

INTER-TRIBAL DYNAMICS OF THE WARM SPRINGS AND  
GRAND RONDE RESERVATIONS: A HISTORICAL  
LEGACY OF DISCRIMINATION, PREJUDICE, AND  
SETTLER-COLONIALISM

by

CLARA GORMAN

A THESIS

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Historical Legacy of Discrimination, Prejudice, and Settler-Colonialism

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Kevin Hatfield

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Jennifer O'Neal

Located in the Northern Great Basin and Western Slope regions of Oregon respectively, the Warm Springs Reservation and the Grand Ronde Reservation are prime examples of how historically different tribes are forced to live together as a sovereign nation under the umbrella of a representative confederation. By focusing on inter-tribal dynamics of both the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, my research seeks to determine the historical impact 19<sup>th</sup> century settler-colonialism has had on shaping contemporary inter-tribal relations and counter the widespread assumption that all participating tribes of a confederation receive equal representation.

Framed through a lens of decolonizing methodology and employing a method of oral history, I center my research on a collection of oral testimonies and narratives of tribal elders and members of the Northern Paiute and Grand Ronde communities. Combined with analysis of documentary evidence including geographic maps, the

Museum at Warm Springs, the Warm Springs Tribal newspaper, the Grand Ronde Tribal newspaper, and the cultural districting of each Reservation, I examine the cultural, social, and political dynamics that operate between the distinct tribal communities within the geographic borders of each reservation. Furthermore, I conduct my research and draw my conclusions within the framework lens of a colonial system forcibly imposed upon tribal land and its Native people. Thus, the underlying goal of this paper is to give a voice to and record an oral history narrative of the historically oppressed, discriminated against, and forcibly colonized communities of the Warm Springs and Grand Ronde reservations.

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to thank all the tribal community members who have graciously given their time, enthusiasm, and voices to this project: Myra Johnson-Orange, Wilson Wewa, David Lewis, Brenda Scott, Francis Wewa Allen, Geraldine Jim, Rosie Smith, Bucky Holiday, Chris Mercier, Francis Severson, Ray Blacketer, Marta Clifford, Dell Dickison, the entire Northern Paiute community at Warm Springs, and the entire Grand Ronde community. Their willingness to express and share their personal narratives has allowed my research to flourish, and their steadfast dedication to the movement of decolonizing Native history will help to alter the existing historical narrative so that it may reflect the historical truth from the Native perspective.

I would like to recognize James Gardner, who has pioneered the field of decolonizing the Northern Paiute historical narrative. I would greatly like to thank my advisors, Professors Kevin Hatfield and Jennifer O'Neal who have introduced me to the field of Indigenous Studies, as well as Professors Melissa Graboyes and Lindsay Braun who have introduced me to the field of historical research. Their constant support and guidance throughout this entire research project has allowed me to cultivate an intellectual space within which to conduct original historical research with the express aim of giving back to both the Native and academic communities.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation and the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program for their generous VPRI fellowship award. The fellowship has allowed me to travel to the Warm Springs Reservation several times over the course of the last summer to attend a variety of different cultural events and conduct numerous in-person interviews. I was

also able to intimately explore the geography of the Warm Springs Reservation, tour the Museum at Warm Springs on two separate occasions, and spend time in the University of Oregon's Special Collections and University Archives. I would also like to acknowledge the University of Oregon and the Clark Honors College for providing me with the opportunity and support to successfully conduct my research project.

Lastly, I would like to thank my friends for their constant support and my family for their unconditional love; my mother Katherine, my father David, and my sister Leila.

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## Introduction

*“Before the coming of the white man, there were peaceful feelings among the tribes that are now, what I call, inter-tribal racism... [For] there is strength in words because we have always been an oral people.”*

– Myra Johnson-Orange<sup>1</sup>

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The Native community of Oregon has always been and continues to be an oppressed and marginalized group of people. Historically, as author James Gardner narrates, particular Oregon tribes, such as the Northern Paiute, have faced undocumented levels of inter-tribal prejudice, while as a collective people, Native communities have been forced to suffer the lasting impacts of 19<sup>th</sup> century settler-colonialism.<sup>2</sup>

This study as a whole examines the ways in which Oregon’s tribal history of the Western Slope and Northern Great Basin regions, specifically the impact and legacy of settler-colonialism, has shaped and characterized contemporary inter-tribal dynamics within the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. These two confederations and the confederated reservations they inhabit serve as my case studies through which I examine a “cause-and-effect” phenomenon of 19<sup>th</sup> century settler-colonialism. Both the Warm Springs Reservation and the Grand Ronde Reservation, whose geographic locations are shown in the map below (figure 1), are

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<sup>1</sup> Myra Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, Warm Springs Reservation, October 15, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> James Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: The Hidden History of the Northern Paiutes* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press), 3.

prime examples of how historically different tribes are forced to live together as a sovereign nation under the umbrella of a representative confederation.

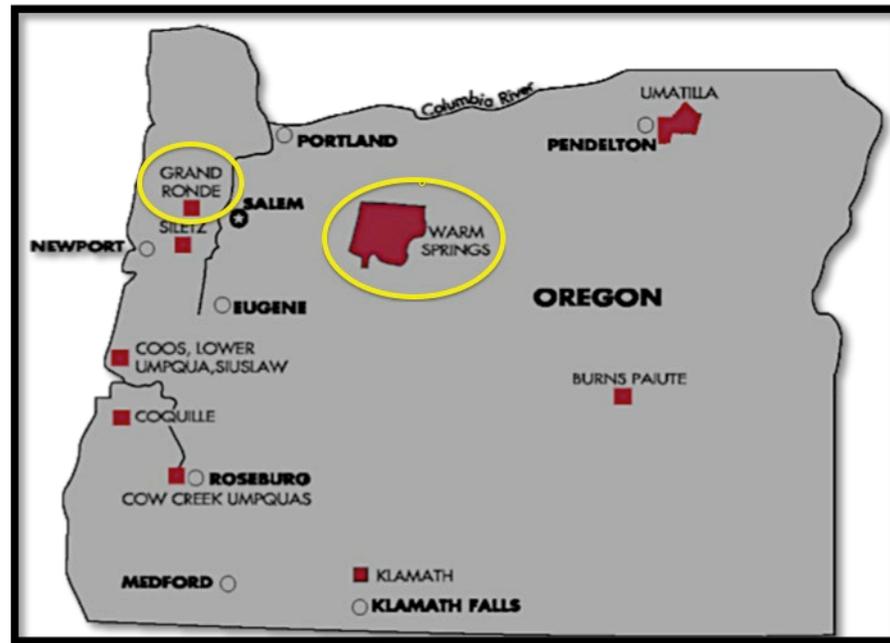


Figure 1: Map of Oregon's 9 Federally Recognized Indian Reservations

This map shows the geographic location of the 9 federally recognized Tribes of Oregon and their respective reservations, with the Warm Springs Reservation and the Grand Ronde Reservation circled for reference.

Broadly, my research addresses existing historical tribal differences and alliances and the ways in which these were impacted by federal policies of forced removal, the reservation system, and assimilation. More specifically, my research explores how federal processes and governmental protocols of the 1800s influenced and shaped Native ideologies of tribal sovereignty, identity, and inter-tribal relations. This study examines these differing perspectives through the lens of decolonization and critical theory, discussing the implications of historical trauma, individual tribal identity, tribal history, geographic location, gender, culture, and settler-colonialism.

Located on Tribal Land in Central Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs is one of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes. It is comprised of three culturally distinct individual tribes: the Northern Paiute, the Wasco, and the Sahaptin.<sup>3</sup> My research specifically examines the small community of Northern Paiutes who reside within the borders of the Warm Springs Reservation but are also a part of the larger Northern Paiute diaspora of the Great Basin region.

The Grand Ronde Reservation differs greatly from the Warm Springs Reservation, being geographically located in Northwestern Oregon, with the federally allotted tribal land situated between the Oregon Coast and the Cascade Range. Similar to Warm Springs, The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is a federally recognized sovereign nation comprised of five individual tribes: Umpqua, Molalla, Rogue River, Kalapuya, and Shasta. Yet within these five named tribes, the confederation collectively encompasses twenty-seven separate tribal communities and bands, all of which had been forcibly removed from their ancestral homeland and relocated to the confines of the reservation by the federal government of the United States. By specifically focusing on these two reservations, I bring into my discussion an often-overlooked discourse surrounding the political, social, and cultural challenges associated with a confederation of tribes and living on a confederated reservation.

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<sup>3</sup> I use the term 'Sahaptin' to refer to the group of Ichishkiin speaking Native Americans whose ancestral land was along the Columbia River before being moved to the Warm Springs Reservation and becoming part of the Warm Springs Confederation. In the dominant historical narrative this group of people is generally referred to as the 'Warm Springs Tribe,' however in an effort to both deconstruct the prevailing narrative and respect Myra Johnson-Orange's words – see rest of the paper - I will use the term 'Sahaptin,' in accordance with Myra's statement, "My preference is using the word Sahaptin, although that is not a true word either, at least it's a better reference for all the tribes that speak the same language."

There currently exists little academic or historical research that specifically examines the cultural inter-tribal dynamics of either the Warm Springs Confederation or the Grand Ronde Confederation. With the nineteenth century colonial settlement of the Pacific Northwest, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the extensive treaty-making period, and the creation of the Indian Reservation System, historically different tribes have been forced to live together as one representative sovereign nation. The dominant discourse assumes that inter-tribal dynamics are characterized by a notion of unity and a semblance of tribal equality.

However, this widespread assumption fails to recognize the individuality of each tribe and tribal member within a given confederation, and inherently limits equal tribal representation on a political, social, and cultural level. Within each confederation, historical differences existed between the individual tribes in terms of culture, language, beliefs, and traditions. As a result, inter-tribal conflicts existed long before the official confederations were created, but the conflicts were between distinct groups not yet living as a collection of tribes. Simultaneously however, historical interactions between tribes were also defined by collaborative exchange including trade, political alliance, communication, and marriage. Thus, the majority of inter-tribal conflict originated with the introduction of colonization and the implementation of settler-colonial structures such as treaties, the reservation system, and assimilation. Therefore, the argument I pursue is not simply one of tribes in conflict forced into a single sovereignty, but a much more profound argument about the deep cultural and historical differences between the tribes, with conflict representing only one aspect of that difference.

In her 2014 historical research paper, University of Oregon student Kimi Lerner worked closely with tribal community partners Myra Johnson-Orange and Wilson Wewa to address the ideology of inter-tribal prejudice within a primarily historical context. She argues that historical prejudice and attitudes of racism towards the Northern Paiute Tribe produced a campaign of extermination that, according to contemporary historians, can be labeled as an act of genocide.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, the Northern Paiute Tribe was faced with a two-sided challenge; fighting for tribal rights and equal representation against both the United States federal government and the Columbia River Tribes of Oregon.

My research seeks to build off of Kimi's findings and continue the relationships, respect, and reciprocity with tribal community partners to explore a more in-depth discussion about contemporary inter-tribal relations on the Warm Springs Reservation. The Northern Paiute community continues to engage in a dual conflict of equal representation. Social, political, and cultural acts of discrimination towards the Northern Paiutes at Warm Springs did not simply disappear over time, but rather remain a constant and visible presence within present-day inter-tribal interactions. Bringing the Grand Ronde history and community into the discussion provides a critical point of comparison between the two confederations that simply does not exist in the academic literature or historical narrative. Furthermore, while there has been an acknowledgement of inter-tribal relations and a hinting of the repercussions of settler-colonialism on inter-tribal relations in a few academic sources, an in-depth discourse of

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<sup>4</sup> Kimi Lerner, "A History of Racism and Prejudice: The Untold Story of the Northern Paiute," in *Northern Paiute History Project Paper Collection 2014: University of Oregon Honors College Course Student Papers* (Eugene, OR: University of Oregon Press, 2014), 32-40.

inter-tribal relations has not been explored in the existing body of academic literature. Thus, my study seeks to fill a clearly defined gap in the historical narrative of Oregon's tribal history and Oregon's Native people.

On a fundamental level, a system of settler-colonialism historically frames my narrative. In the context of my discourse, settler-colonialism refers to a two-part process of colonization. The first part consists of the initial migration and invasion of European colonists or other foreign groups onto the ancestral and inhabited lands of the established Native American tribes. The second part revolves around "a logic of elimination,"<sup>5</sup> in which tribal sovereignty and Native identification are slowly forced into oppression as the settler-colonizer works to eliminate any type of relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. The ultimate goal of this logic is a complete eradication of indigenous people and their culture from the newly conquered lands.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the entirety of my research and the conclusions that I draw operate within the overarching lens of a colonial system forcibly imposed upon both the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

Given this, I first examine the nature of pre-colonial inter-tribal relations in the Great Basin and Western Slope regions. Discovering what the specific dynamics of inter-tribal exchange were prior to the invasion of the white people sets a precedent for how much these inter-relations changed as a result of settler-colonialism. From a

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<sup>5</sup> The concept of "logic of elimination" comes from settler colonial studies that have already been conducted as well as academic scholarship such as Patrick Wolfe's "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native" in *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 387-409 and Lorenzo Varacini's "Introducing Settler Colonial Studies" (2011).

<sup>6</sup> This "logic of elimination" can be contrasted with a system of slavery, which is premised on a "logic of replication" where the colonized (the slave) continues to labor for the colonizer (slave owner) generationally, moving the system towards a world where slavery as an institution of colonization is perpetuated rather than being erased altogether.

historical perspective, the introduction of settler-colonialism into Oregon territory is a cataclysmic event for the Native people, their communities, and their lifeways. Within the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century era of settler-colonialism I specifically focus on the ways in which inter-tribal relations evolve and change due to colonial policies of treaty making, assimilation tactics, and the reservation system, which introduced the idea of both confederated reservations and a confederated tribal structure.

I then explore how, within the borders of both the Warm Springs Reservation and the Grand Ronde Reservation, the land itself and its cultural geography directly reflects the relationships that exist between the tribes of each confederated reservation. Delving further into the specifics of the cultural landscape, a particular question emerges as a central point in my discourse; what exactly does it mean to be a confederated reservation and how does being part of a confederation of tribes impact inter-tribal dynamics?

In examining these questions, I shift my discourse from a historical framework to a contemporary one. I touch on language being used as a tool to foster and communicate feelings of inter-tribal prejudice as well as the Museum at Warm Springs being a visible reflection of contemporary inter-tribal relations. In weaving together the historical narrative of Native history with the contemporary dynamics of each community that exists today, I offer a unique perspective on inter-tribal relations. Furthermore, my entire project is grounded in methodologies of decolonization and indigenous research that seeks to not only approach this work differently than other scholars, but also to share my research back with the Native communities.

## **Methodologies: The Importance of Oral History**

The origin of this entire project stems from Professor Kevin Hatfield and Professor Jennifer O’Neal’s Clark Honors College colloquium that I took in the fall of my third year, titled, “Decolonizing Research: The Northern Paiute History Project.” By the end of the ten-week course I realized that I had just barely scratched the surface of examining the dynamics of inter-tribal relations, at which point I decided to expand and further develop my course topic into my larger thesis project.

The crux of the course is the field research trip at the end of week three, in which the class travels to the Warm Springs Reservation to meet in-person with the tribal community partners and visit the Museum at Warm Springs. More importantly, the field research trip was where my tribal partnership and reciprocal relationship with Myra, Wilson, and other tribal community members began. The opening quote of my entire discourse and the inspiration to examine the dynamics of inter-tribal relations came from this first meeting with Northern Paiute tribal elder Myra Johnson-Orange. The field research trip to Warm Springs was not only a personal highlight, but also provided valuable insight into the ethics of respectfully engaging in a partnership of equality and trust with Native communities.

The central goal of Professor Hatfield and Professor O’Neal’s decolonizing research course is to tell Native history from a Native perspective according to a community-based methodology of decolonization. In regards to theory, the framework for the course draws upon Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s explanation that the overall goal of this decolonizing methodology is to create a more accurate and truthful way of

recording the history of Indigenous people.<sup>7</sup> Central to this decolonizing methodology is the concept of radical indigenism, a lens of internal Native American theory and identity through which non-Native historians should view Native American scholarship.<sup>8</sup> Although appearing simple in theory, over the course of the class it became apparent that the practice of decolonizing history has quickly become a question of ethics. Inherent to this methodology is conducting Native history from a Native perspective. The values of the course are predicated on the notion that to accurately and respectfully engage in a decolonizing methodology, relationships of trust with Native communities must be built and a dialogue between the researcher and these Native communities must be developed. If one rejects the Native way of thinking on principle because it does not conform to the prevailing historical dialogue, the resulting narrative will be both incomplete and invalid.

On the other hand, if one engages with this decolonizing methodology merely on principle without entering into a relationship that builds trust with the Native community, the narrative becomes shaped by speculation and inaccurate assumptions. Professor Nicholas Christos Zaferatos addresses this tendency of generalization. He argues that the legacy of historical contact both with other tribes and the American settler-colonial state has produced an encroaching external force of political imposition on sovereign tribal powers. To counter this external force and maintain political sovereignty and tribal self-determination, tribes must turn inward toward each other. In

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<sup>7</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, introduction to *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous People* (New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 1999), 1-43.

<sup>8</sup> Garrouette, Eva Marie, *Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003).

doing so, an internal tribal community is built that has the power to present a united front to the imposing colonial system.<sup>9</sup>

Although fundamentally appealing, this promotes an idea of tribal unification, which fails to recognize the individuality of each tribe. The collective stance of tribal unity inherently limits individual tribal identity and equal representation on a political, social, and cultural level. Thus, Zaferatos' argument situates tribal politics in dialogue with the imposed colonial structure of the reservation system. It also exemplifies the classic assumption that inter-tribal dynamics are generally characterized by a notion of unity, a conjecture that I argue is completely inaccurate.

