 1867, a writer proclaims that Woods, "has done all he could do" and recognizes that due to Woods' actions, "Indian scouts were organized, and no body of men of the same numbers have done more against the hostile bands than those friendly Indians."⁴⁶ Woods himself stated in his message to the Senate and House of Representatives in 1868, "every call for assistance was promptly responded to, and everything done which could be done, to procure the only lasting peace which can be procured with hostile Indians- whip them into submission."⁴⁷ The governor made it clear to the public that the war of extermination and the added military forces were necessary for the protection of the civilians of Oregon. It is clear as well that Woods faced a considerable amount of opposition from General Halleck, General Steele, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Legislative Assembly along the way. In his message of 1866 he notes that he had faced opposition in the Legislative Assembly:

in view of the necessity which I knew existed, I urged the Legislative Assembly to make an appropriation sufficient to enable me to respond to the appeals for help that were constantly being made by the citizens of the counties of Grant, Baker, and Union; but for reasons unknown to me no appropriation was made and I was left powerless.⁴⁸

44. Ibid., 70.

45. "Protection Against the Indians," *The Morning Oregonian*, October 19, 1867.

46. Ibid.

47. Message of Gov. George L. Woods to the Legislative Assembly, Fifth Regular Session, September 1868, Salem, Oregon, W.A. McPherson, State Printer, 1868.
<http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/records/governors/guides/state/woods/message1868.html> (accessed December 13, 2013).

48. Message of Gov. George L. Woods to the Legislative Assembly, Fifth Regular Session, September 1868.

As a result, Governor Woods utilized the full force of federalized power to incorporate military involvement and intervention in the state of Oregon. When he did not receive the support he needed locally or from Generals in the field, he then turned to the federal powers for help.

As Richard White states in *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*,

In the West federal power took on modern forms . . . Institutions which in the East were locally based and locally controlled became in the West reflections of the federal government. . . The government did not pursue pioneers west; it more often led them there. Anglo Americans did not compel the government to follow; instead the government guided and molded their settlement. The armies of federal government conquered the region, agents of the federal government explored it, federal officials administered it, and federal bureaucrats supervised the division and development of its resources.⁴⁹

The Bureau of Indian Affairs exemplified such a federal institution with significant local impact, and its leadership was appointed through the federal government. However, in 1866 during Woods' term in office, the Secretary of the Interior noted the failure of the Bureau stating that:

These Indians are now beyond the reach of the Indian bureau, and probably will never come under its control. The long-continued hostility existing between them and the whites has bitterly exasperated both, and there I no likelihood that they can ever live in peace.⁵⁰

The federal presence epitomized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs was deemed insufficient to handle the conflicts with the Native Americans. When local attempts to quell the conflicts proved ineffective, Woods called in additional forms of federal influence, diminishing state power and increasing federal power as seen in White's kindergarten theory. The strengthened federalized presence in Oregon during Woods' term can also be partially credited to the end of the Civil War and the retirement of the Oregon Volunteers. With local

49. White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*, 58.

50. House Executive Documents, 72.

resources exhausted from the war, regular U.S. Army troops were sent in to settle the Northern Paiute conflict.⁵¹ Woods himself announced to the Legislative Assembly in 1868 that under the circumstances, he could only appeal to the United States military authorities.⁵² The state of Oregon did not have the capacity to handle the conflict with the Northern Paiutes without the help of the federalized powers. However, this trend of dependency continued throughout the West, as political power in the states, local communities, and political parties were weak.⁵³ Woods' term in office not only marked the beginning of a devastating legacy of genocide in Oregon, but also the start of a strengthened federalized presence.

After the Snake War, the power of the government would continue to increase as the Bureau of Indian Affairs regained strength. The federal government concentrated the surviving Northern Paiute bands on the Malheur Reservation by executive order without a Senate-ratified treaty. The widespread corruption on the Malheur, and other, reservations in Oregon highlighted federal problems with leadership over both Native Americans and its own agents. Consequently, the management of the Malheur reservation continued to impinge on Northern Paiute tribal sovereignty.⁵⁴ Woods' term coincided with the start of the reservation system in central and eastern Oregon and the rampant corruption in their administration. The Secretary of the Interior noted in official reports the importance of more stringent laws punishing the vending of whiskey to Indians, the tampering and interfering with Indians on reservations, and the enticing of Indians to leave reservations

51. Clark and Clark, "William McKay," 128.

52. Message of Gov. George L. Woods to the Legislative Assembly, Fifth Regular Session, September 1868, Salem, Oregon, W.A. McPherson, State Printer, 1868.

53. White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*, 58.

54. *Ibid*, 94.

without the consent of the agent or superintendent in charge.⁵⁵ With local agents and settlers undermining Bureau of Indian Affairs leadership of the reservations, the Secretary of the Interior implored that the agents have the power of justices of the peace, in all cases arising under the laws of the United States upon reservations because the agents did not have means of prosecuting these cases.⁵⁶ As a result of increased problems arising on reservations, the government was forced to react through the strengthening of federal power as a means of better controlling the reservations.

Woods' administration also stressed need to assimilate Indians and protect federal wards, which further spurred the growth of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the state.⁵⁷ With new reservations being formed, more federal attention was needed for the maintenance of the system. As a result of the formation of new reservations, the government was able to obtain more land. The federal government's role in distributing lands meant that American citizens in the West felt the presence of the federal government far more directly than did citizens elsewhere.⁵⁸ Oregon and other western states, to this day, have more federally owned land than any other part of the United States. According to the Federal Research Service, as of February 2012 approximately 53 percent of the land in Oregon is federally owned.⁵⁹ In comparison, the percentages of federally owned land in Connecticut, Vermont, and Virginia are 7.6, 0.3, and 9.2 percent respectively. As a result of wars between the Native Americans and the settlers, more land was taken away from the Native American

55. House Executive Documents, 77.

56. *Ibid*, 77.

