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Newe country: Environmental degradation, resource war, irrigation and the transformation of culture on Idaho's Snake River plain, 1805--1927

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NEWE COUNTRY: ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, RESOURCE WAR, IRRIGATION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF CULTURE ON IDAHO'S SNAKE RIVER PLAIN, 1805-1927

by

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ABSTRACT

Idaho's Shoshone and Bannock Indians have long relied upon the Snake River. The waterway provides salmon and waters the vast Camas Prairie. On the prairie grows the Camas plant, the roots of which Shoshones and Bannocks harvest as a staple of their diet. Grass also grows on the prairie and the surrounding plains, which fed huge herds of bison that Shoshones and Bannocks also relied upon for food and skins to wear and trade.

As a result of integration into the globalizing economy initiated by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, indigenous peoples of the area and Euroamericans overhunted bison populations, driving them to near extinction. Equestrian Bannock culture centered on the bison hunt as the primary means to accumulate wealth and prestige. As bison numbers declined, American cattlemen drove their herds onto the Camas Prairie, consuming and trampling the plants and roots that Shoshones and Bannocks gathered. The combination of the decline of bison numbers, the severe degradation of the Camas Prairie and the failure of the federal government to provide Shoshones and Bannocks on the Fort Hall Reservation with treaty promised food rations and cash annuities drove a coalition of Bannocks, Shoshones and Paiutes to war in 1878, led by a Bannock named Buffalo Horn.

The Bannocks quickly lost the war, but the conflict marked a significant transition period in the history of the Northwest in which indigenous armed resistance to colonization and the reservation system became no longer viable. After the war, the Carey Act of 1896 opened the Snake River and southeastern Idaho to irrigation privatization. Wild speculation characterized much of the investment, and Fort Hall reservation farmers largely lacked the huge capital sums

required to extract financial and hydraulic value from the plan. Despite exclusion from Carey Act development, the reservation community continued using traditional irrigation and farming techniques to raise low water crops and begin their own pastoral cattle industry.

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Dr. P. Jane Hafen provided invaluable cultural context on Native American issues and literature, and pushed me further into the realm of critical literary theory than I should ever again willingly venture in the future. Now that it's over, I sincerely appreciate the experience. Dr. Thomas Wright added an external perspective, yet one that, in the context of the American borderlands, remained vital to my program of study.

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standards while maintaining an endless reserve of patience, second chances and new deadlines. For those I am extremely grateful.

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Introduction

Idaho's Snake River sits at a crossroads of history. Tucked snugly between the Great Continental Divide and the Great Basin, the Snake has carved its circuitous route through the northern American Intermountain West over millennia, from high forested granite mountains into a plateau and then further down through the desert plains. A fountain amid stark aridity, the waters of the Snake provided a life giving resource to the region's first inhabitants and does so to this day. The river supported the plant and animal life upon which several indigenous peoples depended, and its lush plains attracted Euroamerican traders, colonists and ranchers. Euroamericans, beginning with the Meriwether Lewis and William Clark expedition, desired to assimilate indigenous cultures into a growing economy, and in that way make them dependent and vulnerable to the process of colonization. That process required the commodification of natural resources that the region's indigenous peoples relied upon to maintain traditional mobility patterns. When incorporated into the new economy, the consumption of these resources undermined a sustainable base and drove those individuals less willing to adapt to take extreme measures.

When Bannocks used violence to enforce legal boundaries on the Camas Prairie in 1878, they applied a traditional element of their culture to their colonization experience. Despite federal assurances that American cattlemen would cease trespassing their animals on the prairie, the reality on the ground severely challenged equestrian Bannock cultural values rooted deeply in access to traditional environmental resources. When a contingent of Bannocks chose war, they

set in motion events that spelled a new chapter for their culture, one of syncretic adaptation instead of armed resistance.