The vast majority of academic discourse surrounding Native American history can be characterized as adhering to some form of the dominant western triumphalist narrative of colonization, founded on the ideology of Manifest Destiny and supported by Turner's Frontier Thesis. Developed in 1893, Turner's Frontier Thesis sought to set American conquests apart from European colonization, promoting the philosophy that the "western frontier" was a meeting point between savage and civilization. If successful, colonial settlers following the American Dream of Manifest Destiny would emerge as uniquely American, defining both American identity and the origins of American society.<sup>10</sup> Manifest Destiny, which emerged in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, capitalizes on Turner's Frontier Thesis, defined in the historical narrative as the doctrine

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<sup>9</sup> Nicholas Christos Zaferatos, "Planning the Native American Tribal Community: Understanding the Basis of Power Controlling the Reservation Territory," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 64, no. 4 (October 1998): 395-410.

<sup>10</sup> Smith, introduction to *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 1-43.

of belief that justified the westward territorial expansion and migration of colonial settlers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The colonial narrative of Native American history seeks to characterize the colonial settlers as the victors and the tribal communities as the vanquished. In the case of Oregon, the colonial settlers have constantly written and re-written tribal history according to western beliefs of “savagery,” “civilization,” and racism. The dominant methodology of recording Native history subjugates and seeks to eliminate not just the people themselves but also their traditional culture, way of life, and ancestral history.

To successfully counter and decolonize the inaccurate colonial narrative that has been produced in both the academic and social spheres, the primary research method I employ in producing this discourse is one of oral history. Often forgotten and discredited as a reliably sound and accurate research methodology, oral narratives of Native history are incredibly scarce when compared to the vast amount of written documentation in existence. Furthermore, the western imperial perspective, whose ideologies fundamentally shape the dominating colonial narrative, extensively devalues and completely invalidates oral history as a method of acceptable research.

Furthermore, oral history is the most accurate method in which to gain the Native perspective. For both the Northern Paiute and Grand Ronde communities, their entire historical narrative is founded on oral tradition. Storytelling is their primary avenue of historical truth, for as Northern Paiute tribal elder Myra Johnson-Orange declares, “There is strength in words...because we have always been an oral people.”<sup>11</sup> Consequently, there exists very few historical sources, documents, or records written by

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<sup>11</sup> Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, October 15, 2016.

Native people about Native history and those that do exist are extremely hard to locate. Therefore, as a historian attempting to deconstruct the colonial narrative of Northern Paiute and Grand Ronde history, it is critical that I not only identify, but more importantly accept, their oral history as truth. Even if it does not align with the widespread dominant narrative, oral history is unquestionably reflective of an internal and exclusively Native perspective. Thus, I engage with oral history as an authentic, credible, and highly personal method of research.

Since oral traditions continue to be foundational to Native culture and the ways in which Native communities tell their historical narratives, I have attempted to use the language of Northern Paiute and Grand Ronde tribal members. In an attempt to accurately record the Native perspective on language and the use of particular words, I structure my discourse around the words of Northern Paiute tribal elder Myra Johnson-Orange. She asserts, “I am not sure if it was a prejudice or a racism act that created the animosity...because neither of those words, “prejudice” or “racism,” are in our [The Northern Paiute] language.”<sup>12</sup> This revelation is central to my discourse, for it speaks to the direct act of colonial ideologies of descriptive language being imposed on the tribes of Oregon.

However, these western terms and colonial labels have become so ingrained in Native culture that they are still spoken by tribal members today. Thus, I use a mix of the terms “discrimination,” “prejudice,” and “animosity” to characterize the nature of historical and contemporary inter-tribal dynamics because those are the words that appear in the oral narratives I engage with. I also use the term “Native” rather than

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

“Indian” out of respect for the communities I work with. Over the course of my research I have discovered that while tribal members refer to themselves and their communities as being Indian and having an Indian identity, when non-Native outsiders use the term Indian it is viewed as a continued form of colonization, often seen as offensive by the Native communities.

Over the course of my research, I interviewed a total of 14 tribal members, eight affiliated with the Northern Paiute community at Warm Springs and six affiliated with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. I conducted three interviews over the phone and the remaining eleven interviews in-person, all with verbal or written consent from the tribal members being interviewed. All interviews were conducted in English and all but 1 in-person interview was conducted in Native spaces; the Warm Springs Culture and Heritage Department building, the Agency Longhouse in Warm Springs, Kah-Nee-Tah Resort, and the Many Nations Longhouse on the University of Oregon campus. I traveled to the Warm Springs Reservation a total of eight times and to the Grand Ronde Reservation twice. I was also privileged enough to receive an invitation from Myra to attend a series of three cultural nights held at the Agency Longhouse at Warm Springs as both a guest and a researcher, with each cultural night being dedicated to one of the three tribes of the Warm Springs confederation. It was at the Northern Paiute cultural night that I conducted most of my interviews and collected the majority of testimonials discussed in this study. For this study, I have received full IRB approval from the University of Oregon as well as tribal approval from both the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

In addition to oral history, my research findings are drawn from key primary sources, including autobiographical memoirs, records of colonial organizations, and two tribal newspapers; *Spilyay Tymoo* at Warm Springs and *Smoke Signals* at Grand Ronde. Both newspapers are exclusively produced by tribal members and published on their respective reservations. I engage with these particular sources as a major body of information because they capture an internal perspective of reservation life. The newspapers themselves exemplify a primary source discussing local Native issues on each reservation from an exclusively Native perspective and are an effective indicator of the nature of inter-tribal dynamics.

Yet despite my extensive research and multiple collaborations with the Northern Paiute and Grand Ronde communities, I am still an outsider. I fully acknowledge that I am not a part of these Native communities, nor was I raised on a reservation surrounded by the Native culture. Thus, it is impossible for me to produce a complete historical narrative from an exclusively Native perspective. Consequently, in my attempt to truthfully decolonize the colonial narrative of the Warm Springs and Grande Ronde Reservations, I center my entire research process and the ongoing discourse around Myra's heartfelt request to, "do your best to walk in my moccasins."<sup>13</sup> With this statement in mind, the following discourse seeks to give a voice to and record an oral history narrative of the historically oppressed, politically marginalized, and forcibly colonized communities on the Warm Springs and Grand Ronde Reservations.

In addition to the fact that I am not Native, and therefore not fully a part of the Native community, there are other limitations to this study. I recognize that discourses

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

surrounding inter-tribal dynamics, particularly within a confederation of tribes and on a confederated reservation, are highly complex and often politically sensitive. Although I attempt to present the specific struggle of two vastly different communities within the complex structure of inter-tribal relations, I acknowledge the fact that other tribes might disagree with this discourse. I also accept and respect that some aspects of inter-tribal relations cannot fully be discussed and therefore could not be shared with me in conversation, whether it was due to politics, historical trauma, or personal reasons. However, this research work is meant to bring awareness of this particular Native history and the complex relationships created within these confederated tribes.

Due to both resources and the amount of time required to build relationships of trust with Native communities, I was only able to interview a total of 14 tribal members. Given the small amount of testimonials, the themes I discuss are not representative of, nor do they speak for, the collective communities of each reservation. There is a slight inequality in the number of testimonials from each community, as the opportunities to interview and interact with Northern Paiute members were greater than with Grand Ronde tribal members. The scope of this project is also quite large. Given the limited time frame and availability of resources, there are many avenues and perspectives of this topic that came up in the oral narratives but remain unexplored in my discourse, for I simply could not address them all within this particular framework.

Arguably the largest shortcoming of this study is that I am still continuing to build relationships of trust and collaboration with the Native communities. In addition to developing this trust, I recognize that there are major difficulties when writing in partnership with tribal communities. Each individual tribal community, and more

importantly each individual tribal member, has their own story and their own perspective. Each oral testimonial is only one perspective and that single individual narrative cannot be applied to the Native community as a whole. To put it simply, the perspective of this entire project stems from the words of Northern Paiute tribal elder Brenda Scott. She respectfully declares, “Our history of the Northern Paiute tribe is the right way, but everyone has their own story of the history of the reservation.”<sup>14</sup>

Reiterating this statement in the Grand Ronde community, tribal elder Marta Clifford emphasizes the importance of recognizing and respecting the fact that, “Everybody’s story is different. Everyone has a story to tell and the way they live reflects the way they have been treated.”<sup>15</sup> I am also aware that other tribal members even within the same tribe or community might disagree with the narrative and discourse I present.

In working with in partnership with the tribes over a period of multiple years and entering into relationships of trust with tribal communities, I strive to embody the ethics of respect and reciprocity that are central to the methods of decolonization and decolonizing research. Upon completion, my research will be shared with the Native communities of both Warm Springs and Grand Ronde in an attempt to return the knowledge, stories, and historical narratives back to the tribes.

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<sup>14</sup> Brenda Scott, Interview by author, Agency Longhouse at Warm Springs, August 7, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Marta Clifford, Interview by author, Warm Springs Reservation, April 27, 2018.

## Historical Roots: The Dynamics of Inter-Tribal Relations

The ancestral homeland of the Northern Paiute Tribe is the Northern Great Basin region in present-day southeastern and central Oregon, while the ancestral homeland of the Wasco and Sahaptin Tribes is the Columbia Plateau region stretching the length of the Columbia River (figure 2).

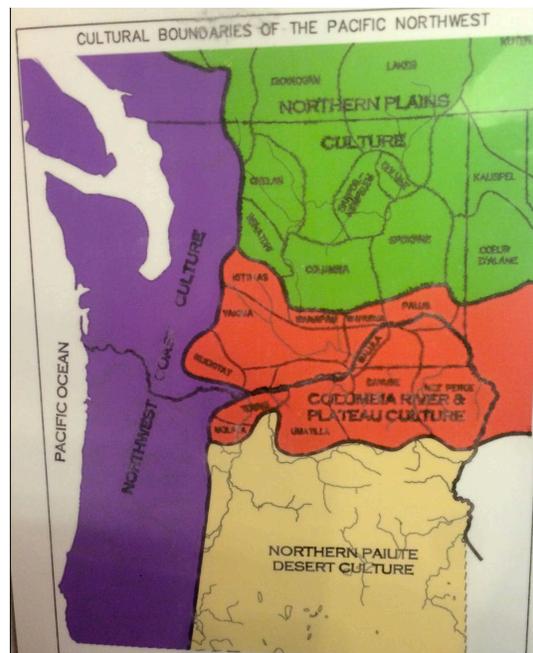


Figure 2: Map of Ancestral Homelands and Pre-Colonial Cultural Boundaries of the Pacific Northwest Tribes

This map shows the geographic location of the ancestral homelands and cultural boundaries of Pacific Northwest tribes, specifically the geographic placement and divide between the Columbia River region and the Northern Great Basin region.<sup>16</sup>

As a result of constantly shifting wet and dry seasons, the Northern Paiutes traditionally adhered to a nomadic lifestyle, in which small bands of Paiute people migrated throughout the region following wild game and an adequate fishing supply. This seasonal migration of the Northern Paiute people sharply contrasted with the way of life

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<sup>16</sup> Map is courtesy of James Gardner.

along the Columbia River, where Ichishkiin speaking tribes maintained a semi-sedentary lifestyle sustained by the salmon runs of the Columbia River and an extensive regional trade network.<sup>17</sup>

Despite engaging in vastly different lifestyles, Northern Paiute tribal elder and spiritual leader Wilson Wewa emphasized, “there was a time [before the invasion of the colonial settlers] when there was no animosity between the Columbia River people and the Paiutes.”<sup>18</sup> Tribes along the Columbia River traded with bands of Northern Paiutes for commodities of obsidian and red willow baskets, while raiding and warring were simply considered to be a part of life. Thus, the inter-tribal relationships of these early years prior to the settlement of western colonists can undoubtedly be characterized as positive and relatively equal in nature, with each group having distinct historical homelands and regions at the core of their traditions and lifeways.

So the historical question is, what changed? Myra Johnson Orange, a Northern Paiute tribal elder and community leader, recalls in her oral testimony, “Before the coming of the white man, there were peaceful feelings among the tribes that are now, what I call, inter-tribal racism where they put one another down.”<sup>19</sup> Myra’s statement perfectly captures the historical question regarding inter-tribal dynamics that one aspect of my research is founded on; how did the inter-tribal discrimination Myra speaks of become such a defining characteristic of historic Columbia River-Northern Paiute

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>18</sup> Wilson Wewa, Interview by author, Warm Springs Reservation, October 15, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, October 15, 2016.

interactions. More importantly, what are the ways we see this inter-tribal prejudice manifested in contemporary inter-tribal dynamics?

According to Wilson Wewa, who approached this question from a historical perspective, “It was the introduction of the horse that brought the tribes at odds.”<sup>20</sup> There existed a prevailing assumption perpetrated by the Columbia River tribes that the Great Basin region could not sustain a material culture revolving around horses. Because horses were highly prized and considered to be an incredible source of wealth, the tribes along the Columbia River that had the ability to maintain a horse-driven culture quickly began to view themselves as superior to their neighboring tribes of the Great Basin. This subtle but present cultural superiority, enhanced by the differing lifestyle patterns, served as a key factor in creating a distinct social divide that inherently produced a level of inter-tribal prejudice towards the Northern Paiutes. From a more personal perspective, Myra Johnson Orange suggests that the historical ideology of prejudice against the Northern Paiute people derived from a series of hostile actions committed by Northern Paiute bands against neighboring warring tribes, acts that we would perceive today as being violent in nature. This increasingly hostile inter-tribal interaction fostered a series of ongoing wars between the Columbia River people and the Northern Paiute bands, gradually creating a perception that these two regional tribes had always been traditional enemies.

In addition to the words and recollections of Northern Paiute tribal elders, George Aguilar’s oral history narrative, *When The River Ran Wild*, addresses the overarching culture of the Warm Springs Reservation from an interpersonal perspective.

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<sup>20</sup> Wewa, Interview by author, October 15, 2016.

Despite Aguilar being descended from the Chinookan Tribe of the Columbia River and enrolled in the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs as a Wasco tribal member, his recollections of childhood stories paint a vivid picture depicting the history of inter-tribal relations on the reservation. As an oral narrative that has been written down, Aguilar gives a glimpse into the historical tensions within the Warm Springs Reservation from a Native perspective, yet one that is considered to be an outsider perspective by the Northern Paiute community.

Despite identifying himself as Wasco rather than Sahaptin, Aguilar's predominantly Columbia River view of life on the reservation is not surprising. The perspective itself, coupled with the extremely scarce references to any aspect of Northern Paiute culture, implicitly promotes a notion that the Columbia River tribes exert more power within the reservation framework. Simultaneously, Aguilar's testimonial speaks directly to the fact that the entire reservation system, and thus the inter-tribal dynamics of discrimination towards the Northern Paiute Tribe, operates within a colonial framework. Aguilar asserts:

“The Wascos warred against the Northern Paiutes of the interior...[engaging in] slave-raiding campaigns against the Northern Paiutes [in which they captured] Paiute women and children, who were then sold at the slave-trading mart. [Simultaneously] the Paiutes were making retaliatory raids because the Wascos and Teninos used their women and children for the slave trade.”<sup>21</sup>

This declaration highlights a deep historical animosity between the Wasco and Northern Paiute tribes from an exclusively internal and personal perspective. Furthermore, it speaks to the reciprocal nature of raiding and an engagement in the slave trade that

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<sup>21</sup> George W. Aguilar, *When the River Ran Wild: Indian Traditions on the Mid-Columbia and the Warm Springs Reservation* (Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society Press, 2005), 3-4, 8.

occurred between the two tribes. Both the Paiutes and the Wascos furthered the animosity within a framework of equality and exchange despite the actual acts taking place. The historical animosity that exists between the Wasco and Northern Paiute is an important part of Aguilar's Wasco tribal history. More importantly, Aguilar's historical narrative exposes the initial roots of the current inter-tribal tensions that exist on the Warm Springs Reservation.<sup>22</sup>

One of those roots was the contentious issue of land. The Warm Springs Reservation was officially created by the Treaty of 1855, when representatives from the Sahaptin and Wasco communities agreed to the terms of settlement on the reservation laid out by the federal government. However, it is imperative to note that Northern Paiute representatives were noticeably absent from this treaty signing, despite the fact that the land of the newly created War Springs Reservation was historically Paiute land.

Addressing the significance of land within the narrative of Warm Springs history, surveyor Frances Fuller Victor recorded in 1871, "It is a general consensus by the confederated tribes themselves that the land on which the Reservation is established was, 'poor and worthless,' and that the tribes would continue to be 'life pensioners' upon the bounty of the U.S. government as long they are compelled to occupy these volcanic wastes."<sup>23</sup> This historical statement showcases that from the outset, it was believed that the land of the Warm Springs Reservation was considered unusable by the tribes. The use of the phrase, "general consensus by the confederated tribes," suggests

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<sup>22</sup> For more exploration on slave-trading between the Columbia River tribes and the Northern Paiute see: Ayantu Israel-Megerssa, "The Other in Their Own Land: Orientalism, Genocide, and the Northern Paiute of the Oregon Great Basin" (2017) and Soo Hwang, "Addressing the Elephant in the Room called Genocide: A Discussion on American Prejudice towards Northern Paiutes in the Mid Nineteenth Century (2017).

<sup>23</sup> Aguilar, *When the River Ran Wild*, 20.

that the Sahaptin, Wasco, and Northern Paiutes collectively agreed on the uselessness of the land.

However, this conclusion is highly questionable. The inaccuracy of Victor's statement lies in the fact that the High Desert lands of central Oregon were the ancestral homelands of the Northern Paiutes. As such, Northern Paiute communities historically viewed these lands as valuable and vital in sustaining their way of life. Yet their nomadic culture indicates that the Northern Paiutes understood that people could not survive in the dry and rocky lands if they stayed in one place. Seasonal migration was paramount to survival in the Great Basin, a fact that the federal government simply ignored when they endorsed the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1803.