57. White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*, 112.

58. *Ibid*, 137.

59. Congressional Research Service, "Federal Land Ownership: Overview and Data: 2012," <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42346.pdf> (Accessed December 13, 2013).

communities and more land was taken under control by the US government, creating an immense federal presence unique to only Western states.

The third governor of Oregon, Governor Woods, served during a time of great change. While the nation was in the midst of Reconstruction, Woods was successful in initiating a history of genocide and federalized power in the state of Oregon. His Republican background enabled him to form a well-connected and powerful political network with the Johnson and Grant administrations, which enabled him to fortify the full force of federal power. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, famous for serving in Lincoln's cabinet, proved to be remarkably influential as Woods would never have been able to wage a war of extermination without his support. Woods' relationship with Andrew Johnson earned him the opportunity of career advancement, and Woods' later relationship with Ulysses S. Grant would offer Woods power in his fight against the Mormons in Utah.⁶⁰ Woods' connections would allow him to enlist the help of the US Army during the Snake War, prompting a strengthened federal presence in Oregon. As a result of the Snake War, hundreds upon hundreds of the Northern Paiute community would die, and the surviving bands endured forced removal from their traditional lands.

The legacy of wars between Oregon tribes and the federal government would not only lead to the decimation of countless communities, but also to the growing power of the federal government. Woods' term in office marked the start of stronger federalization in Oregon. The Bureau of Indian affairs would grow in size, and gain more attention from

60. Woods elaborates in his recollections about his conflicts with the Mormon community and his strong opposition to polygamy. As a result of the Governor's problems with the Mormon community, and his problems with the lack of Church vs. State in Utah, many people feared and resented Woods' power. A newspaper noted that, "the Mormons have a wholesome fear of the Governor. He has vetoed many of their pet schemes of legislation and commanded their respect by his honorable course, though there is no doubt but that there are many who would delight to destroy him." *The New Northwest*, July 19, 1872.

federal authorities. More Native American land would be taken away and held by the government. This history is evident today as over half the land in Oregon is federally owned.

A tree stump sits alone on the porch of the War Department. While it had witnessed the battles and triumphs of the Civil War, the bullets within the tree are equally significant. One of the bullets would reluctantly wind its way into the very hands of Governor Woods. Although the bullet was not his, nor did Woods deserve credit for there being bullets in the tree, through executive orders he was allowed to one home. Even with the initial refusal of the guard to remove the bullet from the tree, Secretary of War Stanton was able to procure the bullet for Woods. Similarly, Stanton was able to provide Woods with the political support needed during the Snake War. Through executive orders, Woods launched one of the most violent and deadliest campaigns against the Native American community. While the Civil War dominated the newspapers of the time, Woods' legacy is one not to be reduced to a stump and forgotten in the pages of history.

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Madeline Weissman

Disease and Space

**An Historical Epidemiology Investigating Northern Paiute
Cultural Patterns Pre and Post Reservation**

I. The Healer, Part I

The winds rustled the branches and he knew it was time. Leaving his small band behind, the Healer departed on horseback just before sunrise to follow the wind into the mountains. The wind had always been his power; it was a gift from his ancestors, rooted deeply in the earth and present in his spirit since before he was born. But just like any prodigy, his skill needed practice and understanding in order to master. With guidance and patience, he cultivated his skill. The wind, in return, gave him the ability to heal the sick. A member of his band had recently fallen ill and now the wind called him.

The wind guided him to the trees. He nimbly scaled the pines surpassing the limits of even the most skilled climbers, until he reached the highest peak. Harnessing his power, the trees began to move in the wind. He was in a complete trance as though in a call and response with the wind. The wind increased and he jumped.

He grabbed ahold of another pine, swaying for a moment until he jumped again. The Healer rode atop the timberline, as though galloping hundreds of feet above the ground. The wind was his power. It controlled him and he controlled it and together in well synchronized game, they played.

The power was alive. The Healer was alive.¹

1. Myra Johnson-Orange, informal interview, November 21, 2013. Story adapted from oral history with Myra Johnson-Orange, a Northern Paiute tribal elder. Her great, great grandfather,, Oytes, possessed the power to control the weather. According to Johnson-Orange, he would go to the tallest pine trees and ride them, jumping from tree to tree. Oytes' power is passed through generations.

II. Introduction

Epidemiology studies the patterns, causes, and effects of disease on a specific population. Studying epidemiology with an historic lens allows for contextualization of diseases within social and cultural factors. What otherwise would remain as a scientific and medical discourse can be opened up to a broader audience. The Northern Paiutes of Oregon provide a community in which to study historical epidemiology and the effects of diseases on a specific population.

Current scholarly literature focuses on West European infections among the “virgin soil” populations of the Americas, and how these had terrible demographic consequences, which eased the way for subsequent European domination of those continents.² However, the previous demographic mechanisms which aided this disaster have been unclear and unstudied. Current literature focuses on disease-induced population decline, but with little emphasis on the way in which location and movement of populations interacted with the spread of disease or how that contributed to population decline. In general, little has been studied about disease patterns within the Pacific Northwest and the effects on Northwest Native American tribes, specifically the Northern Paiute of Oregon. Within this historical epidemiology, this paper will not focus on the structures of the diseases themselves or the ways in which such diseases attack the body, but rather the ways in which they spread in relation to location and intertribal interactions within the case study of the Northern Paiute. This paper will assess cultural patterns, such as Paiute mobility and the ways in which this type of cultural idiosyncrasy