Shoshones and Bannocks willingly participated in the economic changes that swept North America in the 19th century, and the evolution of the trade from beaver fur to buffalo skin paralleled the commodification of the area's natural resources. While each group responded to dwindling resource pools in unique ways, equestrian Bannock culture remained bound to the buffalo hunt. Young and ambitious Bannocks acquired wealth and prestige through the hunt. As that avenue for achievement closed, hunters found few alternatives to a tradition maintained for almost two centuries. Bannock leaders had long enjoyed great success against regional enemies, and at times allied with the United States Army. From the mid to late 19th century this experience in combat contributed to an aggressive stance toward Anglo-Americans and their domesticated livestock. Though the consequent war lacked the high drama of the popular history of the American West, the conflict remains significant. Some Bannocks, such as leader Buffalo Horn, simply rejected a domesticated future as yeoman farmers restricted to a reservation. They made an honest attempt, but the failure of the Fort Hall Indian Agency to provide promised rations and annuities forced some Shoshones, Bannocks and Paiutes to take matters into their own hands and enforce cultural boundaries with violence. Colonization demanded a military response.

This study focuses on the changing environmental factors that led to the Bannock War of 1878, within the context of the Shoshone and Bannock process of federal Indian policy and an integration into a globalizing capitalist economy. The war serves as a moment in which armed resistance ended and two distinct cultural groups formed a larger political identity in order to survive in the new economic order. Despite recent scholarship that may nominally cloud the

issue, the Bannock War serves as one of the last Indian Wars, along with the Nez Perce War and Sheepeater War (1879), that meant the end of organized indigenous resistance in the Northwest, and the completion of the United States colonial objectives in the area. For the Bannocks, the end of the war heralded a new era in which resistance was no longer an option, and in which they would forever negotiate the terms of their cultural and geographical existence with the U.S. government. Though they long possessed a highly adaptive culture, Shoshones and Bannocks faced the new cultural conditions and expectations of the twentieth century described generally by Lakota/Dakota scholar Philip Deloria.[1]

Many understand the Indian Wars of the North American continent not as clashes between colonizers and indigenous peoples, but as white Americans' defensive reactions to hostile "savages". The defeat of George Armstrong Custer's Seventh Cavalry regiment at Little Big Horn in 1876 contributed much popular support to President Ulysses S. Grant's policy of pacification and containment of the last "wild" Indians. Deloria writes that "pacification laid the cultural conditions for the new expectations of the early twentieth century." Ironically, pacification became an extremely violent act, and through warfare the U.S. Army enforced a policy drafted in the halls of a faraway government. The execution of this policy led directly to such events as the Nez Perce War of 1877 and the Wounded Knee massacre of 1890, made only more notorious by popular contemporary accounts.[2]

Ironically, the act of war can possess positive cultural value. Few volunteer to fight a losing war. In order to move away from the declensionist model that plagues the history of Indian-Euroamerican conflict, scholarship on the Indian Wars must accurately portray martial

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[1] Philip J. Deloria. *Indians in Unexpected Places*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004); Elliott West. *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[2]Dee Brown. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West.* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970); West, *Last Indian War*; Deloria, 50.

resistance as a culturally relative engagement with the process of colonization. Just as importantly, scholars can use war to discuss cultural transformation in order to contribute to a modern interpretation of the conflict and the greater Indian Wars, and provide a more accurate version of the "white American national memory [that is] laced through with conquest."[3] If scholars such as Gregory Smoak and John Heaton have recently described in detail the economic and religious vectors of the Shoshone-Bannock cultural transformation, perhaps a fuller historiography demands that we shore up the weaknesses in our foundation, such as George F. Brimlow's 1938 claim that "the march of time was relentless," and his designation of the war as an inevitable result of the civilization of the American frontier.[4] Iconoclastic historian Brigham D. Madsen writes that the Bannocks "took the initial steps toward [war] and deliberately fomented and aroused…but [their] exact motives cannot be so readily listed."[5] A return to the old themes of war with the training of a New Western historian can illustrate such motivations as very clearly the result of starvation and colonization, and therefore provide a stronger base from which to more effectively proceed with decolonization. Heaton combines Bannock violence and federal reactionism with the failure of treaty promises to set off the war. Natural resources rooted those violent boundary enforcements to the environment. He also highlights the simplified federal perceptions of "Shoshone cooperation [and] Bannock intransigence" that contributed to the conflict and the Indian Agency's view of the postwar community, another example of values projected upon cultural behavior deeply attached culturally to the environment. Smoak recognizes the war as pivotal to Shoshone and Bannock history as the "crystalliz[ation]" of the

[3] Deloria, 50.
[4] George F. Brimlow. *The Bannock War of 1878* (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, LTD., 1938), 212.
[5] Brigham Madsen. *The Bannock of Idaho*, (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1958), 227.