Colonial contact with the Native American tribes of Oregon around the turn of 19<sup>th</sup> century was a historic encounter that undeniably set the stage for contemporary inter-tribal dynamics. Notable explorer Patrick Gass, who accompanied the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1803-1806, kept a detailed record of his travels. Throughout his journal entries cataloging the exploration, Gass repeatedly uses the word "Snake Indian,"<sup>24</sup> a term considered to be highly derogatory by the Northern Paiutes and a concept explored later on in the discourse. Although Gass never defines the exact meaning of the word, it can be inferred from his description of Oregon's geography and his interactions with other tribes that "Snake Indian" is a reference to the Northern Paiutes.

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<sup>24</sup> Patrick Gass, *Gass' Journal of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Chicago, IL: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1904), 74, 125, 126, 140, 240.

There is no doubt that Gass adopted the term “Snake Indian” after encounters with Columbia River tribes, indicating that his use of this specific label is reflective of a pre-existing use of the term by the Columbia River communities. Not only does this suggest that certain elements of the colonial narrative fundamentally originated from Native use, but also indicates that colonial invasion did not create, but rather enhanced, a pre-existing dynamic of inter-tribal animosity between the tribes of the Columbia River and the Northern Paiute tribe of the Great Basin.

It is important to note that Gass and the entire Lewis and Clark expedition never actually entered the Great Basin lands that the Northern Paiutes occupied. They also did not engage in any physical exchange or face-to-face contact with Northern Paiute tribal members. Consequently, these particular colonial explorers did not have the opportunity to form their own personal opinions of the Northern Paiutes. Rather, they were left to impose both their own personal assumptions and Columbia River tribal notions of social inferiority on the Northern Paiute people. Thus, all of the ideas and pre-conceived notions about the Northern Paiutes that the early colonial explorers display are rooted in two things; reflections of pre-existing inter-tribal animosity and simple colonial ideologies of savagery pervasively applied to the uncivilized “American West.” Despite these assumptions, what Gass’ account clearly does reflect is the colonial nature of othering. In this specific context of the Northern Paiute, othering refers to the ideological belief perpetrated by both the early colonial explores and the Columbia River tribes themselves, in which tribes are defined based on pre-conceived assumptions rather than facts embedded in traditional indigenous history and traditional ways of knowing.

Colonial assumptions about the Native communities of Oregon also appear in the written narrative of Sarah Sutton, a pioneer woman who bought into “Oregon Fever,” a term engineered by the federal government to describe the mass migration of colonial settlers moving westward on the Oregon Trail in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Sarah’s diary begins with an 1854 newspaper clipping depicting a classic photo of Manifest Destiny; a group of pioneers holding rifles at the center with a Native man positioned directly behind the group holding the reigns of a horse and set against a background of wagon trains clearly moving east to west.<sup>25</sup> Following the newspaper clipping are a variety of personal entries, in which she writes, “Oregon is too far away in an uncivilized land among the savage Indians, who know no more about garden vegetables than they know about work.”<sup>26</sup> Both the newspaper and the Sarah’s observations in the diary entry capture the heart of Manifest Destiny; to expand west and civilize the savage people that inhabit the land under the ordinance of God. Both documents clearly indicate that the ideology of Manifest Destiny was popularized and promoted by the federal government. This is highly significant, for Manifest Destiny served as the catalyst for bringing settler-colonialism to the west coast.

However, what neither of these accounts take into consideration is the fact that the tribes of Oregon had a well-established complex society of both positive and negative inter-tribal relations. Combined together, the accounts of Patrick Gass and Sarah Sutton exemplify the standard colonial narrative. In the dominant narrative of western colonization, the practice of othering is typically associated with the

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<sup>25</sup> Sarah Sutton, *Sarah Sutton Printed Diary: Crossing the Plains, 1854* (Eugene, OR: Archives West, 1854), 1-2.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

encroaching superior colonizers grouping together the Native and Indigenous people they perceive to be inferior. Yet in deconstructing this colonial narrative, there is undeniable evidence that othering occurred both within and between the tribes themselves in a sphere of entirely Native interaction.

The process of othering among the Grand Ronde communities was historically less prevalent than it was among the communities at Warm Springs. Rather than promoting the ideology of othering, the majority of the distinct Native communities that would eventually be removed to Grand Ronde had developed a variety of pre-colonial positive inter-tribal relations. The ancestral homeland of the Kalapuya and Molalla communities is the Willamette Valley, while the ancestral homeland of the Umpqua, Rogue River, and Shasta communities is the southern Oregon region.<sup>27</sup> In addition to these five large tribal communities, there were numerous other small bands that inhabited lands across the state that were rounded up and removed to Grand Ronde. Similar to the Northern Paiute, these Native communities were sub-divided into small familial bands spread out across their given region. Contact between bands of the same tribe was extensive, but contact between tribes remained primarily regional. Due to the fertile soil and abundant fishing grounds of the Willamette, Umpqua, and Rogue River Valleys, a largely sedentary lifestyle was established based around prosperous regional trade networks.

Inter-marriage was the main avenue through which inter-tribal relations of the Grand Ronde community were initiated and then strengthened. Through inter-marriage

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<sup>27</sup> Brent Merrill and Yvonne Hajda, "The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon," in *The First Oregonians*, ed. Laura Berg (Portland, OR: Oregon Council for the Humanities, 2007), 121-122.

kinship networks were formed, resulting in traditions, languages, and cultures from different tribes to become integrated with one another. Due to the sedentary lifestyle, trade relations and expanding kinship networks were vital to sustaining the tribes of Western Oregon.<sup>28</sup> Linguistically, each tribe spoke a different language and within that language there existed a variety of distinct dialects. However, similar to the Columbia River tribes, linguistic similarities within each region allowed for a system of extensive inter-tribal communication to develop. Despite the inter-tribal challenges that arose with the invasion of the colonial settlers, the positive pre-colonial dynamics that existed between these tribes are significant, for they heavily inform the culture, lifestyle, and identity of the Grand Ronde Reservation in both a historical and contemporary context.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

## **Settler-Colonialism: The Reservation System and the Impact of Native-Colonial Relations**

As more and more colonial settlers invaded Oregon territory, the inter-tribal prejudice towards the Northern Paiute tribe rapidly increased, paralleling the federal government's interest in conquering tribal land and executing the ideals of Manifest Destiny. The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century became the height of creating and then implementing the reservation system in an attempt to subjugate tribes and control ancestral land.

In technical terms, the reservation system was founded in 1851 on a legal process of treaty making and exchange between the Native communities and the federal government. Its primary purpose was to both bring Native people under the control of the federal government and to free up land for incoming colonial settlers. However, the federal government quickly realized that the treaty system was lacking in efficiency, prompting a conceptual shift. Under the altered reservation system, land would be, "carved out of the public domain of the United States as a benevolent gesture, a "gift" to the Indigenous peoples."<sup>29</sup> Implementation of the reservation system coupled with the treaty making process served as the United States federal government's final exercise of the Doctrine of Discovery. It saw the federal government clearly defining and then setting aside small parcels of land within federally established state boundaries, drawing out and then creating a specific reserve for the Native communities to inhabit.

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<sup>29</sup> Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2014), 11.

Despite being numerically small and historically discriminated against, the Northern Paiutes received their own Reservation at Malheur in 1872. Although initially promising, the Malheur Reservation was dissolved in 1879 by executive order, leaving the majority of Northern Paiutes not only landless, but also unable to claim a legal right to their ancestral land. Consequently, the Northern Paiutes were forcibly removed from their tribal land in the Great Basin to the Yakama Reservation in Washington.<sup>30</sup> Their subsequent internment at Yakama masterfully exemplifies a visible manifestation of the deep-seated inter-tribal prejudice specifically targeted towards the Northern Paiute tribe.

By the early 1880s living conditions on the Yakama Reservation had become utterly deplorable and the Northern Paiute community was virtually destitute. These heinous conditions prompted various stages of Northern Paiute movement to a variety of geographic locations scattered throughout Oregon.<sup>31</sup> On a fundamental level, emigration from Yakama unintentionally produced a substantial Northern Paiute diaspora. This diaspora is critical in shaping contemporary inter-tribal dynamics, for while some Paiute communities, such as those relegated to Burns, were re-ceded lands for a reservation, other Paiute communities, such as those that ended up on the Warm Springs Reservation, were forced to navigate inter-tribal discrimination within the confines of a political confederation.

Simultaneously, the legacy facing the Northern Paiutes created by the dissolution of the Malheur Reservation and the rapidly increasing colonial settlement directly converges with the legacy of the Warm Springs Treaty of 1855. On June 25,

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<sup>30</sup> Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 27-46.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

1855 designated representatives from Columbia River bands of the Walla-Walla tribe and bands of the Wasco tribe effectively signed the Warm Springs Treaty.<sup>32</sup> However, the notable absence and exclusion of Northern Paiute representatives at the treaty signing council fostered an identity of the Northern Paiutes at Warm Springs as being non-treaty signers.

In her oral narrative, Myra directly addressed the contentious issue of being inherently viewed as non-treaty signers by both the Sahaptin and Wasco tribes. When asked if there were any visible ways in which inter-tribal prejudice or discrimination had manifested itself that she had observed or experienced, Myra responded with a completely unexpected but incredibly telling anecdote:

“Several years ago the [the tribal council] was taking up this thing where they wanted to delete the Paiute input in regards to a lot of things because we always hear on our Reservation from the Sahaptin people and the Wasco people, ‘well you are not treaty signers so you have nothing to say.’ And historically we have heard that so many times. But I think the biggest thing was when a statement was made by Paiute representatives on the tribal council – when the other two tribes were writing down about their stated sovereignty papers saying ‘we are sovereign because...’ the Northern Paiute group did not sign that document. They didn’t want to be in support of a written statement that is declared sovereign as an innate thing that is within ourselves as people so they didn’t sign that sovereignty statement. [She goes on to contextualize this altercation, revealing] historically, there was an apportionment that wanted to take away the voting rights of the Paiute people on the Reservation...They [the tribal council] tried that and then they came back about 2 years ago and introduced another thing to change our tribal constitution to bring back apportionment, where Paiute people would be blended into the rest of the tribe with no identity. So these are real statements of how certain people still feel today about the Paiute people.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Thelma Drake Cliff, *A History of the Warm Springs Reservation 1855-1900* (PhD diss., University of Oregon, 1942), 21-22.

<sup>33</sup> Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, Phone, November 17, 2016.

This particular excerpt speaks directly to the nature of contemporary inter-tribal dynamics on the Warm Springs Reservation and the ways in which it has specifically been shaped by settler-colonialism. In particular, Myra's statement speaks to the visible legacy of inter-tribal discrimination produced by the Treaty of 1855. It is clear that the label of being a non-treaty signer has an underlying connotation of being both different and inferior in some way. However, it is important to note that although the treaty's legacy is an amplification of inter-tribal prejudice towards the Northern Paiute community, the treaty itself was engineered by the federal government as part of the reservation system.

Furthermore, Myra's continuous use of the word "historically" suggests two things. First, that the characterization of Northern Paiutes being viewed as specifically non-treaty signers is rooted in the settler-colonialism of the 1850s. Second, that the prejudiced feelings behind the label of being non-treaty signers actually originated from inter-tribal animosities that existed prior to the invasion of colonial settlers.

Myra's testimonial also addresses the issue of Northern Paiute sovereignty. In regards to the various inter-tribal actions that have occurred, it is clear that an attempt has been made to eliminate the political presence of the Northern Paiute within the Warm Spring Confederation. The Warm Springs Tribal Council is comprised of an equal amount of representatives from each of the three tribes – Sahaptin, Wasco, and Northern Paiute – so on paper it appears as though each tribe receives the same amount of representation. Yet Myra's discussion of the internal politics surrounding ideas of sovereignty on a confederated reservation contradicts this idea of equal representation. Her words speak directly to the fact that in reality, the Northern Paiute community does

not have the same amount of political representation as the Wasco and Sahaptin tribes within the confederated tribal structure.

Echoing Myra's sentiment, Northern Paiute tribal elder Brenda Scott asserts, "We [the Paiute people on the Warm Springs Reservation] still consider ourselves a sovereign nation because we did not sign the treaty."<sup>34</sup> While the words are from Brenda's narrative, the sentiment behind them is echoed throughout the Northern Paiute community. This is significant in revealing that it is not just the Wasco and Sahaptin tribes that view the Northern Paiute community as non-treaty signers, but it is also the Northern Paiutes themselves that identify as such.

Additionally, Myra's emphasis on eliminating Northern Paiute identity in exchange for embodying a "Warm Springs" identity only serves to enhance the discourse of inter-tribal prejudice. Her statement illuminates that it is not just sovereignty, but also personal identity that are being used as tools to further extend the historical subjugation of the Paiute community. Her personal experience with both these instances of undeniable inter-tribal discrimination highlights both the extent to which visible acts of inter-tribal prejudice are still present, and the ways in which they have been informed by settler-colonialism.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Scott, Interview by author, August 7, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> Another significant event that is too extensive to include in my particular study but informs inter-tribal prejudice is the legacy of the "Snake War" of 1855-1856. From the Northern Paiute perspective, it was a war of extermination against the Northern Paiutes by the United States Army and the Warm Springs Scouts. The "Snake War" has been presented to the public in the Museum at Warm Springs, in which the exhibit honors Wasco and Tenino Scouts under the command of William McKay who participated in the systematic killing and genocide of the Northern Paiute people. For a more extensive exploration of this particular historical event see works by James Gardner, George Aguilar, and William McKay, *William McKay's Journal, 1866-1867: Indian Scouts, Part I*, Oregon Historical Quarterly (1978), 128-130.

However, unlike the Warm Springs Reservation where inter-tribal prejudice largely stemmed from pre-existing inter-tribal animosities, the majority of negative inter-tribal dynamics on the Grand Ronde Reservation primarily derived from mid-19<sup>th</sup> century settler-colonialism, which forced previously warring tribes to live together on one small reservation. In the case of Grand Ronde, the cultural, linguistic, and historical differences between the tribes were capitalized on and then manipulated by both the federal government and the colonial farmers who settled the land in the Grand Ronde region.<sup>36</sup> These early homesteaders were crucial in both facilitating and informing Native-colonial interactions. Capitalizing on their presence, the federal government created a multitude of temporary reservations on the farmers' land claims in the Willamette Valley. These specific reservations were unique in that they were governed by the farmers themselves, who acted as temporary Indian agents under the direction of the BIA until the Grand Ronde Reservation became established in 1857.<sup>37</sup>

Initially, all the tribes of Western Oregon, ranging from the Columbia River to the northern California border, were forcibly removed to Grand Ronde by order of the federal government. Driven by the ideology of westward expansion, the purpose of forced removal in western Oregon was to clear the land for the colonial settlers, eliminate the possibility of inter-tribal warfare, and calm down the ongoing Rogue River war that had erupted in in southern Oregon. This resulted in the majority of

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<sup>36</sup> For the many different Native communities of Oregon, the Oregon Donation Act of 1850 resulted in a drastic increase of settler-colonialism. The Act provided up to 640 acres, or one square mile, of land for free to a married couple but was only available to whites and "half-breeds." It served as a legal instrument of Manifest Destiny and radically transformed the indigenous lands of western Oregon. The act expired in 1855, but during its five years in effect it brought 30,000 colonial settlers to western Oregon, a 300% increase in population, and patented 7,437 land claims.

<sup>37</sup> David Lewis, Interview by author, University of Oregon, August 16, 2017.

western Oregon tribal communities being temporarily placed on the Grand Ronde Reservation at some point in time before being permanently removed to alternate reservations. The Native communities that ended up remaining on the Grand Ronde Reservation ultimately became the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, comprised of the five named tribes – Kalapuya, Molalla, Shasta, Rogue River, and Umpqua – as well as numerous other small bands and tribes that were included in restoration but not explicitly listed within the five named tribes.

The original location of the Grand Ronde Reservation was along the Oregon Coast, with an expected date of establishment being 1856. However, by 1855 inter-tribal warfare had broken out in the southern region of Oregon and the Rogue River War was quickly escalating. The Rogue River War is a notable historical event that critically shaped inter-tribal dynamics at Grand Ronde. It served as the main catalyst in removing the Rogue River and Shasta tribes, whose ancestral homeland was the southern region of Oregon, to the Grand Ronde Reservation. The threat these warring Native communities of southern Oregon posed to colonial settlement and western expansion prompted the notorious Superintendent of Indian Affairs Joel Palmer to immediately remove all of Oregon's western tribes from their homeland. Although Palmer was temporarily commissioned as the commissary-general of the Provisional Government's militia forces during the Cayuse War, his influence on the tribes of western Oregon was in his capacity to facilitate treaty and "peace" negotiations as the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon. Since the forced removal of these western and southern tribes was fast-tracked by at least a year, the coastal reservation was far from being completed at the time of removal. As a result, General Palmer was forced to

purchase the Grand Ronde Valley as a temporary location for the reservation, forcibly mixing the vastly different cultures and lifestyles of the Willamette Valley and southern Oregon.<sup>38</sup>

The historical facts presented above all derive from the oral narrative of Grand Ronde tribal historian David Lewis. However, the colonial narrative of the creation of the Grand Ronde Reservation greatly contrasts his oral narrative. Lewis' work is dedicated to correcting these historical inaccuracies and his oral narrative shows that primary narratives have come from the dominant settler-colonial perspective that, in many cases, does not accurately or truthfully portray Native history.