2. Anne Hardy, review of *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence: Introduced Infectious Diseases and Population Decline among Northwest Coast Indians, 1774-1874*, by Robert Boyd, *Medical History* 45, no. 3 (2001): 415.

affected disease once the Paiute were moved onto reservations. Building off of the Fortress of Vastness thesis proposed by historian James Gardner, this paper will argue that movement and space play major factors in the spread of disease.³ However, this paper will also use this theory of location and space to discuss the ways in which contact with disease differed by tribe, focusing on location along commercialization routes as a critical geographic component. Currently, Robert Boyd is credited with the most comprehensive, detailed monograph on the impact of imported diseases within a single region of North America.⁴ Commendably, Boyd focuses on Native American primary accounts, which this paper will elaborate.⁵ In contrast to Boyd, this paper will examine the correlation between traditional medicinal practices and spread of disease. The word “shaman” appears frequently when researching Native American medicine in early to mid-century anthropological and ethnographic scholarship, but this word is complicated due to its connotations of illegitimacy. This paper will address these complications and the effect of language when discussing culture. Boyd outlines an extensive and highly scientific interpretation of epidemiology within the Pacific Northwest, however, he fails to take into account the cultural factors, such as traditional Indian Medicine, or the impact of movement of Native Americans onto reservations.

Some of the unique challenges to studying the spread of disease among the Northern Paiute is that very little has been documented or written in regard to health or the introduction

3. James Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: A Hidden History of the Northern Paiute*, (Forthcoming, 2014).

4. Nancy Shoemaker, review of *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence: Introduced Infectious Diseases and Population Decline among Northwest Coast Indians, 1774-1874*, by Robert Boyd. *Ethnohistory* 48, no. 3 (2001): 518.

5. Robert Boyd, "Commentary on Early Contact-Era Smallpox in the Pacific Northwest," *Ethnohistory* 43, no. 2 (2006): 8.

and effect of epidemics within this population. Most of the research for this paper comes from conducting oral histories with specific Northern Paiute community members as well studying primary sources, such as original letters written to the government and statistical health reports compiled by reservation agency staff. Much of the research comprises secondary sources, which focus on epidemiology and “shamanistic” practices. However, many of these secondary sources need to be assessed critically and carefully due to their predominately colonial bias. Other sources for this research include essays, biographies, and oral accounts that focus on logistics, including maps depicting the creation of and movement onto reservations. Based on the nature of these sources, the arguments made in this paper will be highly inferential, focusing on correlations and possible explanations for disease patterns. By focusing on conducting collaborative community based research and emphasizing a decolonization of much of the current literature, the hope of this paper is to make meaning in the present for both Paiute and non-Native American community members. The goal is to create a tangible reality of present life in which community members can interact with the research of this paper.

The Northern Paiute are a Native American tribe that originally come from the Great Basin, which spans across areas of California, Idaho, Nevada, and much of eastern Oregon. Historically, the Northern Paiute were a semi-nomadic population, mostly isolated and often exposed to harsh weather conditions of the Great Basin. Currently, many Northern Paiute

reside on the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation with the Sehaptin and Wasqu Tribes, which is located in north central Oregon.⁶

Similar to the history of many Native American tribes, Euroamerican diseases devastated the Northern Paiute, however the spread of disease and timing followed a different trajectory than other tribes. The isolation of the Northern Paiute greatly delayed their contact with disease, as opposed to the Plateau and Coastal Tribes who lived along major commercialization routes.⁷ Movement onto reservations, and subsequent suppression of Indian Medicine, marks the moment in which epidemics truly started to affect Paiute population deleteriously.

Focusing on the interaction between disease and the idiosyncratic cultural patterns of the Northern Paiute, such as location, movement, isolation, and traditional medicinal practices, creates an historical epidemiology and helps to understand how and why disease only started to affect the Northern Paiute once they were forced onto reservations.

III. Pre Concentration onto Reservations

The Northern Paiutes have a long history of displacement from their territory followed by movement to and from reservations around the Pacific Northwest. The Northern Paiute have lived on at least the Malheur, Yakima, and Warm Springs Reservations between the 1870s and 1890s. The Northern Paiute moved onto the Malheur Reservation in 1872, followed by displacement onto the Yakima Reservation in 1879, and finally movement and dispersion back to the Northern Great Basin at the Warm Springs Reservation in 1887 and the Burns-Paiute

6. Laura Berg, *The first Oregonians* (Portland: Oregon Council for the Humanities, 2007); Myra Johnson-Orange, informal interview by author, November 21, 2013.

7. William G. Loy, Stuart Allan, and Clyde P. Patton, *Atlas of Oregon*. (Eugene: University of Oregon, 2007); Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, forthcoming 2014.

Colony in 1896.⁸ The clearest introduction to Euroamerican diseases for Native American tribes came from face-to-face contact with white settlers, who either contracted or carried the bacteria.⁹ The first encounter with white settlers in the Great Basin occurred sometime before the 1850s. Zanjani describes the first white settler making one of the initial movements into the Great Basin in 1826 while Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins describes the first Northern Paiute contact with white settlers sometime after 1844.¹⁰ Other sources claim Jedediah Smith was the first to cross the Great Basin between 1822 and 1831, however after the War of 1812, documented presence in this region dwindled.¹¹ Despite contact with white settlers, the Northern Paiute were not affected by epidemic diseases until after 1872, which marks their first movement to the Malheur Reservation.¹² It would seem that the unexposed populations of the Great Basin would have been immunologically vulnerable to the rapid spread of epidemic diseases. Boyd even argues that smallpox spreads most readily in land where no contact has ever been made with the disease before, and thus the people of that land lack a developed immunity. He also underscores that continuous and denser populations specifically face the

8. Records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1848-1873 (M2) National Archives and Records Administration; James Gardner, Map, "1872 Malheur Reservation Created by Executive Order in Historic Paiute Territory; 1883-1889 Malheur Reservation Terminated," 2013.