Bannock image as hostile and oppositional to federal Indian policy, as well as how it sharpened increasing factionalism between and within Fort Hall bands.[6]

As the United States colonized the North American interior through the establishment of territories that became states, imperialistic colonialism required conquest, displacement and rule over indigenous inhabitants. While Jeffrey Ostler focuses on the establishment of military and political authority over indigenous Plains peoples, that process necessarily required a practical vector to undermine their ties to the land and environment. Economics drove that force, but the subject remains the relationship between people and their natural resources. While singular circumstances existed in which government officials and missionaries sincerely wished to improve the lives of Indians, the U.S. policy of assimilation served to appropriate Indian lands for agricultural development. In practical terms, that policy manifested itself as paternalistic, and at times racist, religious and cultural ideals of national homogeneity, within which allegedly primitive ways of life would vanish into a larger American civilization.[7]

William Cronon's work serves as the foundation of the commodification school of environmental history. Incorporation into an expanding capitalist economy transformed sustainable consumption practices into economic activities, furthering the degradation of animal populations and undermining traditional indigenous survival patterns. No human history is entirely extricable from its natural environment, and for that reason this thesis must start at the beginning: the environmental history of the Snake River Plain. The regional environment is firstly a setting for the narrative, but more importantly provides the bioregional historian the

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[6] John Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks: Culture and Commerce at Fort Hall, 1870-1940*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 51, 92 ;Gregory E. Smoak, *Ghost Dances and Identity: Prophetic Religion and American Indian Ethnogenesis in the Nineteenth Century*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 134.
[7] Jeffrey Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2, 8.

guideposts to indigenous peoples' adaptive techniques.[8] Necessarily, such a bioregional study must at least provide a geological, hydrological and climatological survey intended to acquaint the reader with the deep time of the area. Only onto this stage may the three examined nutritive resources enter, two animal and one vegetable. Salmon, bison and the roots of the camas plant are the "three sisters" of the indigenous peoples of this history, assigned such status according to their perceived importance by the author rather than as nominally established cultural significance.

Together, salmon, bison and camas serve as the link between the environmental history of the first chapter and the second, an ethnohistorical description of two indigenous groups, now known as the Bannocks and Northern Shoshones. Linguistically and culturally related, they were nonetheless distinct groups who responded to and interacted with Europeans and Americans independently. Such an ethnohistory has been well narrated and analyzed historically and anthropologically, and though it is not the purpose of this thesis to reproduce those works in detail, a strong ethnohistorical foundation is necessary in order to accurately contextualize the environmental elements of armed conflict and the complexity of interethnic relations. According to scholar Theodore Binnema, the flexibility, fluidity and informality of indigenous bands encouraged the development and dissolution of kin networks in which individuals of different indigenous ethnicities lived and reproduced together. The term interethnicity is therefore the modern scholarly label for a basic type of indigenous existentialism that best facilitates Western ethnohistorical understanding.[9] Access to guns and horses, as well as virgin soil epidemics play

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[8] William Cronin. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England.* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983); Dan Flores. "Place: An Argument for Bioregional History," in *Northwest Lands, Northwest Peoples: Readings in Environmental History*, Dale D. Goble and Paul W. Hirt, eds. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 39-40.

[9] Theodore Binnema. *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 11, 14; Sven Liljeblad.. *The Idaho Indians in Transition, 1805-1960*. (Pocatello, ID: Idaho State University Museum, 1972); Madsen, *The Bannock of Idaho*; —. *The*

incontrovertible roles in virtually every indigenous ethnohistory, as they do here. Surely, such are crucial sources for understanding the complexity of the circumstances that led to war, a conflict that serves as a crucial evolution of that very ethnohistory.