One of the most prominent western narratives comes from Father Adrien-Joseph Croquet. Croquet was a Catholic missionary from Belgium who arrived in the Willamette Valley just as the Grand Ronde Reservation was being established. He was quickly appointed as the principal missionary of the newly created reservation and remained there for the duration of his life. His chronicle of life at Grand Ronde includes his early days on the reservation, in which he writes:

“The whites would have preferred to see the Indians all sent east of the Cascades, and the Indians begged for tiny reservations with each band in a pocket of its ancestral land. It was the practical and noble-minded Joel Palmer of Dayton who rapidly engineered the compromise: west of the Cascades, but also west of the Coast Range---with one exception. The great bulk of the land reserved for the Indians of Western Oregon would be along the coast, but there is one point at which the crest of the Coast Range swings dramatically west, and spurs sweep down to enclose a natural circle of 10 square miles of prairie land, aptly named “the Grand Ronde.” Palmer bought this up from the Whites who had settled it and made it first a temporary reserve for those destined to the rugged lands along the coast, and then the permanent home of the more peaceful bands of all three valleys. The local Whites resisted and asked for

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

soldiers, whose block-house stands now on exhibit in the park at Dayton--but Palmer's brilliant compromise prevailed."<sup>39</sup>

Although the basic facts recorded by Croquet are accurate, his narrative virtually eliminates the Native perspective. Rather, it explicitly characterizes the communities of the valleys as "more peaceful," implying that all the other Native communities were, to some degree, violent in nature. This indicates that from the beginning, the federal government believed there to be a clear division between the valley tribes and the coastal tribes. Yet this classic colonial belief completely ignores any pre-existing inter-tribal relations. His mention of the Native communities' desire for small reservations on their ancestral homeland holds a large degree of truth. It suggests that from the start, the Native people were against a confederated reservation on lands that were not their own and did not wish to share land with other tribes they did not historically get along with. Yet this request was completely denied by the federal government, resulting in inter-tribal dynamics being critically shaped by settler-colonialism.

Croquet's account also characterizes Palmer as "noble-minded" and refers to his solution of forced removal and the temporary reservation as a "brilliant compromise." The term "noble-minded" is a descriptive characterization that dominates the colonial narrative of Native history. Its explicit connotation of civilizing the inferior embodies the ideology of noble savagery. It is clear that white colonial settlers such as Croquet and Palmer fully believed in the idea of noble savagery; that although Native people would always retain their inferiority to white people, their uncivilized nature could be changed through assimilation and contact with the western world. From the Native

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<sup>39</sup> Martinus Cawley, *Father Crockett of Grand Ronde: Adrien-Joseph Croquet, 1818-1902, Oregon Indian Missionary, 1860-1898: A Life in Honor of the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of His Arrival* (Lafayette, OR: Guadalupe Translations, 1985), 18.

perspective, Palmer was, and continues to remain, an embodiment of western colonization. His “brilliant compromise” that Croquet refers to was not a compromise, but rather a dictatorial sentencing for the Native communities of Oregon. It instigated their forced removal from their homelands, forced them to endure their own Trail of Tears, and then confined them to small reservations with a host of different tribes. Rather than “civilize” them, his “noble mindedness” led to the destruction of not only their homeland and culture, but more importantly their entire way of life.

Croquet’s entire chronicle is highly significant to the discourse of decolonizing the colonial narrative. Although it is only one particular account, the colonial ideologies expressed and the assumptions made about tribal characterizations can be applied to most, if not all, historical narratives of Manifest Destiny and settler-colonialism. Croquet’s testimonial is also notable in that it is a faith based missionary interpretation. Both the Christian religion and the missionaries dedicated to converting Natives to Christianity are often overlooked in the larger narrative of Native history. But both the missionaries and the religious practices they brought to Oregon’s reservations played a vital role in assimilating the Native communities into white society. This assimilation critically shaped the inter-tribal dynamics of the reservation both externally and internally.

As one whole entity, inter-tribal dynamics within the Grand Ronde reservation remained somewhat cordial, but each of the individual tribes at Grand Ronde had different experiences with both the other tribes on the reservation and the colonial settlers of the region. The Rogue River, Kalapuya, and Molalla tribal communities had a much higher amount of recorded conflict with both the BIA and the local colonial

settlers. Grand Ronde tribal members who left the reservation and settled in the surrounding lands were characterized as “peaceful Indians” by the federal government and BIA. Those who remained on the reservation were still considered to be “savage,” “uncivilized,” and threatening to the newly established order of settler-colonialism.<sup>40</sup> Not only did this introduce a cultural and socio-political division between the on and off reservation Native communities at Grand Ronde, but it critically informed contemporary inter-tribal discourses of identity, politics, and cultural adaptation within the Grand Ronde community.

Most notably, settler-colonialism fundamentally shaped inter-tribal dynamics at Grand Ronde by introducing the ideology of assimilation and the subsequent process of “Americanization.” By the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Native communities had begun to realize that by becoming American, one could escape at least some degree of the negative socio-economic connotations associated with being Native. 1850 served as the turning point of heightened “Americanization” for the communities at Grand Ronde.<sup>41</sup> In his oral narrative, tribal member Ray Blacketer reflects, “Indians got absorbed and tried to become part of white society...there were a few holdouts...but [most people] tried to be part of the white society at large...Indians wanted to assimilate and wanted to be white [but] people don’t believe this.”<sup>42</sup> Ray’s statement indicates that the Native community at Grand Ronde increasingly saw the value of identifying as American. The benefits of being American included having access to guns, weapons,

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<sup>40</sup> Lewis, Interview by author, August 16, 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ray Blacketer, Interview by author, Phone, February 26, 2018.

fabric, metals, a higher social status, and most importantly a level of relative peace and acceptance by both the federal government and the white colonial settlers.

The drive to assimilate saw clothing, education, and language become some of the major points of cultural adaptation at Grand Ronde. Yet the most prominent way in which Native communities became “Americanized” was through the process of farming. However, according to David Lewis, “These Native men were not farmers. They didn’t know how to farm and struggled to learn so were considered lazy by the settlers.”<sup>43</sup> Not only does this reveal the colonial perception of the Grand Ronde communities, but more importantly it suggests that an inter-tribal power structure developed on the reservation. The Native communities and individuals that learned farming at a faster rate were able to quickly engage in a settler-colonial lifestyle and become seen as the “more civilized” groups in the eyes of the colonial settlers. It is no surprise that they received better resources and gained a level of internal power within the reservation. The Native communities at Grand Ronde that struggled to farm, or in some cases did not farm at all, were subjected to ridicule by both the colonial farmers and the Native “farmers”<sup>44</sup> within their own community. As a result, an inter-tribal hierarchy emerged, governed by those that had been deemed “farmers” by the Indian Agents of the reservation and subjugating those that did not learn farming and were considered “un-Americanized.”

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<sup>43</sup> Lewis, Interview by author, August 16, 2017.

<sup>44</sup> I put “farmers” in quotations because as David Lewis says, from the Native perspective none of the Native communities at Grand Ronde ever became colonial-style farmers.

While the dominant colonial narrative paints the picture that Native children and Native youth hired themselves out to farms surrounding the reservation in an attempt to learn and adopt techniques of husbandry and American culture. However, from the Native perspective this is wholly inaccurate. Tribal member Ray Blacketer refutes this narrative of assimilation, declaring, “There wasn’t much on the reservation...they [the Native communities] are just renters on the land, any resources could not be harvested commercially...so they [the Native communities] couldn’t make a living but could subsist...so everyone had to leave the reservation to find jobs and they [ended up] commuting to work.”<sup>45</sup> Ray’s poignant declaration reveals that the majority of Native communities at Grand Ronde did not voluntarily leave the reservation as colonial ideologies presume. Rather, they were forced to move off the reservation and engage in some level of assimilation with the outside community in order to survive beyond subsistence farming.

It is not surprising that the roots of this off reservation migration can be traced back to the federal government and their settler-colonialism tactics of assimilation. Once the Grand Ronde Reservation had been firmly established and the process of assimilation was well underway, the federal government began to encroach even more on the Native people’s already limited resources and severely constrained lifestyle. The Indian Agents in charge of the reservation retained for themselves the majority of the crops the Native communities grew, only allowing Native “farmers” the barest minimum of food needed to survive.

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<sup>45</sup> Blacketer, Interview by author, Phone, February 26, 2018.

Inevitably, the Native individuals that got jobs on the local farms gained knowledge of farming techniques and a glimpse into life as a colonial farmer rather than as a Native living on a reservation. Life off the reservation had its challenges as well. Most notably, the Native communities experienced racialized treatments by the neighboring whites, such as only being paid half of the wages a white person would be paid for the same amount of labor.<sup>46</sup> Despite this, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century migration of Native people off the Grand Ronde Reservation became a common occurrence. It was largely driven by the prospect of a better life off the reservation.

According to Ray, “those who left never really came back to the reservation or the Indian culture they left behind.”<sup>47</sup> Although this migration off the reservation seemed insignificant at the time, it became a pivotal event in shaping both contemporary inter-tribal dynamics within the Grand Ronde community and the Grand Ronde diaspora that currently exists today.

Another notable way that the Native community at Grande Ronde assimilated into the white colonial society was through marriage. Throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s it was common for Native women on the reservation to marry the newly arrived colonial settlers that farmed the surrounding lands. Some of these unions were voluntary, while others were arranged as either a trade or a sale. In both cases, the Native woman would move off the reservation to live with her new husband and more often than not, would raise her children in white colonial society. This particular type

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

of assimilation narrative is an integral part of Ray's family history. He reflects that in 1876:

“My great-grandmother was sold for a horse and a couple of blankets to her 1<sup>st</sup> husband. She had a kid and then they divorced...she then shackled up with a white guy, got married, and had 4 kids with him...[But back then] Indian women married 2 or 3 times, either the guy died or they split up, and so determining family history is difficult to try and get restored and a blood degree is really hard to determine...Today it is still hard [to determine blood quantum] but it is getting better.”<sup>48</sup>

While not a direct reflection of inter-tribal prejudice, Ray's narrative illuminates one of the major roots of contemporary inter-tribal dynamics at Grand Ronde. It introduces the practice of what many scholars today call “mixed-race;” the unions of a Native woman and a white man produced a mixed blood child, who could then claim both Native and colonial ancestry and identity. This mixed blood status became an avenue through which to pursue inter-tribal discrimination by bringing into the discussion the ideology of blood quantum as a way to determine Native identity. The result of this is that it brought Native identity into a legal framework. Yet this generation of half-white and half-Native people also served to bridge the social, cultural, and political divides that existed between the Native communities of Grand Ronde and the colonial farming communities surrounding the reservation by facilitating the process of “Americanizing” the Native communities.

An often forgotten but crucial part of Americanization at Grand Ronde was the introduction of classic American celebrations to reservation life. In addition to Christmas and Easter, Indian Agents at Grand Ronde organized the Fourth of July as an annual celebration of relaxation, games, and an opportunity for all the communities at

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Grand Ronde to come together. These American celebrations are recorded in *My Life: Reminiscences of a Grand Ronde Reservation Childhood*, an autobiographical memoir by Grand Ronde tribal member Louis Kenoyer who grew up on the reservation at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Louis Kenoyer records that as a child, the annual Fourth of July celebrations brought together all the different tribal communities of the Grand Ronde Reservation. He writes that each year the entire Native community, “paraded around the field. My father went in front of the wagon. Then his tribe went behind him. Then those Wachenos went behind my father’s tribe. Then those Molala people...Then those Santiam people...Then those Luckiamute people...All the Indians’ tribes went behind. The Whites stood there to the side.”<sup>49</sup> Kenoyer’s recollection reflects that the Native communities bought into and actively participated in the American celebrations, albeit in their own way within their own social structure. It illuminates the fact that even 50 years after the reservation was established, the Native communities at Grand Ronde retained their individual tribal identity within the social, cultural, and political confines of being a confederated reservation. It is also important to note that unlike Warm Springs, the tribal council of Grand Ronde is not comprised of equal representation from all five of the named tribes.

Tribal representation, both politically and socially, greatly differs between the two reservations and the individual tribal identity groups have not necessarily been entirely sustained at Grand Ronde. Assimilation and “Americanization” did not just alter the outward appearance of the Native communities at Grand Ronde, but also

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<sup>49</sup> Louis Kenoyer, *My Life: Reminiscences of a Grand Ronde Reservation Childhood* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2017), 282.

prompted a gradual identify shift to occur. Combined with the changing of names, this gradual shift towards a collective Grand Ronde identity minimized the specific tribal identities of each individual. In turn, this diminished the inter-tribal tension and lessened the inter-tribal discrimination within the reservation. Although feelings of inter-tribal prejudice continued to exist, the collective Grand Ronde identity served as an avenue to bridge the cultural differences between tribes and to some degree, it united the Native communities on the reservation.

Grand Ronde tribal elder June L. Olsen explores the impact this collective Grand Ronde identity had on family lineage in her semi-autobiographical narrative, *Living in the Great Circle*. In the book, Olsen includes a directory of all the families that are a part of the Grand Ronde community.<sup>50</sup> For every individual person their specific tribe, band, or community is listed directly next to or under their name. This is significant, for it shows that in this particular narrative, written by a Native individual of the Grand Ronde community, individual tribal identity remained important during the period of settler-colonialism, despite the emphasis placed on having a collective Grand Ronde identity.

This emergence of a Grand Ronde identity also produced a critical shift in both inter-tribal identity and inter-tribal relations on the reservation. Olsen goes on to write, “Eventually it was agreed that in order for people to be enrolled [at Grand Ronde] and receive treaty annuities, they had to be accepted by one of the tribes or bands assigned to the reservation and their status had to be approved by the Indian agent.”<sup>51</sup> This is a

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<sup>50</sup> June L. Olsen, *Living in Great Circle: The Grand Ronde Indian Reservation 1855-1905* (Clackamas, OR: A. Menard Publications, 2011), 50.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

prime example of not just assimilation of Native communities, but an assimilation that was engineered and manipulated by the federal government to subjugate some tribes while elevating others. For many members of the smaller bands and tribes, if they wanted to receive the benefits of being part of a legally recognized confederation Native individuals and communities who did not identify as Rogue River, Shasta, Molalla, Umpqua, or Kalapuya had to incorporate a Grand Ronde identity into their already existing individual tribal identity.

Although this is not a unique situation to many Native communities, it is a topic that is entirely overlooked in both the existing historical narrative and the academic literature. Rather than assimilate into the white colonial society, these individuals had to assimilate, at least to some extent, into a distinct Native culture that was different from their own. This by itself speaks directly to the notion of inter-tribal prejudice.

Furthermore, it was combined with the fact that their entire Native identity, not just their specific tribal identity but also whether or not they would be recognized as Native at all, rested in the hands of other Native communities. There is a clear underlying implication that those who were not recognized at the outset as one of the five tribes faced not only discrimination from the federal government, but also inter-tribal discrimination within their own Native community on their own Native reservation.

Only in recent years have the collective impacts of 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial settlement been examined by the communities at Grand Ronde. According to David Lewis, for the Grand Ronde community this inquiry into the historical past, “explores what we are losing by becoming American, specifically the language, the education,

and our identity.”<sup>52</sup> David goes on to explain that as a result, a new generation of Native people, primarily young adults, are beginning to reclaim their Native heritage and develop a Native rather than an American identity.

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<sup>52</sup> Lewis, Interview by author, August 16, 2017.

## **Life on the Reservation: Cultural Districting & the Allotment System**

Following the implementation of the reservation system and the creation of both the Warm Springs and Grand Ronde Reservations, the federal government then proceeded to divide reservation lands even further through the introduction of the allotment system. Originating from the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, the intent of the allotment system was to divide the communal land base by parceling out 160-acre sections of land, known as allotments, to each individual family that could claim tribal membership. Upon the death of the person who the parcel was ceded to, the allotment would then be equally divided between the surviving children and their families, furthering the division of reservation lands with each new generation. Any remaining parcels of land not allotted to tribal members automatically reverted back to the federal government and became available for extensive colonial settlement. Modeled after the Homestead Act of 1862, the underlying purpose of the allotment act was to further assimilate Native communities into mainstream American society by giving Native Americans United States citizenship and individual land ownership in adherence to the Euro-American model of land organization.<sup>53</sup>

The widespread practice of allotment that occurred on both the Warm Springs and Grand Ronde reservations indicates that from the outset of the reservation system, a tension existed between the tribes, the federal government, and the colonial settlers. The settlers had established farms, cattle ranches, and homesteads on the borders of the reservations. They were constantly encroaching on reservation lands driven by a strong

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<sup>53</sup> Stephen Dow Beckham, "Federal-Indian Relations," in *The First Oregonians*, ed. Laura Berg (Portland, OR: Oregon Council for the Humanities, 2007), 209-242.

desire to expand their colonial settlements onto the newly created reservation.<sup>54</sup> The driving force behind the entire allotment process was the ideological foundation that there would always be ‘extra land’ after the allotments had been parceled out. The allotment process was a direct result of settler-colonialism, perpetrated by the federal government and carried out by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Ultimately, the allotment system was merely one of many factors that produced a widespread cultural districting on both the Warm Springs Reservation and the Grand Ronde Reservation.

The lands that comprise both the Warm Springs and the Grand Ronde Reservations are subdivided into a variety of districts according to a range of determining factors. In addition to the physical division of land that occurred due to allotments, the most notable of these factors is individual tribal culture and tribal identity. Neighboring allotments on reservation lands were parceled out to members of the same tribe, resulting in the development of cultural districts. On the Warm Springs Reservation, these cultural districts formed as individual tribal communities that shared the same historical background, culture, and language, slowly became consolidated into three distinct locations within the border of the reservation. The particular map shown below (figure 3) visibly depicts the cultural geography of the Warm Springs Reservation.

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<sup>54</sup> Cliff, *A History of the Warm Springs Reservation*, 124.