9. Marilyn Dunlap Couture, "Recent and Contemporary Foraging Practices of the Harney Valley Paiute" (master's thesis, Portland State University, 1978), 23.

10. Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (1883), 5; Sally Zanjani, *Sarah Winnemucca* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 12. Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins was a Northern Paiute who married a white man and authored a biography of her experience with the Paiute.

11. Loy, Allan, and Patton, *Atlas of Oregon*, 13.

12. While this has not been verified, there is no documentation of epidemic diseases among the Northern Paiute before this time. It is an assumption that the Paiute's first contact came when they moved to reservations.

most threat.¹³ The *Atlas of Oregon* helps demonstrate why the Northern Paiute territory escaped Euroamerican epidemic diseases such as smallpox, malaria, influenza, dysentery, and measles during much of the 19th century by showing geographically that the denser populations located along commercial routes were the most effected by epidemics. The Northern Paiute's dispersed and relatively isolated population prevented bacterial and viral diseases from thriving in Northern Paiute territory.¹⁴ Despite the increased susceptibility of disease due to the virgin soil and lack of immunity to diseases within of the Great Basin, the first records of Northern Paiute epidemics emerge almost 30 years after the initial contact with white settlers as mentioned by Hopkins due to distance from commercialization routes, the semi-nomadic lifestyle and population dispersion of the Northern Paiute.¹⁵

Historically, the Northern Paiute territory covered most of central, eastern, and southern Oregon. To the west of the Northern Paiute territory were the Northwest Coast Tribes, which bordered on the Pacific Ocean. To the north of the Northern Paiute territory, covering the border between what is now Oregon and Washington were the Columbia River and Plateau Tribes. The map of these tribal territories illustrates that the Columbia River runs directly through the Columbia River and Plateau Tribe territories, continuing through the Northwest Coast Tribe territory, eventually reaching the Pacific Ocean.¹⁶ Both the Columbia

13. Robert Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence: Introduced Infectious Diseases and Population Decline among Northwest Coast Indians, 1774-1874* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 17.

14. Loy, Allan, and Patton, *Atlas of Oregon*, 16-17.

15. Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence*, 21; Loy, Allan, and Patton, *Atlas of Oregon*, 16-17.

16. James Gardner, Map, "1805 - Indian Tribes and Territories of Central and Eastern Oregon, with Selected Citations," 2013; James Gardner, Map, "Cultural Boundaries of the Pacific Northwest," 2013.

River and the Pacific coastline stood as prominent exploration and later trade routes for white settlers. The first white explorer to enter and survey the “River of the West” was Robert Gray in 1792, who named the river the Columbia after his ship.¹⁷ After Gray, Lewis and Clark’s expedition along the Columbia River immediately marked that water route as one of the most documented and obvious paths for exploration and emigration, and established the route for the end of Oregon Trail. With the increasing traffic in overland settler-colonizers in the 1840s and 1850s, this course became a vector for the spread of disease.¹⁸ In addition to the Columbia River, the Oregon coastline also became a prominent commercialization hub. David Thompson, a British trader, by way of the Columbia River reached Astoria along the coastline in 1811. John Jacob Astor founded the eponymous Astoria that year as the Pacific headquarters of his American Fur Company.¹⁹ Only the movement of people or goods along the Columbia River and coastal ports could provide an easy path for infections of diseases like smallpox and malaria. Smallpox, influenza and measles spread through face to face contact, typically through droplets from the nose, mouth, or throat; saliva; or infected clothing and bed sheets. Malaria is spread via mosquitoes, which live mostly in water-dense areas such as the Columbia River.²⁰ Indeed, the tribes located along these commercialization routes suffered the affects of contact with Euroamerican diseases. The decade of 1770 was one of the most devastating decades of

17. Loy, Allan, and Patton.,*Atlas of Oregon*,13.

18. D. W. Meinig, *The Great Columbia Plain: A Historical Geography, 1805-1910* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), 32.

19. Loy, Allan, and Patton, *Atlas of Oregon*, 13.

20. David C. Dugdale III,, “Flu,” nih.gov.; Jatin M. Vyas, “Smallpox,” nih.gov.; Neil K. Kaneshiro, “Measles,” nih.gov.; David C. Dugdale III, “Malaria,” nih.gov.

mortality due to the smallpox epidemic within the Pacific Northwest, with 1775 being the first direct contact with Euroamericans.²¹ The maps provided trace the greatest disease mortality in Oregon between 1775-1853, where unsurprisingly the regions affected are those along the water routes. Other sources claim the first appearance of an epidemic occurred the summer of 1830 along the banks of the lower Columbia River, hitting the Central Valley of California in 1833, incapacitating most whites and decimating the native population. Additional epidemics followed, including smallpox which touched the Columbia River region in 1847 and in the same year cholera hit the Humboldt River region.²² When coming from the desert regions of the Great Basin to meet tribes in the Humboldt River region, Hopkins reported “their crying and wailing could be heard from a long way off . . . Everyone was in mourning because whole families had died of typhus. The Paiutes thought that the whites must have poisoned the Humboldt River.”²³ By 1853, smallpox devastated the Plateau and Coastal regions, yet remained contained within those areas; the Great Basin stood untouched.²⁴

Before their movement onto reservations, Northern Paiutes led a semi-nomadic life, covering a vast and largely isolated territory. James Gardner argues that the relative isolation due to the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Paiutes protected them from epidemic diseases that wrecked havoc to other tribes located on more prominent commercialization and exploration

21. Boyd, "Commentary on Early Contact-Era Smallpox in the Pacific Northwest," 6.

22. Couture, "Recent and Contemporary Foraging Practices of the Harney Valley Paiute," 23-24.

23. Gae Whitney Canfield, *Sarah Winnemucca of the Northern Paiutes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 9.