While the second section starts with pre-contact ethnohistory and ends with the first advance wave of the Euroamerican colonizing influence, the third chapter opens with a vastly important development in the history of the region's indigenous-Euroamerican relations: the construction of the Fort Hall trading post in 1834 by Bostonian entrepreneur Nathaniel J. Wyeth. The creation of a trade center set in motion and contributed to the rate at which events culminated in several significant historical moments: the Treaty of Fort Laramie (1851), the Bear River Massacre in 1863, the Treaty of Fort Bridger (1868), the relocation of Bannock and Shoshone bands onto the Fort Hall reservation in 1869, and the establishment of a military post and garrison in 1870. By this time, the encroachment of American cattlemen and farmers onto the prairies of southern Idaho led to the depletion and destruction of the vital camas root and salmon for the mostly pedestrian Shoshones, and the grasses and bison for the mostly equestrian Bannocks. Subsequently, Anglo-American farmers diverted water resources vital to the sustenance of Shoshones, Bannocks and their plant and animal resources. Concomitant to this chronology are the decisions made by Bannock band leaders such as Taghee, Tyhee and Buffalo Horn. External executive decisions are just as significant, the consequences of their interethnic relations with neighboring groups, such as those of the Eastern Shoshone leader Washakie. Important as well are the differences between adaptive and resistant behavior, manifested

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Northern Shoshoni. (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1980); Robert F. Murphy and Yolanda Murphy. *Shoshone-Bannock Subsistence and Society*. (Anthropological Records Vol. 16, No. 7. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960); Julian H. Steward. *Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups*. (Reprint of 1938 ed., Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1970).

generally by agricultural and pastoral integration on the Fort Hall reservation for most Shoshones and Bannocks, but also that of armed resistance and reactionism led by a Bannock faction.

Following the Bannock War of 1878, Shoshones and Bannocks used a variety of means to integrate into the regional economy while simultaneously subverting federal demands for their assimilation through allotment. The Carey Act opened western water to privatization, and begins the fourth chapter, but most western states lacked the capital to produce very profitable gains. The Fort Hall community experienced much of the same, and their success in agriculture and cattle pastoralism remained largely the result of their own adaptive techniques, namely low water crops and self-provided irrigation independent of Carey Act speculation. Snake River irrigation serves as the larger narrative's latter environmental bookend, in which humans harness the power of the river to their political and economic purposes and their designs on the twentieth century.

In his widely published and extremely popular 1836 classic, *Astoria*, Washington Irving created one of the earliest examples of the Euroamerican perception of the indigenous peoples of the Snake River area. In September 1811, an American trapping and exploring expedition led by Wilson Price Hunt traversed the Bighorn Mountains and entered the vaguely bordered Oregon country at that time still claimed by Great Britain:

> Mr. Hunt and his companions continued on westward through a rugged region of hills and rocks, but diversified in many places by grassy little glens, with springs of water, bright sparkling brooks, clumps of pine trees, and a profusion of flowering plants, which were in bloom, although the weather was frosty. These beautiful and verdant recesses, running through and softening the rugged mountains, were cheering and refreshing to the wayworn travelers. In the course of the morning, they beheld a small band of savages, as wild-looking as the surrounding scenery. They proved to be a mixed party of Shoshonies, or Snakes. The Shoshonies are a branch of the once powerful and prosperous tribe of Snakes. Their hunting ground was occasionally invaded by the Blackfeet, but the Snakes battled bravely for their domains, and a long and bloody feud existed. The Snakes, who occasionally traded with the Spaniards, endeavored, but in vain to obtain weapons; the Spanish traders wisely refused to arm them so formidably. The Blackfeet now had a vast advantage, and soon dispossessed the poor Snakes of their favorite hunting grounds. Thus by degrees the Snakes have become a scattered, broken-spirited,

> impoverished people. These are a shy, secret, solitary race, who keep in the most retired parts of the mountains, lurking like gnomes in caverns. Sometimes, in passing through a solitary mountain valley…the whole landscape is lifeless and deserted: at length [the traveller] finds some forlorn and skulking brood, terrified at being discovered.[10]

Americans and Europeans read such words and made plans to move to the frontier. Faced with the aridity of the Great American Desert, vegetation and rainfall drew many toward the northwest, and a diversity of resources and intersection of ecologies lured them to the Snake River Plain. The historian appreciates Irving's recognition of the inter-band dynamic, but his description of the area's indigenous inhabitants lays the foundation of cultural and racial superiority necessary for the process of colonization. His literary reinforcement could only have hastened its approach.

In his novel *Indian Killer*, Spokane-Coeur d'Alene writer Sherman Alexie describes a world of interracial violence in modern Seattle. In one scene a camas field serves as a patch of land where whites continue to inflict war on the traditional subsistence of Northwestern indigenous people in microcosm, ostensibly as retaliation for perceived Indian violence.[11] Where others may see such environmental settings as mere backdrops, they in fact serve as the root of the cultural action taking place in fiction, or almost fictionalized history. Such interpretations reveal the significant cultural importance of the region's natural environment, and each is a type of endpoint that delineates the opposite edges of an environmental chronology of almost two hundred years.