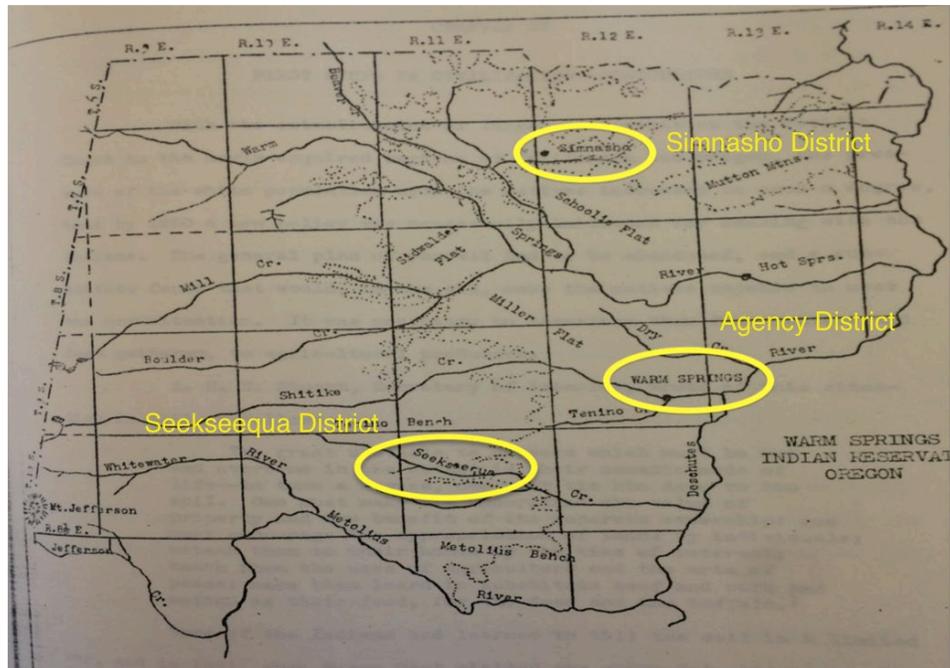


Figure 3: Map of the Warm Springs Reservation

This map outlines the borders of the Warm Springs Reservation and highlights the cultural districting of the reservation. Each of the 3 districts are circled and labeled for reference.<sup>55</sup>

Not only does the map identify the various cultural districts that have been created throughout the reservation lands, but also situates each individual district within the appropriate physical landscape. It also contextualizes each cultural district on the reservation in relation to all the other districts. The historical Agency District is known today as the small town of Warm Springs. It lies on the eastern edge of the reservation along the Deschutes River and is primarily settled by the Wasco community. Simnasho, the district initially settled by the Wasco people and that now houses the majority of the Sahaptin people, lies twenty-five miles north of the Agency District, surrounded by a large portion of the most fertile land that exists within the borders of the reservation. Seekseequa, the district that is almost exclusively Northern Paiute lies seven miles

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

southwest of the Agency District. It is known for its incredibly poor cropland and relative isolation, as well as its location on the southern edge of the reservation border. The map exemplifies the historical process of space and land being assigned and then imposed onto the Northern Paiute, Wasco, and Sahaptin communities through the process of allotment and cultural districting.

The practice of cultural districting has been evaluated from a western perspective in the form of documented field matron evaluations. Field matrons were a group of official surveyors sent at the behest of the Bureau of Indian Affairs at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to catalog the detailed social and economic status of each family residing on the Warm Springs Reservation. Each individual recording provides a snapshot of a particular family in a specific district on the reservation. Although highly invasive, the records create a historical window into the average day-to-day life of tribal members in each of the three cultural districts.

The overwhelming majority of these written records document nuclear tribal families of the Northern Paiute community that specifically reside within the boundaries of the Seekseequa district. Each family's location is noted as follows: "Location: Has allotment at SeceWa."<sup>56</sup> While the spelling differs from that of present day, there is no doubt that "SeceWa" is a reference to the Seekseequa district. The clear colonial English spelling of this single word highlights yet another visible manifestation of colonial imposition that furthers the dominant colonial narrative and rejects the accuracy of a Native perspective.

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<sup>56</sup> Field Matron Record Books, 1916-1922, Record Group 75, Records of Indian Affairs, Warm Springs Agency, National Archives and Records Administration (Seattle, WA), 24.

Operating within this colonial framework, the reports actively characterize the general state of the Seekseequa district in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Economic conditions of the district residents were listed as “poor,” while the houses and structures were cited as being “run down” and “in a disastrous state.”<sup>57</sup> On an inter-personal level, one notable observation described the general character of an average Northern Paiute family as, “Annie [the mother] is very immoral and neglects her children dreadfully...having no house, [and living] around in a teepee.”<sup>58</sup> The matron’s use of the word “immoral” is highly colonial, imposing western beliefs of morality and motherhood onto the Northern Paiute mother. When combined with the mention of neglect and an undeniable indication that by colonial standards a teepee does not qualify as a house, it is clear that the characterization of Northern Paiutes is highly critical and incredibly derogatory. Furthermore, this type of negative description does not appear in the field matron’s records of Simnasho or the Agency district, suggesting a clear portrayal of inter-tribal discrimination.

By contrast, descriptions of Tenino allotments on the outskirts of the Agency district characterize both the economic and housing conditions to be “good.” According to the reports, there appeared to be a vast abundance of food and work as well as substantial moral character, all qualities that the Northern Paiutes of the Seekseequa district reportedly lack.<sup>59</sup> Collectively, these records directly reveal that not only did the Bureau of Indian Affairs under the command of the federal government espouse the

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 48.

idea of cultural districting, but also that the practice itself was actively discriminatory towards the Northern Paiute community; they received the worst allotments of land, had little access to economic gain, and were considered morally inferior to the Sahaptin and Wasco tribes. Thus, these primary source reports reveal that the cultural districting of the Warm Springs Reservation and the inter-tribal prejudice this practice derived from was perpetrated and supported by an external force that caused internal struggles and prejudice.

From a Native perspective, Northern Paiute tribal elder Wilson Wewa critically addresses this topic of cultural districting in his oral narrative. Despite the fact that he identifies as Northern Paiute, Wilson Wewa is known throughout the larger Plateau region as a Washat leader and throughout the Great Basin as a spiritual leader among the Paiute community.<sup>60</sup> As a renowned historian of Northern Paiute history, Wilson's oral testimonial exposes the often unknown historical act of cultural districting that occurred on the Warm Springs Reservation from an internal perspective. It highlights the historical truth that, as latecomers to the reservation, the Northern Paiute community faced high levels of internal and external discrimination:

“When our people were moved from southeast Oregon and put on the Warm Springs Reservation in 1882, we were put on the southernmost extremity of the reservation. According to some of the Wasco and even Warm Springs elders...they knew that the allotment act wasn't working [for other tribes]...So when the Warm Springs and Wasco people were moved to central Oregon, they already were aware that there were other reservations [where] excess land was being sold to the public domain, thereby cutting down the size of their reservation. [Consequently], the decision was made by those leaders in the 1880s to let the Paiute come here but to put them on the south edge of the reservation so the white

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<sup>60</sup> Wewa, Interview by author, October 15, 2016.

people wouldn't take away the land. And so they put our people on the south end to protect the cutting away of land from this reservation.”<sup>61</sup>

Wilson's oral testimonial highlights the detailed reservation process the Northern Paiute tribal members faced upon arrival at the reservation. Most critically, it reveals that the Northern Paiutes were purposefully displaced within their own reservation, a land area in which they supposedly have one-third control over. Although subtle, Wilson's use of the specific phrase “let the Paiute come here” is a point of inter-tribal tension for the Northern Paiute community, for the land that the Warm Springs Reservation is situated on is historically and traditionally Paiute land. As such, many Northern Paiutes feel as though they do not need permission from either the federal government or other tribes to return to their ancestral homeland. It is also important to note that because the Northern Paiutes were the last tribe to be removed to the Warm Springs Reservation, the most fertile and promising lands on the dry and rocky reservation had already been parceled out to the Wasco and Sahaptin communities. Both the Native and non-Native discourses fail to acknowledge this fact, yet for the Northern Paiute community within the Warm Springs Reservation it still remains an important piece of their historical narrative.

The end of Wilson's statement reveals that the Northern Paiute community was strategically placed on the southernmost portion of the reservation. Known as being the most undesirable land on the reservation and the closest to the encroaching colonial settlers, the Northern Paiute community was engineered by both the BIA and the other tribes to serve as a buffer between the colonial settlers and the Native communities on the reservation. It also indicates that as late as the 1880s, colonial farmers and settlers

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

still posed a threat to the Native communities at Warm Springs. Despite the Treaty of 1855, the Native communities knew that they could still be subjected to forced removal and there was no guarantee that the designated reservation lands at Warm Springs would remain in their hands. This threat was most keenly felt by the Northern Paiutes, as they were the last to arrive and had a population in Seekseequa that was three times smaller than both the Wasco and Sahaptin tribes. Wilson's words collectively reflect the role of the Seekseequa district as an exemplary example of inter-tribal discrimination.

It is clear that the Northern Paiutes faced discrimination on two sides. First, the establishment of the Warm Springs Reservation by the federal government meant that they could no longer engage in their nomadic tribal culture. Second, by specifically being given the most rocky and unusable piece of land upon their settlement at Warm Springs, they faced discrimination from the other tribes on the reservation. Thus, the practice of cultural districting on the Warm Springs Reservation was a clear act of inter-tribal prejudice aimed at subjugating the already diasporic Northern Paiute community further.

Despite living in the Agency district and being raised in the Seekseequa community, Wilson currently lives in the Simnasho district. Originally settled by both Wasco and Sahaptin people upon their arrival on the Reservation, Simnasho waned as the Wasco community was transferred to the Agency District at Warm Springs following the relocation of BIA headquarters to the small town in the late 1800s. Although the Sahaptin community largely remained in Simnasho while the Wasco people took up residence in the Agency District, by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century <sup>62</sup> This

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<sup>62</sup> Wilson Wewa, Interview by author, Warm Springs Reservation, August 15, 2017.

slow but critical inter-tribal integration indicates that after the initial allotments were ceded, the delineation of allotments was not strictly based on tribal identity. Although the cultural districting of the reservation heavily informed the cultural geography, it did not prevent inter-tribal interactions or internal migration.

Wilson's voluntary settlement in Simnasho serves to emphasize the more positive inter-tribal relations that have begun to develop over the past half century. Wilson stresses that throughout his childhood, "there was a spirit of community on the reservation. We all grew up together and knew each other... Today people in Simnasho just grumble [about his Northern Paiute identity]. That's about it... especially because the reservation is so integrated now."<sup>63</sup> Wilson's statement is significant in highlighting that the negative inter-tribal relations prominent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century have largely faded, although they continue to exist in smaller and subtler forms. The integration of the reservation that Wilson speaks of must not be overlooked or dismissed. It shows that despite the framework of settler-colonialism the tribes have been forced to live in, the Native communities at Warm Springs have still managed to amicably come together, survive, and flourish.

In conjunction with Wilson's oral testimonial, Myra brings this discussion of designated allotments and cultural districting into a contemporary framework of discourse that adds a different perspective and reflects another side of the story. In her oral narrative, she emphasizes, "They placed them [the Northern Paiute] out of the way so to speak in the Seekseequa district, an area that was originally exclusively Northern Paiute because it is further out from the actual community... and it's still that way

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

today.”<sup>64</sup> Myra’s statement is significant in exposing the fact that despite the level of integration on the reservation and the amicable inter-tribal relations, the cultural districts established in the 1800s by the federal government still clearly exist on the reservation today.

Mirroring the strategy implemented at Warm Springs, the federal government subjected the Grand Ronde Reservation to the process of cultural districting followed by the allotment system. Cultural districts were created on the Grand Ronde Reservation according to tribal identity and tribal culture. Since there were 27 small bands and communities removed to Grand Ronde, the Bureau of Indian Affairs divided them into the 5 named tribes that exist today: Umpqua, Rogue River, Shasta, Kalapuya, and Molalla. The map below (figure 4) visibly depicts mid-19<sup>th</sup> century cultural geography of the Grand Ronde Reservation.

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<sup>64</sup> Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, Phone, November 17, 2016.

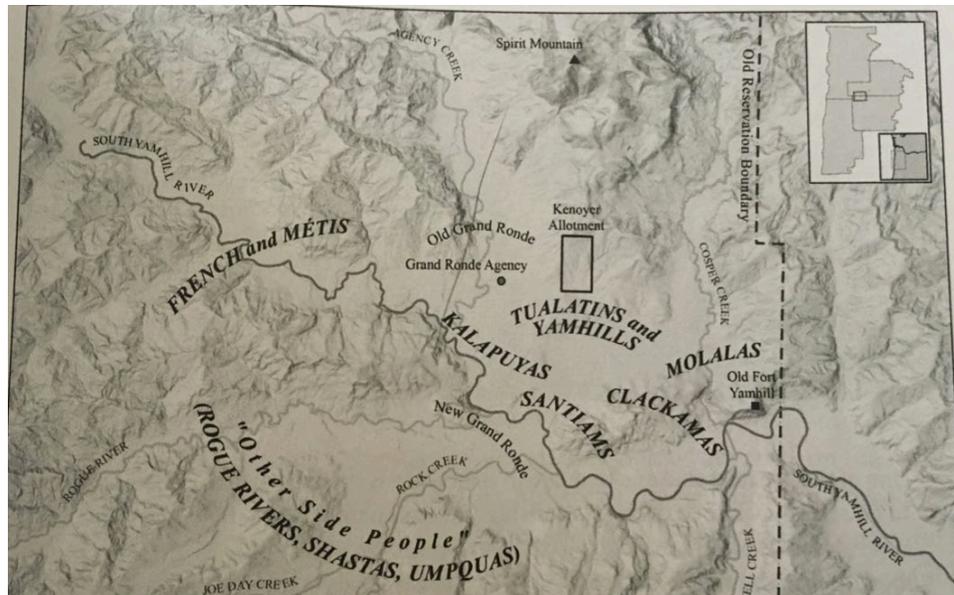


Figure 4: Map of the Grand Ronde Reservation

This map shows the cultural districts of the Grand Ronde Reservation and the specific tribes that lived in each district circa 1890.<sup>65</sup>

By the 1850s, the temporarily established reservation housed an increasing number of small tribes and bands from all over the state. As shown in the map, the system of cultural districting was implemented to separate these tribes and bands according to their region of origin or by the previous reservation they originated from. By 1856, there were 5 main encampments on the reservation, collectively spread across the Valley and along the Grand Ronde River. According to Grand Ronde tribal historian David Lewis, a portion of the Umpqua community was situated in the southern encampments while the rest of the Umpqua people were spread throughout the reservation. The Rogue River people inhabited one large encampment just south of the Umpqua community, notable for its use of tents rather than permanent houses because the community expected to be forcibly removed at any given moment. The people of

<sup>65</sup> Kenoyer, *My Life*, 24.

the Western Valley tribes were initially divided into three smaller bands, Kalapuya Molalla, and Tualatin. Each band inhabited one encampment in the northern region of the reservation scattered along the north side of the Grand Ronde River in a ring like formation.<sup>66</sup> Due to the geographic distance between the 5 districts, communication between different tribes and communities was extremely limited, resulting in cultural pockets being formed in different areas of the reservation lands.

The cultural districting that occurred at Grand Ronde was a direct result of, “the federal government separating the tribes.”<sup>67</sup> Similar to the Warm Springs Reservations, this separation and cultural segregation quickly became a point of inter-tribal tension, particularly in regards to identity. In addition to existing individual tribal identity, regional identity became a prominent social and cultural aspect of early life on the reservation. The Grand Ronde River served as the physical boundary of division. But the socio-cultural division, although enhanced by the cultural districting, was rooted in the fact that these 27 small Native communities were originally from all over the state. This conglomeration of bands haphazardly thrown together by the federal government each had a different tribal history, specific cultures, and a distinct way of life.

Similar to Warm Springs, cultural districting on the Grand Ronde Reservation appears in the written narrative of colonization. The cultural districting that occurred at Grand Ronde was clearly engineered by both the federal government and the colonial settlers, in particular missionaries, that had formed close relationships with the Native communities on the reservation. Father Adrien-Joseph Croquet was one of the most

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<sup>66</sup> Lewis, Interview by author, August 16, 2017.

<sup>67</sup> Blacketer, Interview by author, February 26, 2018.

notable missionaries on the Grand Ronde Reservation. Reflecting on the cultural geography of the reservation, Croquet wrote, “the early Agents at Grand Ronde dealt with the Indians there in terms of three great valleys from which they came. Within those valleys there were distinctions of language and culture, often quite radical, but the whole thrust of government policy was to minimize the differences between the Indians, and so the grouping by valleys was used.”<sup>68</sup>

Croquet’s statement clearly reveals that the Indian Agents, and by extension the BIA, acknowledged the fact that visible tribal differences existed between the Native communities removed to Grand Ronde. In addition to the language, culture, and geography explicitly reference by Croquet, it is clearly implied that tribal differences were also determined by how “civilized” or “savage” the BIA perceived the Native communities to be. Combined with the use of the term “Indian,” this particular excerpt indicated that the ultimate goal of the federal government was not to separate the Native communities at Grand Ronde, but rather bring them together under one “Indian” identity in the hopes that tribal differences would be eliminated.

As a result, from its very early days inter-tribal cultural exchange occurred on the Grand Ronde Reservation to a greater extent than it did at Warm Springs despite the cultural districting. Serving as somewhat of a transit stop for tribes before they were forcibly removed to permanent reservations, Grand Ronde quickly became both a trading hub and a social space for tribal gatherings. The small land area but relatively large population meant that the five encampments were geographically closer together than the districts at Warm Springs. This made communication and increased social

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<sup>68</sup> Cawley, *Father Crockett of Grand Ronde*, 39.

interaction with other tribal communities easier and more accessible. Just as it did before the invasion of colonial settlers, inter-marriage between the tribes on the reservation became a prominent social interaction. It allowed for both a continuous mixing of different tribal cultures and a level of constant internal migration.