24. James Gardner, Map, "Area of Greatest Disease Mortality in Oregon 1775-1853," 2013; Loy, Allan, and Patton, *Atlas of Oregon*, 16-17.

routes such as those in Western Oregon, Willamette Valley, and along the Columbia River.²⁵ Similarly, Park describes the traditional Northern Paiute semi-nomadic lifestyle, writing that “for the most part families roamed the country as a single unit, only coming together as a large population several times a year for communal undertakings such as large hunting parties or inter-tribal raids.”²⁶ Gardner also presents a Fortress of Vastness theory, arguing that in addition to isolation from other Paiute bands and other bordering tribes, Paiute territory was so large and expansive that it prevented white settlers and American soldiers from reaching them. Gardner explains that “horses and men became too exhausted by their attempted expeditions through the northern great basin.”²⁷ Other sources also mention that Lewis and Clark avoided the plains due to its hostile soil and expansive emptiness, thus avoiding any face to face contact with the Northern Paiute.²⁸ Their semi-nomadic lifestyle in conjunction with the vast and difficult geography of their territory insulated the Northern Paiute from contact with disease.

Indian Medicine specifically relied on this semi-nomadic lifestyle, and the seasonal round enabled Indian Doctors to access needed plants, roots, berries, meats, and herbs.²⁹ In doing so they covered at least a third of the state of Oregon. The “Dreamer” Oytes, was a Northern Paiute powerful spiritual leader and medicine in the latter-half of the 19th century, and advocate of resistance against white colonization. Oytes gathered medicine from the

25. Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: A Hidden History of the Northern Paiute*.

26. Willard Z. Park, "Pavotso Shamanism" *American Anthropologist* 36, no. 1 (1934): 98.

27. Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: A Hidden History of the Northern Paiute*.

28. Meinig, *The Great Columbia Plain*, 29.

29. The term “Indian Doctors” is the preferred language of the Northern Paiute tribal elders interviewed for this research.

mountains by horseback for two weeks as part of his collection of herbs.³⁰ The healing powers of the Indian Doctors were associated with a connection to environmental components such as the ability to cause thunder, to bring rain, wind, and cloud bursts.³¹ Indian Doctors were not arbitrarily chosen for their path, but rather were made aware of their abilities through their dreams.³² During unsought dreams, animals such as an eagle, owl, deer, antelope, bear, mountain sheep, or snake come to a person numerous times, after which he knows that he will become an Indian Doctor.³³ Medicinal practices included a combination of prayers, songs, rocks used for healing, and traditional pharmaceuticals, with the most frequent practice being the extraction of blood in order to suck poison out of the body.³⁴ Indian Doctors deeply relied and greatly utilized the expansive land, which worked well with the Paiute semi-nomadic lifestyle. Indian Medicine and the ability to heal diseases changed drastically once the Northern Paiute were moved onto reservations.

IV. Post Concentration onto Reservations

With increasing amounts of white settlers coveting the Great Basin as potential land for agriculture, accompanied by United States military involvement, the Malheur Reservation was created by executive order in 1872. The Reservation stood as a designated location for the

30. Johnson-Orange, interview.

31. Harold Olofson, "Northern Paiute Shamanism Revisited," *Anthropos* 74, no. 1/2 (1979): 14.

32. *Ibid.*, 12.

33. Park, "Paviotso Shamanism," 98-113; Paul W. Reeve, *Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners, and Southern Paiutes* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 99.

34. Myra Johnson Orange, informal interview, November 21, 2013.; Olofson, Harold. 1979. "Northern Paiute Shamanism Revisited". *Anthropos*. 74 (1/2): 14.; Wilson Wewa, informal interview, November 13, 2013.; Oral history conducted with Wilson Wewa who is a Northern Paiute tribe member and very knowledgeable about traditional medicine.

Northern Paiute to reside in order to protect the interests of the U.S. government and its settlers.³⁵ While Northern Paiute territory originally covered most of the state of Oregon, the Malheur Reservation was confined to about 1/18 of their previous land.³⁶ The Northern Paiutes as well as the Bannock and Shoshoni Indians moved onto the reservation in eastern Oregon.³⁷ This dislocation marked the beginning of Paiute movement to and from reservations in the Pacific Northwest, which in addition to contact with other tribes on the reservation, created an atmosphere primed for epidemic diseases to emerge within the Northern Paiute community.

Lack of proper public health and sanitation programs on the reservation combined with drastic increases in population density intensified the Northern Paiute vulnerability to epidemic diseases. With close physical contact representing a primary cause of spreading diseases such as smallpox, measles, influenza, and dysentery, the compression of people in a confined space increased susceptibility to these diseases.³⁸ Highly compressed populations are much more vulnerable to epidemics than less dense populations. Widely dispersed bands were generally less affected by the disease, and so moving several tribes together on a very small reservation created an atmosphere in which disease could spread easily.³⁹ The Malheur Reservation was 2285 square miles with over 2,000 people, with most residents living in close proximity to the

35. Berg, Laura. 2007. *The first Oregonians*. Portland, Or: Oregon Council for the Humanities. 220.

36. James Gardner, 1872 Malheur Reservation Created by Executive Order in Historic Paiute Territory; 1883-1889 Malheur Reservation Terminated, 2013.

37. Records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1848-1873 (M2). Inventory.

38. Dugdale III, David C. "Flu." nih.gov.; Vyas, Jatin M. "Smallpox." nih.gov.; Kaneshiro, Neil K, "Measles." nih.gov.; Dugdale III, David C. "Malaria." nih.gov.; Dysentery is often a symptom in addition to cause of previously named diseases.