This study balances the environmental history, ethnohistory and a small slice of the military history of southeastern Idaho, and therefore must remain centrally a story of the region's indigenous inhabitants and their cultural transformation. The specific elements of that history listed above are purely the choice of the author, perhaps because of a fascination with the

[10] Washington Irving. *Astoria*. (1836. Reprint, Portland: Binfords & Mort, 1967): 224-26.
[11] Sherman Alexie. *Indian Killer*. (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1996), 62-66.

influences of sheer force, such as nature and violence. Perhaps the infinitely massive energy beneath the geological and hydrological forces of the region cannot be incised from the immense personal and spiritual forces that drive some to take the drastic actions of war. If the psychology of the indigenous fighters will always remain somewhat of a mystery, surely the consequences of the fight are clearly etched into history.

Chapter I

Geology, Hydrology and Climate of Idaho's Snake River Plain

Human history is inextricable from its surrounding environment. In order to understand the indigenous history of an area, a scholar must acknowledge the relationship between a people, their land and the climate. Indigenous peoples extracted resources directly from their physical environment, so the root of any resource study remains in the environmental history of the area. The starting point of an environmental history can be elusive. Geographical and hydrological forces created the environment and climate into which Shoshone and Bannock people migrated and lived. Their connection to the Snake River requires a survey of that waterway's physical history. They also lived in an area of extraordinary organic diversity, of which they harnessed several species for their survival. Three play a central role in their history, but before the evolutionary arrival of Camas plants, river salmon and plains bison, a world formed that provided those species the necessary climate and environment to not only survive, but thrive and flourish to levels sustainable to support human existence.

Eons before the continents occupied their familiar spots on our modern globe, the land that is Idaho inhabited a vague interior region of a vast supercontinent. To study the landlocked mass that became the inland northwest of the United States, and more specifically the land that federal officials much later named the Fort Hall Reservation, and oriented it along the same compass as ours today, the beginning of the narrative must start around 600 million years ago.

Mere millennia before that 600 million year mark, a sea began to wash up from the southeast into a lowland created by millions upon millions of years of erosion. The Cambrian Sea covered the area from the Paleozoic Era into the Mesozoic for more than 400 million years. Large amounts of soil from the surrounding land mixed with the water, compacted and formed shales and sandstones, while limestone formed at the bottom of the clearer, deeper areas of the sea.[12]

The earliest rock formations were of Brigham quartzite. One drilling site found a seam of such quartzite with a thickness of 2,000 feet. The crystal began to form more than 540 million years ago, and as the Early Cambrian era became the Middle Cambrian, an overlapping deposit of the mineral along what is now the Wasatch Range. Its character reveals a long duration of shallow water and relatively slow subsidence as the Cambrian Sea advanced. 60 million years later, as the sea fell in Ordovician time, Swan Peak quartzite formed, and as it rose it deposited limestone upon that crystalline layer. 416 million years ago, during the Devonian Period, the seas returned to the plains, sweeping the land into layers that formed steps of western shale. In the east oozes of limy clay and the calcium carbonate shells of millions of sea creatures mixed and compacted for 40 million years to become limestone cliffs a mile high that exist today north of the Snake River Plain. This cycle of limestone deposits continued until the mid-Pennsylvanian epoch, 311 million years ago, when another layer of sandstone and quartzite returned in shallow water conditions. During the crustal disturbances of the Permian era, from 300 to 250 million years ago, a series of phosphate beds and shales formed along with yet another layer of limestone.[13]

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[12] George Rogers Mansfield and William Bayard Heroy. *Geography, Geology, and Mineral Resources of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, Idaho*. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1920), 66-71; Eugene H. Walker, *Geologic History of Snake River Country*, (Boise: Idaho Historical Society, 1963), 6.
[13] Mansfield, 66-71; Walker, 6.