Consequently, over time, “everyone learned to get along and have kids.”<sup>69</sup> Not only does this speak to a more positive and communal nature of inter-tribal dynamics that developed, but it also implies a level of coming together within the entire Grand Ronde community. This is significant, for as a result, the cultural districting system on the reservation was eliminated. Combined with the high levels of inter-marriage, internal migration, and continuous social interaction, the different communities on the reservation slowly became integrated and spread out across the reservation, maximizing land use and establishing a shared culture.

Today, there are no geographic districts on the Grand Ronde Reservation. According to David Lewis, the elimination of the district system was heavily impacted by the allotment system. Similar to what occurred on the Warm Springs Reservation, allotments parceled the land of the Grand Ronde Reservation out to individuals and individual families.<sup>70</sup> With the continuous division of land occurring each generation and the guarantee of at least a small parcel, it was easy for the entire Grand Ronde community to spread out and integrate with each other. Unlike Warm Springs, part of the argument for the allotment system at Grand Ronde was that the Grand Ronde

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<sup>69</sup> Lewis, Interview by author, August 16, 2017.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

communities were already assimilated into colonial society that allotments would have little impact on their already “Americanized” way of life.

However this was not the case. According to Ray Blacketer, the majority of the Native communities removed to Grand Ronde were heavily against the allotment system. Given the cultural districting that existed, the idea of sub-dividing lands into specific parcels was not only a foreign concept to many, but also a threat to their way of life. As a way of bypassing these anti-allotment sentiments, the Indian Agents of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, “created a committee of 9 tribal members in order to get the allotments to pass...but of course they stacked the deck by choosing Indians who wanted the allotments.”<sup>71</sup> This directly exposes a clear level of manipulation by the federal government that capitalized on promoting inter-tribal discrimination; they pitted tribal members against other tribal members within the confines of one reservation in order to pass the allotment system and shape the cultural layout.

With the elimination of cultural districts and the increasing cultural mixing at Grand Ronde there emerged an emphasis on family relations. Rather than organize themselves by tribal affiliation, by the 1880s the people at Grand Ronde began to organize themselves by family. An individual’s identity and more importantly their cultural, social, and political affiliation within the Grand Ronde community, is directly tied to their family name. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of family names had become English or “white” rather than Native. This name change was a direct result of not only heavy missionary influence, but also a visible symbol of assimilation. As a

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<sup>71</sup> Blacketer, Interview by author, February 26, 2018.

result, feelings of inter-tribal prejudice became somewhat minimized, for most everyone had visibly adopted an American identity or at least gained an American name.

Furthermore, in conjunction with the loss of cultural districting, individual tribal identity has largely been lost on the Grand Ronde Reservation. Instead, a communal Grand Ronde identity has been created to represent all the enrolled members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. However, many Grand Ronde tribal elders reflect that this communal Grand Ronde identity is a point of inter-tribal division within the Grand Ronde community.

Tribal elder Dell Dickison states that the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is such a broad category that although she is a legally enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, she identifies herself as Chinook, Umpqua, and Cree. When asked about the Grand Ronde Reservation being a confederated reservation, she reflects that, “At Grand Ronde there’s like five tribes that are listed on our seal and Chinook isn’t one of them, so we are made to feel less than, you know, less than good enough to the other tribes that are listed.”<sup>72</sup> Dell’s words speak directly to the heart of inter-tribal discrimination and the inter-tribal tensions that exist on confederated reservations. In parallel to the Northern Paiute being seen as non-treaty signers, the absence of all 27 tribal bands being listed as part of the confederation has created an avenue of inter-tribal prejudice at Grand Ronde. From Dell’s perspective, she has experienced a range of inter-tribal discrimination based on the fact that her identity falls outside one of the five named tribes of Grand Ronde.

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<sup>72</sup> Dell Dickison, Interview by author, Warm Springs Reservation, April 27, 2018.

Tribal elder Marta Clifford, who introduces herself as a tribal elder registered with the Grand Ronde Tribe but who identifies as Chinook, Cree, and Umpqua, approaches this issue of inter-tribal divisions within a confederation from a broader perspective. Building off of Dell's words, Marta declares, "Anytime there is a confederation...just because you are Native doesn't mean everyone is going to get along and treat each other like they should."<sup>73</sup> Although Marta does not specifically reference her own confederation in this statement, her serious tone and personal experiences with inter-tribal discrimination create an implication that inter-tribal prejudices and inter-tribal tensions can clearly be seen and felt within the Grand Ronde Confederation.

However, in comparison to the Warm Springs Reservation, at Grand Ronde inter-tribal prejudice based on tribal identity and geographic cultural segregation is minimal despite being a confederation of tribes. The rigid cultural geography of the Grand Ronde reservation became fluid and ultimately broke down, resulting in Grand Ronde becoming a more integrated confederated reservation than Warm Springs in regards to cultural districting and geographic segregation.

That is not to say that feelings of inter-tribal prejudice do not exist and that inter-tribal discrimination does not occur on the basis of cultural geography. It most certainly does. Tribal member Ray Blacketer reflects that, "to this day, there is a tribal, cultural, and historical divide between the upper and lower farm Indians [and that] they still disagree on lots of stuff."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Clifford, Interview by author, April 27, 2018.

<sup>74</sup> Blacketer, Interview by author, February 26, 2018.

This is significant, for it speaks to the fact that even though the cultural districts have been eliminated, the feelings of inter-tribal tension and animosity are still present to some degree on the Grand Ronde Reservation and within the Grand Ronde community.

## Language: A Tool of Inter-Tribal Prejudice

In addition to cultural districting, a major tool that reflects the dynamic character of inter-tribal relations on both the Warm Springs and Grand Ronde Reservations is language. Historically, language on the Warm Springs Reservation has been used as both a dividing force and cultural barrier between the Columbia River tribes and the Northern Paiute tribe. While the tribal language of the Sahaptin and Wasco communities derives from the Ichishkiin linguistic family, the Northern Paiute language belongs to the Shoshonean linguistic family.<sup>75</sup> This language division carried over onto the Warm Springs Reservation despite the colonial attempt to eliminate tribal language. Consequently, the Ichishkiin language quickly became the dominant tribal language on the Warm Springs Reservation, causing the Northern Paiute language to rapidly disappear.

In recent years, language has become magnified as a tool of discrimination due to contemporary efforts of language revitalization becoming ongoing on the Warm Springs Reservation. A 1977 article in the Warm Springs Tribal Newspaper, *Spilyay Tymoo*, states, “Sahaptin language growing,”<sup>76</sup> followed by a 1978 article declaring, “Language Class to Include Wasco: Speakers of the Wasco and Sahaptin Languages Will Team Up.”<sup>77</sup> Neither of these articles mentions the Northern Paiute language in any form despite the fact that the language revitalization efforts are occurring on the Warm Springs Reservation. Both articles clearly reflect that the Sahaptin and Wasco

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<sup>75</sup> Cliff, *A History of the Warm Springs Reservation*, 34.

<sup>76</sup> Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, *Spilyay Tymoo – Coyote News: Warm Springs Newspaper, March 1976-October 2016*, April 1, 1977.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, June 30, 1978.

languages of the Columbia River are not only being brought back, but that they are the dominant voices on the reservation in terms of Native language.

More importantly, the language of the *Spilyay Tymoo* indicates that from the start of the language revitalization movement, early attempts to revitalize the Northern Paiute language were completely marginalized. It is unclear if this marginalization was an outward act of inter-tribal prejudice or simply a natural result of the Northern Paiute language being virtually eliminated from the entire reservation. Although the latter is a more plausible scenario, either way it is clear that any efforts to revitalize the Northern Paiute language at Warm Springs have faced major challenges. This is primarily due to the fact that the Northern Paiute language simply is not spoken on the Warm Springs Reservation.

Only a handful of tribal elders are even familiar with the Northern Paiute language and only a select few can still speak it. According to Northern Paiute tribal elder Bucky Holiday, “I’m forgetting my language because no one speaks it anymore.”<sup>78</sup> Bucky is one of the oldest and most respected elders within the Northern Paiute community at Warm Springs, which makes her statement even more telling of the sheer loss of language the Northern Paiute community has experienced. Unlike the Sahaptin and Wasco communities, whose languages are still spoken on the reservation, the Northern Paiute community has experienced linguistic inter-tribal prejudice because of their marginalized and almost extinct Native language.

In an attempt to prevent a complete loss of the Northern Paiute language, Northern Paiute tribal elders such as Myra Johnson-Orange have started a rigorous

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<sup>78</sup> Bucky Holiday, Interview by author, Agency Longhouse at Warm Springs, August 7, 2017.

revitalization movement specifically aimed at the Northern Paiute community. In 1996, an entire century after the Northern Paiute community at Warm Springs was established, an education based Northern Paiute linguistic partnership with members of the Burns Paiute Tribe was introduced to the Warm Springs Reservation.<sup>79</sup> Led by Myra, this program is focused on developing and then promoting Northern Paiute language lessons and communal learning sessions on both the Warm Springs and Burns Paiute Reservations. In January of 1996, for the first time in the history of the newspaper, *Spilyay Tymoo* printed an announcement for the newly created Northern Paiute language revitalization program.<sup>80</sup> The announcement itself is significant, for it is the first time when a somewhat equal representation of language revitalization attempts is both advertised and then implemented on the Warm Springs Reservation. However, it is important to note that according to Myra, the Northern Paiute language is spoken to a much greater degree on both the Burns Paiute Reservation and the Fort McDermott Reservation.<sup>81</sup> This suggests that the tribe or community with the most power and more tribal members who can thus exert the most influence determines the dominant language spoken within a given area.

A particular form of language being used as a tool to foster feelings of inter-tribal prejudice is the widespread characterization of Northern Paiute people being “Snake Indians.” In his oral narrative, Wilson vehemently counters this colonial assumption. He illustrates the strength of his point by comparing the derogatory use of

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<sup>79</sup> Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, *Spilyay Tymoo*, January 1, 1996.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Myra Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, Agency Longhouse at Warm Springs, August 7, 2017.

the term “Snake Indians” to the racialized epithet of using the “N word” in American society. He adamantly states:

“One of the other things that is really important is that “Snakes” was not our own name for ourselves...Because of the [inter-tribal] animosity... Indian Agents documented that we were “Snake Indians” as related to them by the Warm Springs or the Wascos or the Umatilla or the Nez Perce. Since finding this out...I have always looked at “Snake” as a derogatory term, that is equal to calling Black People ‘niggers.’”<sup>82</sup>

When asked about the legacy of this discriminatory “Snake Indian” term, Wilson recalls, “They [the Wasco and Sahaptin] have never changed calling us that [“Snake Indians”]. We are not “Snake Indians,” we are Neawhoa, and we have to have pride in who we truly are not what someone else pegged us with.”<sup>83</sup> Building off of Wilson’s testimony, Brenda Scott, another Northern Paiute tribal elder and community leader, reiterates the presence of this historically ingrained sense of inter-tribal discrimination. She recalls that others on the reservation, “were really mean to our Paiute people...They called us dumb, stupid, and Black...They called us “Itzah” which means coyote, a derogatory term that we consider to be a cuss word...They still call us Black, dumb, and rattlesnake people because we hide in the rocks and then strike. They think we don’t understand what it means, but we know.”<sup>84</sup>

Wilson and Brenda’s statements reflect the persistent use of derogatory terms such as “Snake Indian” and “Black Paiute” in both the historical narrative and contemporary times. There is a clear implication that the terms themselves derived from the historical inter-tribal prejudice towards Northern Paiutes. Furthermore, these

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<sup>82</sup> Wewa, Interview by author, October 15, 2016.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Scott, Interview by author, August 7, 2017.

two testimonials reveal that the use of language as a form of inter-tribal discrimination towards the Northern Paiute community has become both internalized and accepted as normal. Most importantly, their declarations serve as a step towards re-writing history from the Northern Paiute perspective. Not only do they internally rebuke the presumed characterization of Northern Paiutes as being “Snake Indians,” but also adamantly assert the continued presence of the Northern Paiute people. The continued use of the derogatory terms “Snake Indians,” “Black Paiutes,” and “Itzah” in the dominant historiography of Northern Paiute history is just one of many examples that showcase the dynamics of inter-tribal relations. Within the socio-political confines of the Warm Springs Reservation, language continues to be used as a visible tool of tangible, public, foundational, inter-personal and pervasive discrimination towards the Northern Paiute community.

Although the statements of Wilson, Brenda, Bucky, and Myra are specific to the Northern Paiute community, the Grand Ronde community initially faced the same challenges as well. With 27 different bands of people and 29 distinct languages, the Grand Ronde community was forced to navigate these linguistic differences within the confines of a small reservation under the newly created legal term of confederation. Inevitably, a large portion of the early Native languages spoken at Grand Ronde disappeared. It is unclear if this loss of language resulted from inter-tribal prejudice that discouraged the use of some languages and encouraged the use of others. But a similarity in the Willamette Valley languages and the southern Oregon languages allowed for a basic level of inter-tribal communication to occur.

In addition to language similarities impacting inter-tribal relations, the familiarity and rapid adoption of the English language at Grand Ronde was also critical. Unlike the Warm Springs Reservation, where language and the loss of language divided the different Native communities, on the Grand Ronde Reservation the English language became an avenue of communication that bridged the cultural and linguistic differences. Yet it is imperative to note that the adoption of the English language and the linguistic colonization that occurred at Grand Ronde both derive from settler-colonialism.

However, today Grand Ronde is currently facing the same challenge as the Northern Paiutes in restoring their languages. Rather than the term revitalize, many Grand Ronde members use the term restore to discuss the old Native languages that have been lost. As of today, the Chinookan language is the only Native language currently being restored at Grand Ronde. Restoration efforts of the Kalapuya language are currently being worked on by Henry Zink, who examines each of the 3 separate Kalapuyan dialects: north, central, and south Kalapuyan.<sup>85</sup> Siletz tribal elder Esther Stutzman is also working on the restoration of the Kalapuyan language. The likelihood of restoring all 29 languages is nearly impossible due to the simple fact that most of these languages are not spoken anymore and have been completely forgotten.

To add another layer to the discussion of Native language, in addition to linguistic inter-tribal prejudice, both reservations were subjected to the linguistic colonization, in which the English language was forcibly imposed on the Native communities. For both the Warm Springs and Grand Ronde Reservations, the mere

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<sup>85</sup> Lewis, Interview by author, August 16, 2017.

presence of the English language heavily impacts both the historical and current discussion surrounding Native language.

Wilson Wewa offers his perspective on language as a form of inter-tribal prejudice, commenting on familiar words such as “discrimination,” “prejudice,” “treaty,” and “reservation.” He states that, “all these terms are white terms.”<sup>86</sup> Wilson’s comment is critical in exposing that on a fundamental level, the language that is used to discuss Native issues and tell Native history, even within the framework of decolonization, is still rooted in the English rather than the Native language. More significantly, the English language has been used as a visible form of colonization to label the Warm Springs and Grand Ronde Reservations as confederated reservations.

But what exactly does it mean to be a confederation in terms of language? When asked to comment on this particular question, Northern Paiute tribal elder Brenda Scott reflects, “We still consider ourselves a sovereign nation because we did not sign the treaty... So we consider ourselves a free people even though we are under the umbrella of a confederation of tribes.”<sup>87</sup> Echoing Brenda’s sentiment, Wilson Wewa states, “Personally I think it’s just a name placed on us by the white people and the federal government... it was a term [that] imprisoned us by white people on our own land...If it was adopted by a tribe [at some point] it was by the Wasco and Sahaptin because they signed the treaty.”<sup>88</sup> Wilson and Brenda’s statements speak directly to the complex nature of being a confederation, as well as the high level of linguistic colonization that

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<sup>86</sup> Wewa, Interview by author, August 15, 2017.

<sup>87</sup> Scott, Interview by author, August 7, 2017.

<sup>88</sup> Wewa, Interview by author, August 15, 2017.

occurred on the Warm Springs Reservation. For the Northern Paiute community at Warm Springs, identifying themselves as non-treaty signers greatly impacts their perspective on what their confederated status truly means. Brenda and Wilson's words suggest that although it produces a sense of independence for the Northern Paiutes, it simultaneously creates a discriminatory division within the confederation, indicating that not all tribes within a confederation receive equal representation.

## **The Museum at Warm Springs: Visualizing the Past**

The Museum at Warm Springs is a prime example of a physical manifestation that reflects contemporary inter-tribal dynamics of the Warm Springs Reservation. Located in the town of Warm Springs on the eastern edge of the reservation, the museum was conceptually introduced to the Warm Springs Tribal Council in 1974. Officially opening to the public on March 13, 1993 after twenty years of collaborative planning and intense construction, the overall goal of the museum is to recount the history of the Warm Springs Reservation from a solely Native perspective.<sup>89</sup> Despite being a constantly evolving museum, within this particular narrative of inter-tribal dynamics, I treat the Museum at the Warm Springs as a static artifact, expressly representing the history, land, and people, from an exclusively Native perspective.

I was privileged enough to tour the Museum at Warm Springs with Northern Paiute tribal elder Myra Johnson-Orange in October of 2016, as part of the field research trip for Professor Hatfield's and Professor O'Neal's decolonizing history class. This allowed me to gain both a personal and Native perspective to the ways in which inter-tribal dynamics are exhibited in the creation and design of the museum. The three tribes, Sahaptin, Wasco, and Northern Paiute, are each identified and recognized as being individual communities within the collective political entity of the reservation. Yet they are not given an equal amount of visible representation within the various museum exhibits. References and depictions of a Northern Paiute presence on the

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<sup>89</sup> The Museum at Warm Springs, "Permanent Exhibit Hall," Museum Exhibit. March 1993, The Museum at Warm Springs, Warm Springs OR, October 16, 2016.

reservation are either extremely limited or noticeably absent from the extensive videos, photographs, glass artifact cases, and documents displayed to the public.