39. Loy, William G., Stuart Allan, and Clyde P. Patton. 2001. *Atlas of Oregon*. Eugene: University of Oregon. 16-17.

agency headquarters.⁴⁰ Moreover, the Malheur Agency thrust the Northern Paiutes into nearly daily interaction with federal officials and employees, including the reservation agents, school teachers, blacksmiths, farmers, and visiting traders and soldiers. For a tribe habituated to cyclical movement and relative isolation, the immune systems of the Northern Paiute were underprepared for constant exposure to a much denser population with new diseases that they encountered on the reservations. Sanitation and population reports from the reservation agents indicate that diseases began to effect the Native Americans.⁴² Sanitation reports from the Malheur Reservation report cases of dysentery and fever, both indicators of influenza.⁴³ For a previously semi-nomadic tribe that relied on a vast territory in which to roam, compression to a small reservation had major effects on community health.

Following the Bannock War of 1878 in which some bands of the Northern Paiute participated, the federal government dissolved the Malheur Agency and exiled the Northern Paiute to the Yakima Reservation in Washington Territory via a forced march in the dead of winter. During their eight years of brutal internment on the Yakima Reservation, the agency failed to provide the Northern Paiute with adequate supplies, both medicinally as well as basic survival amenities. In 1887 the federal government allowed Chief Leggins to begin leading Northern Paiutes out of the Yakima Reservation and back to Oregon and northern Nevada,

40. Couture, "Recent and Contemporary Foraging Practices of the Harney Valley Paiute," 14.

42. Superintendents' annual narrative and statistical reports from field jurisdictions of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1907-1938 M1011. Roll 164, 166, and Letter by Agent James Kirk. In 1928 the Indians attempted to integrate with the Burns public school. They were refused on the grounds that they had trachoma, tuberculosis, and venereal diseases.⁴² Sanitation reports from the Chemewa and Warm Springs schools report cases of scarlet fever, smallpox, trachoma, and typhoid fever among the Native American students.

43. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Record Group 75. Records of the Malheur Agency. National Archives and Records Administration. Seattle, WA. Box 1. Folder 2. "Monthly Sanitary Reports, 1877."

including the Warm Springs Reservation and Burns Paiute Colony in Oregon, and the Pyramid Lake and Walker River Reservations in Nevada.⁴⁴ Documentation of both the Yakima reservation and the journey back to the Great Basin show the destitute conditions. The Northern Paiutes suffered from cold, hunger, and sickness, with the first two exacerbating the last. Letter from agents on the Yakima reservation describe the thinly clad and highly exposed Native Americans suffering from cold, sickness, and hunger. The agent writing mentions the prevalence of diseases such as scarlet fever, diphtheria, and measles.⁴⁵ Johnson-Orange recalled that she had never heard of the Northern Paiutes receiving smallpox blankets, emphasizing the lack of resources provided by the reservations, as well as the absence to her knowledge of the intentional use of disease as a weapon of conquest or colonization.⁴⁶ Many Paiute ended up returning to Harney County in the Great Basin in 1887, where they were given land allotments. However, the soil on the allotments was alkaline and the land was covered with sage and scrub brush. Without any water for irrigation, farming on it was bound to fail.⁴⁷ Sarah Winnemucca also describes the failures of agriculture and proper land: "The bad flour made us all sick. My poor people died off very fast."⁴⁸ At the Pyramid Lake Agency in Northern Nevada, an epidemic of measles from infected cast-off clothing hit those who remained. Winnemucca describes that the agent at Pyramid Lake did nothing for these sick Indians and

44. Berg, *The First Oregonians*, 200.

45. Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917 (RG 94). Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), 1881-1889 M689. Roll 56, National Archives and Records Administration.

46. Johnson-Orange, interview by author.

47. Berg, *The first Oregonians*, 49.

48. Winnemucca Hopkins, *Life Among the Piutes*, 213.

even refused to reimburse an army doctor who had brought vaccine to the reservation. More than one hundred individuals died on the Pyramid Lake Reservation, and about the same number died at the Walker River Reservation from ague, typhoid fever, and consumption.⁴⁹ Agent Douglass spoke to the separate Paiute bands, trying to convince them to come to Pyramid Lake. However, his efforts were not successful because the Paiutes “could not expect to find better conditions on the reservation.”⁵⁰ When Major Green came to investigate the Paiutes’ condition at the Malheur Reservation, Chief Egan told Green that no blankets were available at the agency, nor clothing of any kind, and people were very cold. Egan told Green that they had been promised sugar for the sick, but received none.⁵¹ Problems on the reservations arose as a result of poor management, leading to a failure to provide proper resources to ensure the health of the Northern Paiute.⁵²

The living conditions on the reservations contributed to the increase in contraction of and failure to control spread of disease. The reservations were often described as dirty. Nannie Alderson describes the American West in 1883: “Everyone in the country lived out of cans . . . and you would see a great heap of them outside every little shack.”⁵³ Before reservations, the Northern Paiute did not need to worry about waste management because living in a small group or as a singular family that constantly moved locations, waste management was not an

49. Canfield, *Sarah Winnemucca of the Northern Paiutes*, 58-59.

50. *Ibid.*, 62.

51. *Ibid.*, 114.