The ebb and flow of the ancient Cambrian Sea created the area now known as the state of Idaho. Hydrological shifts inextricably linked to the chemical composition and pressure of the atmosphere battered millions of tons of shifting and spewing rock, and 220 million years ago the earth's internal heat pushed up a curve of western volcanoes. As the earth's crust created western mountain chains, central regions became sheltered from the vast unpredictable rains. That water swept the faces of the mountains and their foothills, and poured immeasurable tons of sand and silt into the newly formed basins. [14]

By the end of the Triassic period 203 million years ago, the sea floor rose to become a land of hills, low mountains and wide lowlands, lasting for perhaps 100 million years. Surrounding the smaller seas were coal forests lush with fern-like trees up to a hundred feet tall, and cycads bearing the largest flowers in earth's history. More recognizable were the stands of sequoia, cypress, cedar and juniper.[15]

The end of the Jurassic period 150 million years ago brought tectonic plate movement along regional fault lines deformed the landscape and isolated the sea. Rain in the highlands watered the growth of forests and simultaneously eroded the land, washing sand and silt into the basins. Over the next 150 million years, the global temperature dropped 6 degrees.[16]

After the Cretaceous period ended 70 million years ago, but before the Eocene epoch 55 million years ago, a great deformation occurred that created the folds and overthrust fault lines that characterize the region and much of the geological American West. Heat from the earth's core spilled out once again onto the surface. At the hottest breaches, old soft limestone melted and formed the deep granite of Idaho's batholith and the core of its present mountains. As the

[14] Leonard Arrington, *History of Idaho, Vol. 1.* (Moscow, ID: University of Idaho Press, 1994), 3-4.
[15] Walker, 8-9.
[16] Mansfield, 66-71; Walker, 8, 10.

granite cooled it spewed hot fluids into its surroundings, depositing cracks of gold, silver, lead and zinc.[17]

Eastern Idaho and Yellowstone area forests grew old over centuries, to be buried under periodic eruptions of lava and ash. One fossil record displays a succession of 27 cycles of forest regrowth and volcanic destruction. Perhaps more influential than the volcanic forces that shaped the land were the hydrological, when three cycles of subaerial erosion carved a network of rivers and great streams through soil, rock and hardened lava.[18]

Beneath the surface lies an extensive phosphate deposit that remained unexploited until twentieth century economic conditions forced some indigenous members to process the rock-earth aggregates under their feet. Within the highest grade phosphate rock, silica is the most frequently appearing minority compound. In deep water conditions, strong currents strained the finest particles of earth from a matrix of phosphatic oolites. This allowed the formation of shale, sandstone and limestone in the newly evacuate crevices in the phosphate rock. Bacterial decay synthesized ammonium phosphate, which reacted with minerals in the surrounding rock and other detrital organic material such as animal waste, wood and bone. The result was the further phosphatization of the organic compounds and the creation of an underwater complex of phosphatic oolites. Originally deposited as carbonate of lime in warm to moderate water temperatures, the phosphatic oolites developed as quantities of carbonate of lime settled on the seafloor and denitrified the resident bacteria. As dead bacteria decomposed, the nitrate content of the water decreased. Replaced with ammonium phosphate, low nitrate levels prevented the development of dependent marine plants and animals. While the oolithic phosphate regions remained dead zones of mineral combustion, the cooler temperatures and stronger currents of

[17] Mansfield, 66-71; Walker, 6, 8.
[18] Walker, 11.

deep water checked denitrifying bacteria accumulations. The shells of marine creatures contributed to the formation of oolithic limestone instead of phosphates, but the diversity of the sea's wildlife provided the necessary decaying organic matter for the limestone to begin the phosphatization process. The death of a large number of marine animals, perhaps by an abrupt change in sea temperature, contributed to a relatively rapid phosphatization of the oolithic limestone. The formation of undersea mountains to the west, south and east eventually enclosed the phosphate floored sea, but it may have had a sporadic connection with a larger northern ocean, perhaps providing it with a source, albeit unreliable, of replacement organic matter.[19]

Low intensity volcanics endow the area with several warm sulphur springs that bubble up from the Camas Prairie. Very small amounts of placer gold have been found along the Blackfoot and Snake Rivers, but the geological consensus is that the Fort Hall reservation lacks valuable commercial minerals. Exploratory oil and gas drilling has yielded negative returns, with little incentive to continue.[20]