In both the historical and contemporary sense, it often feels as though many Northern Paiute references are more of an afterthought, added in towards the end of a description or appearing at the bottom of a list. Any and all things related to, or associated with, the Sahaptin and Wasco tribes, including names, artifacts, and diorama displays, are visibly placed above or in front of any aspect of Northern Paiute culture. For example, one of the most prominent maps in the main exhibit hall visibly draws out the various land areas ceded to the Reservation and the different tribes that engaged in these land transfers. The historical descriptions accompanying the map call out by name both the ‘Warm Springs’ and Wasco tribes, yet nowhere are the Northern Paiutes mentioned as being a participating or affected group in these land transactions.<sup>90</sup> This notable absence of Northern Paiute presence from the history of the reservation implies an underlying but fundamental separation between the Northern Paiutes and the Columbia River Tribes that continues to exist today.

Although the Museum itself claims to be a collaborative project in which Sahaptin, Wasco, and Northern Paiute tribal members participated equally and were given equal representation, according to Myra, “We [the Northern Paiute community] were involved in 2% of the making of the museum.”<sup>91</sup> Rosie, a Northern Paiute tribal elder continues Myra’s reflection, stating, “I disagree with some stuff they are wanting in the museum because I don’t think they talked to everyone. Don’t believe everything

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Myra Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, The Museum at Warm Springs, October 16, 2016.

that is being written.”<sup>92</sup> Myra and Rosie’s statements clearly indicate that even in the sphere of accurately telling their tribal history, the Northern Paiute community is underrepresented within the Warm Springs Confederation. Wilson Wewa reiterates this sentiment, stating that the portrayal of Northern Paiute culture and history is very minimal and that little collaboration actually occurred despite the fact that a meeting was held with Paiute, Wasco, and Sahaptin tribal elders to discuss the exhibit curation and layout of the museum. He asserts, “Because we always kept our culture to ourselves, the Wasco and Sahaptin thought that we had nothing to contribute to the museum...They did it without [our] input or consensus. They stepped over us... They thought Paiutes don’t know nothing.”<sup>93</sup>

Wilson and Myra’s statements are both heartbreaking and brutally honest. They clearly indicate that even in the sphere of accurately telling their tribal history, the Northern Paiute community is underrepresented within the Warm Springs Confederation. Furthermore, their testimonials reveal an underlying attempt to erase Northern Paiute culture and history from reservations lands, as the majority of the museum is created, designed, and controlled largely from the Sahaptin and Wasco point of view. The glass cases spread throughout the museum exhibits display an array of Northern Paiute artifacts, yet museum curators did not ask Northern Paiute elders on the Warm Springs Reservation to craft any cultural item. Instead, the baskets, cradleboards, and tools are primarily borrowed from other reservations, notably the Burns Paiute Reservation in Burns OR, or historical collections.<sup>94</sup> It is clear that, in parallel to the

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<sup>92</sup> Rosie Smith, Interview by author, Warm Springs Reservation, October 20, 2017.

<sup>93</sup> Wewa, Interview by author, August 15, 2017.

*Spilyay Tymoo*, the Museum at Warm Springs subtly promotes a collective Warm Springs tribal identity as an existing characteristic defining the people and culture of the Warm Springs Reservation.

Yet an average tourist simply visiting the museum would have no knowledge of this unequal representation. They would not recognize the wildly inaccurate historical data of the Northern Paiute tribe nor would they realize that the museum itself is not a true collaboration. This discussion about the Northern Paiute community being underrepresented in the Museum at Warm Springs also brings to light critical questions regarding the ways in which Native history is currently being portrayed to the general public. Even educated tourists such as myself would not have comprehended the extent to which the Northern Paiutes are underrepresented had it not been for Myra's ongoing oral narrative and Wilson's personal reflections.

While the majority of both narratives follow the familiar trajectory of Northern Paiute discrimination, one of Myra's revelations unexpectedly diverges from this historical narrative. Myra recounts that as a young woman her grandmother engaged in the art of making red paint. This cultural item quickly became a trading commodity when the Sahaptin medicine man entered into a trade partnership with her Paiute grandmother over the red paint in exchange for medicinal knowledge.<sup>95</sup> This unknown but critical interaction is one example that exemplifies a historic dynamic of positive inter-tribal reciprocity.

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, October 16, 2016.

Although not widespread and clearly limited to particular items of trade, inter-tribal relationships founded on a sense of reciprocity and equality between the Northern Paiute and the Columbia River tribes did historically exist in some capacity. However, this aspect of Northern Paiute history is neither sustained nor addressed by the museum. As a result, Myra concluded the tour by looking to the future of both the Museum at Warm Springs and the Northern Paiute community.

One of her closing remarks that spoke directly to contemporary inter-tribal dynamics was her call for, “some updates [to the museum] and a clear picture of three tribes rather than one, [for] we need to do a truer visible representation of who we are. We [the Northern Paiutes] have always been here, we will always be here.”<sup>96</sup>

Myra’s statement is a direct acknowledgement that the Northern Paiute community at Warm Springs continues to experience inter-tribal discrimination.<sup>97</sup> It also suggests that the distinct tribal identity of the Northern Paiute, Wasco, and Sahaptin has been marginalized and that the Warm Springs identity has become a blanket term used to describe everyone on the reservation. Given this, for the Northern Paiute community it is not just about reclaiming their Paiute identity. It is also about visibly and accurately portraying their Paiute identity and tribal history in a public space to which they are entitled to equal representation.

More importantly, Myra’s testimonial speaks to the notion that the Northern Paiutes have as much a claim, if not greater, to both the reservation land and its history.

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<sup>96</sup> Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, October 16, 2016.

<sup>97</sup> Another particular example that highlights inter-tribal discrimination is the “Honor Roll” of Warm Springs veterans. It is visibly displayed in the museum and includes those who served in the genocidal “Snake War,” known as “Warm Springs Scouts,” who engaged in killing many Northern Paiutes under the direction of William McKay. However, the display makes no mention of the genocidal impact on the Northern Paiutes or the lasting historical trauma that many Northern Paiutes experience today.

Myra makes it clear that the Northern Paiutes have always inhabited the land and continue to have a strong presence. Despite the inter-tribal prejudice they face, they will continue to remain on the land and in the historical narrative.

Unlike the proliferation of casinos such as Spirit Mountain and Indian Head, The Museum at Warm Springs is currently one of only a few select tribal museums in Oregon that are located on site at the reservation and open to the general public. In 2014, twenty years after the Museum of Warm Springs opened, Grand Ronde began the initial process of crafting a tribal museum on the Grand Ronde Reservation. As both the tribal historian for Grand Ronde and a respected leader in the community, David Lewis was one of the first people to map out a design of what the museum would include.

Using The Museum at Warm Springs as a basic template, David developed archival programs, curated exhibits, graphic arts, interactive activities, an archeological lab, and an educational layout complete with a circular hallway, an extra space for traveling exhibits, and a research library.<sup>98</sup>

Yet similar to the Northern Paiute at Warm Springs, David was heavily criticized for his work and his emphasis on equal representation within the museum exhibits. He recalls that after only a year on the project, those in charge, “let me go...They took my knowledge and then threw me out.”<sup>99</sup> Lewis’ statement is critical in revealing the unequal balance of power and control within the Grand Ronde community that subjugates the majority and elevates a select few.

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<sup>98</sup> Lewis, Interview by author, August 16, 2017.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

It highlights the fact that even in an attempt to come together and reclaim their cultural and social history that was virtually erased with the invasion of colonial settlers, inter-tribal prejudices continue to inform the cultural landscape of the Grand Ronde Reservation.

## Contemporary Inter-Tribal Relations: Acknowledging the Past and Looking to the Future

When connecting the Museum at Warm Springs to contemporary inter-tribal dynamics, Wilson recalls, “The dedication of the museum was for show. It involved us because they wanted to show a collaborative effort from all three tribes for the D.C. representatives that were in attendance...We [the Northern Paiute community] thought it better to save face by showing up than not showing up at all.”<sup>100</sup> It is clear that in parallel to the *Spilyay Tymoo*, the Museum at Warm Springs subtly promotes a collective Warm Springs tribal identity, while simultaneously diminishing Northern Paiute culture. Wilson’s statement also speaks directly to the meaning of being a legally recognized confederation of tribes and the impact that legacy has had on shaping contemporary inter-tribal relations.

On the Warm Springs Reservation, one of these impacts is the continued tension surrounding notions about sovereignty. As discussed earlier, the foundational ideology of sovereignty stems from the Native backlash to settler-colonialism. In Native history, it represents the federal government’s attempt to legally uphold the treaties they signed, an endeavor that utterly failed. But for the Northern Paiute community at Warm Springs, the notion of sovereignty extends beyond just the legal domain. It remains a constant presence in everyday life and has been intricately woven into the contemporary discourse about Northern Paiute identity.

This notion of identity that has emerged from all the Northern Paiute oral narratives as a major theme has been a critical factor in shaping the discourse of

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<sup>100</sup> Wewa, Interview by author, August 15, 2017.

contemporary inter-tribal relations. Historically, tribal identification was a key tool in guiding prejudice and racism, as shown in the outright hostilities that developed between the Columbia River bands and the Northern Paiute bands. In the contemporary lens however, distinct bloodlines from which one would define their tribal identity have become blurred, largely due to extensive inter-tribal relationships of marriage within which, according to Myra, inter-tribal hostilities continue to exist. As a result, “Depending on who raised you is how you define yourself.”<sup>101</sup>

For Myra, she faced excessive verbal bullying and a social atmosphere that was highly discriminatory towards her tribal identification as Northern Paiute. She recalls that it became so extensive that she felt as though she couldn’t be who she really was. She recounts in her oral narrative:

“My grandmother, who was full blood Northern Paiute, raised me. Although my mother was full blood Ichishkiin speaking band from the Columbia River, I identify myself normally as Northern Paiute... There was a time when I was ashamed to be Paiute. People called me ‘Black Paiute’...[so] being a Paiute was something I wasn’t proud of for a long time.”<sup>102</sup>

One particular story Myra narrates speaks directly to the pervasive cultural atmosphere that exists today surrounding hostile feelings of inter-tribal prejudice:

“Growing up and identified myself as Northern Paiute but then when I started saying my mom was of a Columbia River band the conversation kind of lightened. As people began to realize who my mother was...they would say ‘Oh! You’re from that family!’ So the treatment kind of changed when people found out that I identify as a full blood Paiute but that I also come from a Columbia River band and it became a softer environment.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, Phone, November 17, 2016.

<sup>102</sup> Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, October 15, 2016.

<sup>103</sup> Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, Phone, November 17, 2016.

Myra's statement reveals that there still exists a prevailing notion regarding cultural superiority and inferiority that is attached to particular tribes, predicated on an inter-tribal social hierarchy. For the Northern Paiutes, this inter-tribal hierarchy operating within the Warm Springs Reservation vehemently places them at the bottom and the Columbia River tribes at the top. Yet Myra's declaration also exposes that with even the slightest identity change, feelings of inter-tribal animosity shift. While inter-tribal dynamics are undoubtedly a complex sphere to internally navigate, the immediate shift in treatment Myra experienced indicates that inter-tribal dynamics can be internally manipulated and remain somewhat malleable.

Like Myra, Brenda Scott faced inter-tribal prejudice because of her Paiute identity. She recalls that during her childhood, "It wasn't cool to be Paiute...and even now some Paiutes don't acknowledge their Paiute ancestry."<sup>104</sup> Brenda's statement speaks to the fact that there still exists a level of prejudice towards the Northern Paiute community that can be felt on an emotional and cultural level. It creates a culture of discrimination in which Northern Paiutes still don't feel comfortable acknowledging their Paiute identity for fear of being seen as "not Native enough" or in some way inferior to other Native communities, including those on their own reservation.

However, Brenda is adamant that acknowledging one's Northern Paiute is a vital component in eliciting a change to the inter-tribal dynamics on the Warm Springs Reservation. She resolutely declares, "Never be ashamed to say you're Paiute because lots of people are Paiute but are too ashamed to say so."<sup>105</sup> Her testimonial speaks to

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<sup>104</sup> Scott, Interview by author, August 7, 2017.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

the ingrained sense of discrimination that the Paiutes have faced and the social degradation that is attached to being Paiute. More importantly, it reveals that this inter-tribal prejudice towards the Northern Paiute has become internalized and simply seen as normal by the Native communities at Warm Springs.

When asked directly how inter-tribal prejudice manifests itself in a contemporary framework on the Warm Springs Reservation today, Myra states:

“I think it comes mostly from the older generation of people, that inter-tribal prejudice or inter-tribal racism, because they remember the past and how the Paiute people defended themselves and how they did war back at the tribes [of the Columbia River] because they did help the soldiers conquer the Paiute people. So there is a lot of animosity due to that...The older generation does still stay in touch with that feeling of prejudice or animosity towards the Paiute people...You hear it now and then in the community it is a lot less forceful than it was say 10 years ago [but] it's still there though.”<sup>106</sup>

Myra's reflections reveal an ongoing generational divide that exists in regards to ideologies of inter-tribal racism. There is an underlying allusion in her comments that regardless of their tribal identity, the young generation of tribal members enrolled in the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs generally do not perpetrate acts of discrimination specifically founded on the notion of historic inter-tribal prejudice. Despite the continued cultural districting and undeniable underrepresentation of the Northern Paiute community, Myra's statement also suggests that the Warm Springs Reservation has become a slightly more inclusive environment within which the young generations are being raised in.

Although the historical feelings of animosity and inter-tribal racism continue to exist on a fundamental level, over time the visible manifestations of discriminatory acts

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<sup>106</sup> Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, Phone, November 17, 2016.

have become more subtle and lessoned altogether. Yet Myra is quick to add that even after a century of permanently residing on the Warm Springs Reservation, the Northern Paiute community is referred to as intruders and characterized by the Wasco and Sahaptin tribal communities as a “devil people” within the social borders of the reservation. Wilson reiterates this sentiment, stating that many people on the Warm Springs Reservation, “Don’t know how to forgive and forget so carry on animosity and prejudice for things we never did to them.”<sup>107</sup>

In addressing the social dynamic of the Warm Springs Reservation, throughout the *Spilyay Tymoo* Northern Paiute tribal identity is rarely mentioned and continuously discouraged. Rather, the *Spilyay Tymoo* works extensively to promote a collective Warm Springs identity that characterizes the Warm Springs Reservation. Articles reporting on sports, education, community representation, and traditional Columbia River culture all seek to produce an idealized picture of Warm Springs unification.<sup>108</sup> However, not only does the collective Warm Springs identity completely ignore individual tribal affiliation, but also implies that all participating members are given equal status and representation.

Yet in this regard, the *Spilyay Tymoo* is wholly inaccurate in their reflection and portrayal of inter-tribal dynamics. According to the Northern Paiute perspective, the truth, as Myra adamantly declares is that, “There is no such thing as a Warm Springs Tribe... there is the Warm Springs *tribes*, the three of us as a confederation: the Wasco, the Sahaptin, and the Northern Paiutes. I know that there are Sahaptin people that

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<sup>107</sup> Wewa, Interview by author, August 15, 2017.

<sup>108</sup> Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, *Spilyay Tymoo*, March 19, 1976–October 31, 2016.

would disagree with me but there is no such thing as a Warm Springs tribe [so] I never use Warm Springs to identify a tribe, ever!”<sup>109</sup> Myra goes on to say that, “the Newspaper favors the Sahaptin people kind of like the museum... that is historically how it has been.”<sup>110</sup> Myra’s statement indicates that although the intensity can be seen to have visibly decreased, the underlying promotion of a collective Warm Springs identity continues to remain present in the more contemporary publications of the newspaper.

Despite the clear internal discrimination the Northern Paiute community at Warm Springs experiences, there simultaneously exists a prevailing sense of community on the Warm Springs Reservation. Most recently, the Warm Springs Culture and Heritage Committee organized a series of three cultural nights to be held throughout the summer, with each cultural night dedicated to one of the three tribes. Held at the Agency Longhouse at Warm Springs, the intent of these cultural nights was to bring together all the members of each individual tribal community for a night of storytelling and a sharing of tribal history. The cultural nights are a clear example of steps currently being taken to respect and acknowledge distinct tribal identity. It is also a recognition by the tribal council that each of the three tribes has a different tribal history and that each tribe was given an equal right to express and share that specific history.

In addition to the both the cultural nights and Myra and Wilson’s acknowledgment that inter-tribal relations are becoming more positive, the oral

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<sup>109</sup> Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, Phone, November 17, 2016.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

narratives of other Northern Paiute tribal members reflect the sense of community. Brenda Scott recalls that as a child her family told her, “Not be raised against each other. Be kind to everyone and respect everyone.”<sup>111</sup> Brenda’s statement speaks directly to the heart of the Northern Paiute perspective; that kindness and respect are paramount even in the face of discrimination. Yet in parallel to Myra’s testimonial, underlying Brenda’s words is a clear implication that a cultural and socio-political tension exists between the tribal communities. Although this tension is rooted in historical tribal animosities, it has been capitalized on and manipulated by the federal government and the process of settler-colonialism. Despite this, rather than engage in acts of inter-tribal discrimination and further feelings of inter-tribal prejudice, the Northern Paiute community heavily emphasizes respect, collaboration, and a unifying community spirit.