52. Couture, *Recent and Contemporary Foraging Practices of the Harney Valley Paiute*, 14.

53. Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: Norton, 1987), 17-18. While Limerick describes a settlers’ town in 1883, it can be extrapolated to include most living situations in the West during this time.

issue.⁵⁴ However, movement onto the reservations exposed the lack of public health and sanitation programs. Waste, as described by Limerick, acquired on the reservations due to living in a static location. While the reservations were not equipped to properly dispose of accumulated trash, the Northern Paiute were also unaccustomed to stationary living and intensive, sedentary, agricultural farming. The Paiutes who did not who did not have homes on the allotments in Harney County near the cattle and lumber town of Burns lived outside of the town in makeshift tents alongside the city dump in a community called Old Camp. They lived in a wretched condition, without sufficient food, clothing or a place to live.⁵⁵ Displaced from their homeland, the Northern Paiute lived in very poor conditions and endured the hostility of the townspeople.⁵⁶

A lack of connection to the land led to increased distress among the Northern Paiutes. Current studies show that poor social support can lead to increased risk for adverse health outcomes.⁵⁷ This increased stress can be described as allostatic load, which is the cumulative physiological burden imposed through life's demands, which include responses to chronic stress and stress related to changes in health behavior.⁵⁸ Compression onto reservations, which occupied a much smaller area of land than original Northern Paiute territory, led to a large decrease in the availability of natural resources used for collecting medicine and maintaining

54. This argument is an extrapolation based on logical guesses about semi-nomadic lifestyle.

55. Couture, "Recent and Contemporary Foraging Practices of the Harney Valley Paiute," 14.

56. Berg, *The First Oregonians*, 49.

57. P. Schnorpfeil, A Noll, R Schulze, U Ehlert, K Frey, and JE Fischer, "Allostatic Load and Work Conditions," *Social Science & Medicine* 57, no. 4 (1982): 647.

58. *Ibid.*, 654.

medicinal powers, which prohibited the Indian Doctors from fully realizing their ability to heal. The agencies noted their unsuccessful attempt to detribalize, individualize, and convert the Indians into the Yeoman farmer model, because the Northern Paiute were not farmers, they were hunters, gatherers, and fishers.⁵⁹ Letters written from agents on the Warm Springs Reservation describe the Paiute's unwillingness to live off of the land.⁶⁰ Other letters describe the distress felt by the Northern Paiute, noting the sadness and prevalence of crying on the Reservations.⁶¹ Once the Northern Paiutes moved onto the reservations, settlers moved into bottom lands near streams and created cattle and horse ranches. This was where medicine and herbs were historically gathered, however, cattle are very destructive on river banks and riparian areas and consequently deteriorated the landscape.⁶² The Euroamerican intrusion into Northern Paiute space was devastating for more than its destruction of land. It was an intrusion into their space and an affront to the Paiute identity that was bound up in that space.⁶³ The ability to move freely over large landscapes was vital to Northern Paiute survival and the geography of the Paiute territory undoubtedly contributed to the richness of the food resource base formerly located there, which was taken away once they moved onto reservations.⁶⁴ The

59. Couture, "Recent and Contemporary Foraging Practices of the Harney Valley Paiute." 14.

60. Superintendents' Annual Narrative and Statistical Reports from Field Jurisdictions of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1907-1938 M1011. Letter by Agent 5.

61. Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1881: Oregon Superintendency, 1842-1880 M234. Rolls 613.

62. Wilson Wewa, interview by author, November 13, 2013.

63. Reeve, *Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners, and Southern Paiutes*, 14.

64. Berg, *The First Oregonians*, 45; Couture, "Recent and Contemporary Foraging Practices of the Harney Valley Paiute," 27.

Paiutes built significant value into their space, which Couture bolsters by writing that “to understand Paiute Indian culture, one must comprehend the Indian concept of being attached to a commonly held piece of ground without the concept of private ownership to the exclusion of others.”⁶⁵ A dislocation from their land not only diminished the resources of Indian Doctors but it also created great stress from a lack of connection to the land.

V. The Clash of Traditional and Western Medicine

In addition to the geographical factors that contributed to a spread of disease within the Paiute community after movement onto reservations, the clash between traditional Indian Medicine and reservation officials and suppression of practices of Indian Medicine exacerbated the spread of epidemic diseases among the Northern Paiute. While experienced and successful in their treatment of ailments prior to the reservations, such as broken bones or fainting spells, the Indian Doctors and their traditional medicines were unable to cure the epidemic diseases present on the reservations. Indian Doctors were completely unprepared for epidemics, such as smallpox, because they had never encountered those diseases before.⁶⁶ Wewa says that “medicines weren't able to cure smallpox and diphtheria. The common cold affected some tribes very negatively and wiped out some native populations.”⁶⁷ Johnson-Orange also noted that “[The Northern Paiute] were sicker because they weren't able to practice the usual medicines; there was a lack of understanding of disease.”⁶⁸ Meanwhile, the physicians on the

65. Couture, “Recent and Contemporary Foraging practices of the Harney Valley Paiute,” 8; Reeve, *Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners, and Southern Paiutes*, 11.

66. Johnson-Orange, interview by author.

67. Wewa, interview by author.

68. Johnson-Orange, interview by author.

Warm Springs Reservation describe the traditional sweat-houses of the Native Americans as breeding grounds for disease, noting the savageness and superstitions they associated with traditional Indian Medicine.⁶⁹

The interaction with the physicians on the reservations created tension among the Northern Paiute. Olofson includes first-hand accounts of Northern Paiute encounters with dreams and medicinal powers in which William Paddy says that the Indian Doctors were able to cure ailments that physicians on the reservations could not.⁷⁰ Canfield also writes that “most of the Indians preferred the remedies of their own medicine men.”⁷¹ Letters written on the Warm Springs Reservation acknowledges that immunizations were not popular among Native Americans.⁷² The tension between the physicians and the Indian Doctors did not help the spread of disease on the reservations.