The first epoch of erosion that created the Snake River is known as the Putnam Cycle, in which torrents of rainwater wore smooth the slopes and summits of the mountains and the rough banks of the first streams. Narrow, steep-sided chasms formed, and the fast moving water within them washed into broader valleys. The Gibson Cycle was perhaps the most significant, as the water cut canyons and gullies through the benches between valleys. Flood plains formed and merged with the larger Snake River Plain, which cut 75 feet lower than the surrounding plains. This hydraulic action created the Gibson Terrace surrounding the Snake River. Much shorter than the Putnam Cycle, the Gibson Cycle spared much of the higher ground, and the higher

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[19] Mansfield, 111-14; Arrington, 2; Norman Nybroten, *Economy and Conditions of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation*. (Moscow, Idaho: University of Idaho, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, 1964), 33-34.
[20] Nybroten, 34; Mansfield, 115; John Francis Ryan. *History of Camas Prairie* (Fairfield, ID: Camas County Historical Society, 1975) 7.

mountain elevations remained relatively untouched, rough and rocky. Next came the Spring Creek Cycle. The development of the bottoms along the Snake and from the lower Portneuf and Blackfoot Rivers and Bannock Creek started this cycle, extending a combination of creek actions much like the Gibson Cycle but much shorter again, creating Spring Creek, which courses through what would become the Fort Hall Bottoms.[21]

The hills in today's Bannock Valley region are now capped with ancient solidified volcanic lava, which also lies sporadically on the surface of the Gibson terrace. As the elevation meanders from 4,400 to 9,000 feet above sea level, the temperature lows range from -20° F in January to 39° F in July, and highs from 55° to 102° F. Heavier rains appear in the late spring, but by the summer the sun and prevailing northeastern winds sweep the plain of much of its moisture. Southern Idaho enjoys a unique meteorological status among the states, inhaling a free flow of air currents from around the compass.[22]

The broad Gibson terrace and low river bottoms separate the eastern and southwestern mountainous regions of the Fort Hall Reservation, and from those eastern heights flow the Blackfoot and Portneuf Rivers. They run directly to the Snake River, and their largest tributaries en route are Lincoln Creek and Ross Fork Creek. Bannock Creek divides the mountains in the southwest, principal tributaries of which are Rattlesnake, Moonshine and Starlight Creeks. Average annual rainfall on the reservation varies from 9.75 and 13.5 inches, and feeds the waterways that have linked diverse indigenous cultural groups for thousands of years.[23]

The Snake River Plain range consists principally of big sagebrush *(Artemisia tridentate),* three-tip sagebrush *(A. tripartita)* and rabbitbrush *(Chrysothamnus nauseosus and C.*

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[21] Mansfield, 14-17.
[22] Nybroten, 30; Mansfield, 17, 21-22; U.S. Weather Bureau, *Climates of the States: Climate of Idaho.* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971), 1.
[23] Nybroten, 30; Mansfield, 20.

viscidiflorus). Grasses on the range consist mostly of bluebunch wheatgrass *(Agropyron spicatum),* little bluegrass *(Poa secunda),* and Idaho fescue *(Festuca idahoensis)*. Wild flowers include the larkspur, daisy, buttercup and blue Cama blossom. In the lower rocky hills grow thick stands of cedar, and mountain mahogany *(Cercocarpus ledifolious)* in patchy areas of surface dolomite.[24]

At higher elevations, mountain brush such as the snowberry *(Symphoricarpos)* and serviceberry *(Amelanchier)* grow within a coniferous forest of Douglas-fir *(Pseudotsuga menziesii),* aspen, lodge-pole pine and balsam. As one approaches Bannock Peak or the Putnam Mountains, the alpine fir *(Abies lasiocarpa)* joins the former three tree species.[25]

Forests cover roughly two million acres of the eastern part of Idaho, and in the high northern forests of the state grows one of the lushest white pine stands in the country. The higher timberlands serve as summer deer and elk range and the inhabitant small game include rabbits, badgers, porcupines, and coyotes. Most of the region's game birds are grouse and duck. Flying ants have inhabited the region for much longer than indigenous humans.[26]

Idaho's animals present the latest evolution of a widely diverse set of ancient mammals and fish, a catalog of which would be a paleontological study rather than history. The record of the rock provides a geological framework within which existed a multitude of creatures. After the dinosaurs and their descendants the great reptiles died out, alligators and crocodiles remained in the swamps and small mammals multiplied rapidly by consuming large amounts of vegetable matter. Glaciers provided the runoff for the rivers and great streams that fed a shortgrass country in which the Latifrons, or royal bison grazed. Huge animals with horns that at times spread as wide as six feet, their size became unsustainable after four cycles of glacial advance and retreat.