Elaborating on Brenda’s statement, Northern Paiute tribal elder Geraldine Jim recalls, “We grew up learning how to get along with people.”<sup>112</sup> This statement indicates that a sense of community has existed on the reservation for generations. Francis Wewa Allen, another Northern Paiute tribal elder, reiterates this sense of community, declaring, “We are a little reservation so we all should know everyone and know our history and where we come from.”<sup>113</sup> In addition to fostering a sense of community and friendship, Francis’ statement is also a comment on the need for historical truth both on and off the reservation. Whether it is the Northern Paiute

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<sup>111</sup> Scott, Interview by author, August 7, 2017.

<sup>112</sup> Geraldine Jim, Interview by author, Agency Longhouse at Warm Springs, August 7, 2017.

<sup>113</sup> Francis Wewa Allen, Interview by author, Agency Longhouse at Warm Springs, August 7, 2017.

narrative, the Wasco narrative, or the Sahaptin narrative, all Native communities deserve to know and then pass on an accurate and decolonized narrative of Native history.

The Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde are currently facing the same challenge. The existing relationship between the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the United States federal government is precarious at best. As the leading tribal historian of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, David Lewis states that termination of the reservation entirely destroyed the majority of previously established tribal-federal relationships. Consequently, under the umbrella of a legally recognized confederation, the tribes of Grand Ronde are externally still trying to establish and maintain a relationship with both the state of Oregon and the federal government. Given this, David Lewis emphasizes the importance of positively shaping contemporary inter-tribal-dynamics given the fraught history of the reservation. He stresses that tribal leaders are currently asking how to equally represent all the individual tribal cultures within the confederated framework given that there are 29 different cultures at Grand Ronde.<sup>114</sup>

Over the past 30 years, *Smoke Signals*, the Grand Ronde Tribal Newspaper, has become a visible form of representation for each of the 5 named tribes. In parallel to *Spilyay Tymoo*, *Smoke Signals* is a unique but critical source to the discourse of inter-tribal relations. As discussed earlier, it is a newspaper that is written and produced exclusively by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde reporting on local tribal news and events. Earlier issues of *Smoke Signals* focus on the reservation's 1988 restoration,

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<sup>114</sup> Lewis, Interview by author, August 16, 2017.

while more recent issues focus on contemporary events, topics, and day to day life from an exclusively Grand Ronde perspective.

The cover story of each newsletter has, at the top of the page, the 5 tribes listed in this order: Umpqua, Molalla, Chasta, Rogue River, Kalapuya. Despite this clear reference to the individual tribes that comprise the Grand Ronde Confederation, one of the major themes that emerges from *Smoke Signals* is an emphasis on the collective Grand Ronde tribal identity. There appear numerous references to “The Tribe” as well as to “The Grand Ronde Nation!”<sup>115</sup> There is also a reiteration of the current tribal council at the start of each article or general meeting report. After each individual’s name it lists the council position of that person. It is important to note that there is no indication or mention of what tribes they identify as or that they are affiliated with.

This differs greatly from Warm Springs, where in both the tribal newspaper and the culture of identity they specify the individual tribe of each tribal council member; Northern Paiute, Wasco, or Sahaptin. This difference suggests that *Smoke Signals* reflects an assumption that exists at Grand Ronde that everyone in the community shares the same Grand Ronde identity. Obviously this is not representative of the entire community nor does it eliminate individual tribal identity from Grand Ronde. Rather, it suggests that the collective Grand Ronde identity is the one being promoted within the community and to the public.

However, for the Native communities at Grand Ronde, inter-tribal conflict continues to be present in a variety of forms. One of the ways these inter-tribal differences manifest within the Grand Ronde community today revolves around the

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<sup>115</sup> Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community, *Smoke Signals*, December 1984, 2.

question, ‘How Indian Are You?’ Reflecting on this sensitive topic, Ray Blacketer reflects, “Most reservations [there is] lots of internal prejudice. Some families don’t like other families or some people don’t like other people.”<sup>116</sup> When asked to elaborate, Ray said that some people think that, “If you are not half Indian or more you shouldn’t be on the reservation.”<sup>117</sup> Tribal elder Dell Dickison reiterates the presence and impact of this on and off reservation inter-tribal division, asserting, “there’s the distinction [that is] not so much tribal, [but rather] if you live there and/or grew up there or you didn’t... A lot of people are like, well, if you didn’t grow up here [on the reservation] you don’t really understand Grand Ronde. You are not a real Grand Ronde.”<sup>118</sup> Dell’s statement speaks directly to a sense of inter-tribal alienation, in which those that did not grow up on the reservation are seen by those who did as somehow less than or not Grand Ronde enough. This clearly defined split within the Grand Ronde community serves as a highly visible and contemporary form of inter-tribal prejudice that is still prominent today.

A more subtle form of inter-tribal prejudice on the Grand Ronde Reservation is the ongoing power struggle, driven by the belief that if one can get in charge they can improve their family’s power. To make matters worse, the primary factor impacting both inter-tribal and federal relations is, as David Lewis calls it, casino politics. Derived from the well-known Spirit Mountain Casino, casino politics is all about money and power. Established in 1985, Spirit Mountain Casino, owned and operated by the

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<sup>116</sup> Blacketer, Interview by author, Phone, February 26, 2018.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Dickison, Interview by author, April 27, 2018.

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, serves as one of the two major employers of the reservation, the other one being the tribe itself. As a result, the population of both the reservation itself and the enrolled tribal members has drastically increased over the past 20 years.<sup>119</sup> It is undoubtedly the most prosperous casino in the state, raking in up to \$80 million per year.<sup>120</sup> Although this high sum allows for a large tribal budget, the result is that whoever is in control of the money is in control of the confederation. Thus, only a select few families hold almost all the power on the Grand Ronde Reservation.

The tensions casino politics creates extend beyond the Grand Ronde Reservation. Most, if not all, of the communities currently situated in western Oregon are aware of both the scale of Spirit Mountain Casino and the casino politics it produces. Siletz tribal elder Francis Severson states, “The only major difference [between the Siletz Reservation and the Grand Ronde Reservation] is that the Grand Ronde gets way more money. I am just fine with that [because] we get some money but everyone knows the Grand Ronde gets lots of money.”<sup>121</sup> Despite the casino politics, David Lewis asserts that the culture of Grand Ronde is all mixed together. In his oral narrative he reflects that, “Technically there is no Grand Ronde culture...Being Grand Ronde has a higher impact on identity rather than culture. Restoration didn’t specify all

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<sup>119</sup> Chris Mercier, Interview by author, Many Nations Longhouse at the University of Oregon, February 23, 2018.

<sup>120</sup> Lewis, Interview by author, August 16, 2017.

<sup>121</sup> Francis Severson, Interview by author, Phone, February 19, 2018.

the individual tribes just the confederated tribes, so elders say you are just Grand Ronde and that is all you are.”<sup>122</sup>

Not only does this emphasize that Grand Ronde is technically a collection of tribes, but it also brings the importance of tribal identity into conversation with being a confederation. Unlike Warm Springs, where individual tribal identity is more prominent than a confederated identity, Grand Ronde has successfully created a collective Grand Ronde identity. At Grand Ronde, all the tribal members that I have interacted with have introduced themselves as being Grand Ronde. Occasionally a tribal member will specify their tribal heritage, Chris Mercier for example identifies as both Grand Ronde and Kalapuyan, but there is no doubt that the confederated Grand Ronde identity has become adopted throughout the Grand Ronde community.<sup>123</sup> Yet at Warm Springs, virtually all the tribal members, and certainly all the tribal members I conversed with, introduced themselves as being Northern Paiute, Wasco, or Sahaptin. Even though they acknowledge their status as an enrolled tribal member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, their identity lies with their individual tribe rather than with their confederation.

In addition to the differences in expressing their identity, another point of comparison between the two reservations is their community spirit. Mirroring the

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<sup>122</sup> Lewis, Interview by author, August 16, 2017.

<sup>123</sup> Despite the collective Grand Ronde identity that exists, David Lewis goes on to say that the Chinook culture is very prominent at Grand Ronde. Its popularity has resulted in the organization of canoe journeys and for the Chinook language to be taught on the reservation for the past 15 years. When asked to elaborate on the Canoe Program, David explains that it is a positive program for the future and one of the only specific programs aimed at Grand Ronde youth. Its goal is to teach the youth of today about their culture, heritage, history, and ancestry. The Canoe Program provides an exemplary point of contrast between the Grand Ronde and the Warm Springs Reservations; it is an example of the funded programs and resources that the communities at Warm Springs simply do not have.

dynamics of the Warm Springs Reservation, at the center of the Grand Ronde Reservation is a spirit of community. Chris Mercier is a current tribal council member for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde who identifies as both Grande Ronde and Kalapuya. He reflects that Grand Ronde, “is more a tight knit community...What I love about Grand Ronde is that we are a tribal community that integrates with the non-tribal community a lot.”<sup>124</sup> Not only does Chris’ statement emphasize the internal spirit of community that exists on the reservation, but also speaks to the spirit of community that has developed between Grand Ronde and the non-tribal community surrounding the reservation.<sup>125</sup>

Throughout his oral narrative, Chris subtly emphasizes the positive impact integrating the non-tribal community has had on the social and cultural dynamics at Grand Ronde. Given the mixed culture and communal nature of the reservation, David Lewis argues that in looking towards the future, “Positive relationships with the tribes need to be developed.”<sup>126</sup> Despite being a recognized sovereign nation and having their own tribal council and governmental structure, David says that the political climate at Grand Ronde is not much different than the current political climate of the United States. The Grand Ronde Tribal Council is comprised of 9 members who each serve a 3-year term, so 3 seats up for re-election each year. Unlike the Warm Springs Tribal

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<sup>124</sup> Chris Mercier, Interview by author, February 23, 2018.

<sup>125</sup> The contemporary relationship between the Grand Ronde community and the non-tribal community, specifically its communal nature and the recent development of a community food pantry, is related to my study but falls outside the framework of inter-tribal relations. Thus, while I chose not to address it in my discussion, I think Chris Mercier’s statement, “We want them [the non-tribal community] to feel like they do belong...That’s why we call it a community center,” is highly relevant in speaking to the nature of contemporary relations at Grand Ronde.

<sup>126</sup> Lewis, Interview by author, August 16, 2017.

Council, council representation at Grand Ronde is not based on heritage or tribal affiliation.

Chris Mercier also notes that there are roughly about 5300 currently enrolled tribal members, with approximately ½ residing in Oregon and the rest scattered throughout 48 states.<sup>127</sup> Not only is Grand Ronde enrollment significantly larger than enrollment at Warm Springs, the physical location of the Grand Ronde community is noticeably more spread out than at Warm Springs, where 98% of enrolled tribal members live on the reservation. As a result of this Grand Ronde diaspora, whoever is in charge of the tribe has the power. David Lewis is adamant that the Grand Ronde needs a new administrative structure and more progressive ideas in order to bring about change and level the playing field within the confederation. He declares, “This power of equality would be gained if we were all to get along.”<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Mercier, Interview by author, February 23, 2018.

<sup>128</sup> Lewis, Interview by author, August 16, 2017.

## Conclusion

In attempting to decolonize the historical narrative by re-writing Native history from an exclusively Native perspective, the intent of this discourse is to bring public and academic awareness to the historical truth of Native history. The foundational goal is that the vast body of knowledge, research, and oral testimonials I have collected thus far will ultimately contribute to the crucial field of restoration history. In doing so, my findings will in some way contribute towards marginalizing or altogether eliminating the historical legacy of inter-tribal prejudice that is often used as justification in perpetuating discriminatory acts of inter-tribal animosity. Furthermore, I hope that the discourse I engage with will help to alter the dynamics of inter-tribal prejudice on not just the Warm Springs and Grand Ronde Reservations, but also on other confederated reservations. Ideally, it will help to bring about social justice in the form of equal political, social, and cultural, representation within a confederated nation.

Stemming from a rich and intricate history of historical inter-tribal animosity and differences and then furthered by 19<sup>th</sup> century settler-colonialism, the Northern Paiute community has faced blatant acts of visible discrimination, ongoing political subjugation, and extreme cultural loss. Despite residing on the lands of the Warm Springs Reservation for over a century, the Northern Paiutes continue to endure a relentless underrepresentation and often times an outright denial of their tribal community, identity, and culture within the overarching structure of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. For the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, pre-colonial inter-tribal animosities have largely disappeared, but inter-tribal discrimination continues to remain a legacy of the imposed settler-colonial system.

While the termination of delineated cultural districts worked to integrate the Grand Ronde Reservation, casino politics and the extensive range of historically different tribes means that inter-tribal prejudice will never be completely eliminated. Therefore, the current discourse I engage in argues that in a contemporary framework shaped by settler-colonialism, inter-tribal dynamics on the Warm Springs and Grand Ronde Reservations can be characterized by persistent inter-tribal prejudice and inter-tribal discrimination. This is particularly the case for the smaller tribes and bands that have been visibly marginalized, despite Francis Wewa Allen's declaration, "we all share the same color blood even if we are different tribes."<sup>129</sup>

Given the research conducted to produce this discourse and centered on the oral testimonials of specific Northern Paiute and Grand Ronde tribal members, a variety of conclusions can be drawn. Most notably, inter-tribal dynamics on both the Warm Springs and Grand Ronde Reservations are incredibly complex and highly layered. Despite this complexity, inter-tribal discrimination and inter-tribal prejudice are undeniably present on both reservations and within both communities. In comparing the two reservations, currently the Warm Springs Reservation has a higher level of visible inter-tribal prejudice than the Grand Ronde Reservation, but each reservation manifests their contemporary inter-tribal dynamics in a different manner.

On the Warm Springs Reservation, inter-tribal dynamics can be characterized as culturally, socially, and politically discriminatory towards the Northern Paiute community. The continued existence of cultural districts, the continued use of derogatory terms such as "non-treaty signers" and "Snake Indians" used to describe

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<sup>129</sup> Wewa Allen, Interview by author, August 7, 2017.

Northern Paiutes, and The Museum at Warm Springs are all tangible ways in which inter-tribal prejudice towards the Northern Paiute community exists today. While pre-colonial inter-tribal animosity is a critical factor in shaping these dynamics, settler-colonialism allowed for inter-tribal prejudice towards the Northern Paiutes to not only expand, but also to become accepted as a normal part of the culture at Warm Springs that continues to affect descendants to this day.

In regards to the federal government's attempt to assimilate and "Americanize" the Native communities of Oregon, the people at Warm Springs experienced less assimilation than the people at Grand Ronde, although both reservations were subjected to assimilation such as boarding schools and a basic level of farming. Thus, a united tribal identity of being, or striving to be, "American" did not develop on the Warm Springs Reservation. As a result, there is no overarching confederated identity or unity at Warm Springs, making it easier for tribal members to capitalize on topics such as identity, the cultural district of one's family, and tribal history and use them as forms of discrimination. Despite being legally recognized as the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, individual tribal identity continues to be a prominent marker of identification. Whether one is Wasco, Sahaptin, or Northern Paiute determines one's status and position both on the reservation and within the confederation.

Inter-tribal dynamics on the Grand Ronde Reservation and within the Grand Ronde community can be characterized as somewhat more unified in terms of social, political, and cultural aspects of reservation life. Stemming from the assimilation and "Americanization" of the Native communities at Grand Ronde in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, there is a cultural similarity that exists between the tribes. The creation of a collective

Grand Ronde identity as a byproduct of the colonial reservation system allowed for inter-tribal relations to develop with a degree of positivity. Consequently, the umbrella of belonging to the Grand Ronde community overrides the majority of pre-colonial inter-tribal tension and critically informs contemporary inter-tribal relations today.

However, there still exists a degree of inter-tribal prejudice and inter-tribal tension within the community. This is largely due to casino politics, power struggles, the identity of growing up and living on or off the reservation, and what tribe or family one comes from. But the avenues of inter-tribal discrimination are minimal and often harder to pinpoint than those at Warm Springs, making inter-tribal prejudice and inter-tribal discrimination less visible.<sup>130</sup>

Collectively, my conclusions emphasize the fact that ideological beliefs and social practices of contemporary inter-tribal discrimination on these two particular reservations are undeniably present in a variety of forms. More importantly, this existing inter-tribal prejudice needs to undergo significant change in order to achieve a fundamental level of equal representation for the entire Native community. All tribal members, regardless of what tribe they descend from or identify with, should be treated equally. From a historical perspective, we must take note of David Lewis' request to develop positive inter-tribal relationships as a way to decolonize the western colonial narrative, for he declares:

“We [the tribes of Oregon] need to take control of things that we don't currently have control of. We need to begin by admitting there is a problem. To do this we need to look at our history and see what has been taken away from us, and what has changed, and what we used to

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<sup>130</sup> However, it is imperative to note that avenues of inter-tribal discrimination definitely do exist today. Although inter-tribal prejudices are discussed in contexts such as internal tribal social media groups, it is not something widely talked about or addressed in tribal newspapers or primary sources.

be...The amount of colonization that has happened has changed our history, who we are, our rights to land, and our relationships [with each other]...we need to look for a way to get along because of our shared history and heritage...We don't have any real reason to fight anymore. We need to come together and get along to meet the challenges of the federal government, [for] we have more in common than we have differences.”<sup>131</sup>

Most importantly, when looking to the future, it is imperative for historians, academic scholars, tribal members, and anyone driven by the desire to bring about social justice, to remember the words and testimonials of Myra, Wilson, David, Brenda, Francis, Bucky, Geraldine, Rosie, Ray, Francis, Chris, Dell, and Marta. Furthermore, we must also remember the discourse and legacy of Myra's oral narrative:

*“We have always been here, we will always be here.”*

*– Myra Johnson-Orange<sup>132</sup>*

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<sup>131</sup> Lewis, Interview by author, August 16, 2017.

<sup>132</sup> Johnson-Orange, Interview by author, Warm Springs Reservation, October 15, 2016.

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