In addition to tension with the reservation physicians, suppression of Indian Medicine increased stress and susceptibility to diseases. The federal government and the reservation agents feared the use of traditional medicine and regarded it as sorcery. In addition to their healing powers, many medicine men had great political influence which also worried the government. The U.S. outlawed Indian gatherings after Wounded Knee in 1890. The Indian police would disband ceremonies and letters were sent to healers on reservation telling them

69. Superintendents' annual narrative and statistical reports from field jurisdictions of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1907-1938 M1011. Roll 166, Letter from Agent Jason Wheeler.

70. Olofson, "Northern Paiute Shamanism Revisited," 20. Olofson quotes William Paddy, a northern Paiute who spent a large amount of time at Pyramid Lake.

71. Canfield, *Sarah Winnemucca of the Northern Paiutes*, 114.

72. Superintendents' annual narrative and statistical reports from field jurisdictions of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1907-1938 M1011. Roll 166.

to cease “heathen practices” with threats that they would send the police to handcuff and jail them. Reservation agents proscribed Indian gathering after Wounded Knee because the military feared that such communal actions would foment rebellion. Indian Doctors had great political and spiritual influence over the people, and chiefs on the reservations often consulted the Indian Doctors whom were believed to wield the power to control the weather and hypnotize the food sources in order to bring them within distance for the hunters. These Indian Doctors and their practices were subdued by the Indian Police--Native Americans that were influenced by the reservation agents. These suppressive interactions forced many traditional practices into hiding.⁷³ These practices were highly discouraged because the white men were afraid of the medicine people’s powers, often calling it sorcery or black magic.⁷⁴ Oytes, a medicine man, was angered by the arbitrary treatment of his people by various Indian agents. These agents and the military watched Oytes closely because they feared his influence among the Paiutes and thought that while he was doctoring his people, he was trying to recruit some of them to go to war against the whites.⁷⁵ The fear of the influence of Indian Doctors led to a suppression of their practices by the U.S. government and reservation agents. This suppression of traditional practices augmented the already dire health conditions present on the reservations.

73. Wewa, interview by author.

74. Johnson-Orange, interview by author.

75. Berg, *The First Oregonians*, 47.

VI. Northern Paiute Today: Aftermaths of Disease on Population

The population devastation from disease is still present today. Johnson-Orange says that the Northern Paiute only have “10 percent of the remaining of people that once were,” emphasizing the population destruction as a genocide. She blames the concept of Manifest Destiny as the worst thing that could have happened.⁷⁶

Despite the destruction from disease, “the Paiute people aren’t history - they still know how to use the land.”⁷⁷ There are still people today that practice those traditional healing traditions. In 1978 the Indian Religious Freedom Act opened the door for the Northern Paiute to overcome restrictions from the federal government to practice religious ceremonies, including Indian medicine. Currently on reservations, physicians refer people to traditional practitioners and herbal medicines are used cure ailments that white medicine cannot. More than just psychological or placebo effect, Wewa knows of enough instances from his own experiences that it makes him believe that people are actually cured of illnesses by using traditional healers. Today, Wewa’s family relies on him to act as a doctor using knowledge and practices that have been shared by ancestors and relatives. He knows it must work because they keep coming back year after year, and because there are no after-effects of traditional medicine. Today the tribes still practice traditional medicine, however most people would tell you that the Northern Paiute do not do that anymore. In other words there is not a formal profession position or title labeled “Shaman/Medicine Man/Healer,” but many families seek

76. Johnson-Orange, interview by author.

77. Ibid.

prayer, sing songs, and use traditional medicine. Indian Medicine is a facet of culture that the Northern Paiute are still holding on to.⁷⁸

However, Johnson-Orange describes a different perspective of Indian Medicine than Wilson. She says that nobody practices Indian Medicine anymore in the Paiute culture and that is largely forgotten. Despite the inherited power, Indian Doctors need to be groomed to control power, so if no one is trained and mentored then the practice is forgotten. Moreover, the dominant culture discouragement of the grooming and practicing of Indian Medicine has interrupted the inter-generational learning. Johnson-Orange explains that despite having the power, it remains “dormant” if not groomed.⁷⁹ Couture bolsters this argument by claiming a number of native plants were used for medicinal purposes including wap and sawabi for cold and flu symptoms. Wodaa kwasiba was applied topically to sores and wounds. However, many of the healing remedies, including mixtures and combinations of various plant parts, remain a secret among the elders, and this information is not readily shared with the younger generation.⁸⁰

Population decrease due to Euroamerican diseases, dislocation from their land, interruption of traditional seasonal rounds, and suppression of Indian Medicine represent one aspect of the overall devastation endured by the Northern Paiute. The three tribes that

78. Wewa, interview by author.

79. Johnson-Orange, interview by author.

80. Couture, “Recent and Contemporary Foraging Practices of the Harney Valley Paiute,” 36.

compromise the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs have endured, and emerged from hardship and separation from vast homelands and traditional livelihoods.⁸¹

VII. Conclusion

It is important that we study this particular historical time period because of its relevance not only to the continued history of the Northern Paiute, but to all Oregonians. It is crucial to recognize the devastation from white settler colonization, which includes the introduction of epidemic diseases—an critical facet of the broader genocide of war, slavery, and removal from which the Northern Paiute population is still recovering. Looking at history through an epidemiological lens helps to chip away at only part of the larger picture, which is a story of destruction. The creation of an anti-colonial history allows for grieving, which in turn allows for reconciliation. This work is more of a reconciliation project than a history of disease.

VIII. The Healer, Part II

200 years later the wind continues to sweep up the dust and rustle the branches of the tallest pines, calling out to the Healer. But no one responds to the untamed wind. Without training to control the wind, the practice is forgotten and will remain that way unless the ancestral knowledge, accumulated by past Healers is passed down to the next generation. The power, while still present, remains dormant and hidden deep inside the human spirit.

81. Berg, *The First Oregonians*, 198.

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