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[24] Ryan, 7; Mansfield, 22.
[25] Nybroten, 45, 55-57; Mansfield, 22.
[26] Mansfield, 23; U.S. Weather Bureau, *Climates of the States*, 4; Nybroten, 57.

Extinct, their descendants became a smaller breed that migrated to the forage of the Great Plains.[27]

Part of the littoral area along the Snake River came to be known as the Fort Hall Bottoms, and the high level of water in the soil made it attractive for agricultural development, despite being an enclave of cottonwood and willow for birds, indigenous forage and fish resources. The Bottoms consist largely of very calcareous clayey soil intermixed with fine sand.[28]

The Snake River flows east to west from its headwaters in the Continental Divide in modern day Yellowstone, Wyoming, and through a broad alluvial valley before it turns north and then west again to the Columbia, covering 1,078 miles in total. Occasionally in its early travel through the plain, cliffs that serve as the plain's easternmost lava formations border its northwestern banks. The average river gradient is 2.5 feet per mile, and very unevenly distributed. The river is navigable by the smallest of boats and canoes, and only with the current. Into this landscape entered the region's first human occupants roughly 28,000 years ago. Hunting tools found at Wilson Butte Cave on the central Snake River Plain date to before 13,000 BCE. Around 10,500 BCE, the end of the Neothermal climatic period, began the first of three cycles of environmental change. Lasting about 5,500 years, cool moisture gave way to warm moisture, and then evaporated from the soil into drier air. As glaciers retreated and left lakes and rivers, hydrological patterns became more predictable, allowing settlement along the banks of the Snake. The second cycle, the Altithermal period, lasted about 3,500 years, in which high precipitation rates contributed to increased erosion and siltation of the plain's water, which killed

[27] Walker, 15.
[28] Mansfield, 118; Nybroten, 41, 45.

fish resources but contributed to a proliferation of camas plants. The third cycle lasted more than 3,000 years, ending in the 1870s.[29]

Population patterns exploded and shrank as the arid desert transformed into a cooler plain and back again over millennia. Mammal remains in eastern Idaho date indigenous big game hunters to roughly 10,000 BCE, an epoch that experienced similar wet and dry cycles that continue to today. The only data trend is that there seems to be no definitive trend, inhabiting an unpredictable pattern of rain and long term drought. The water table concentrates in the younger alluvium of the soil. In the older alluvium of clayey sands and gravels, the water cannot circulate as easily. Water travels from the rocky areas surrounding the prairie, circulating in the fractures and pores of the basaltic lavas, and within the denser plutonic rocks and older lavas. The water moves through open joints and fissures in the rock, which also absorbs a significant amount of water and discharges it in springs at lower elevations. This water retention makes the prairie an artesian basin, and prime future drilling ground for wells to support agricultural and pastoral settlement.[30]

Despite a distance of 300 miles from the Pacific Ocean, the maritime air influence is most noticeable during the winter, bringing more clouds, precipitation and higher temperatures than the interior of the continent. Through the Columbia River Gorge rushes this moist air into the state. At times during the summer moist air from as far as the Gulf of Mexico makes its way into Idaho from the south to produce thundershowers.[31]

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[29] Sven Liljeblad, *Idaho Indians in Transition*. (Pocatello, ID: Idaho State University Museum, 1972), v-vi; Richard E. Ross and David Brauner, "The NW as Prehistoric Region," in *Regionalism and the Pacific NW*, 101, 103.
[30] Piper, Arthur M. *Ground Water for Irrigation on Camas Prairie, Camas and Elmore Counties, Idaho*. (Moscow: University of Idaho, 1926), 2, 5, 6, 12. 15; William Clarence Walton. *Ground-water Resources of Camas Prairie, Camas and Elmore Counties, Idaho*. (Washington, DC. Government Printing Office, 1962), 5, 22; Ryan, 10.
[31] U.S. Weather Bureau, *Climates of the States*, 1-2.

The Snake River served as an east-west vector of cultural linkage between the plains and the plateau. A common route of political, economic and cultural interaction between the indigenous peoples of the Plateau and the Great Basin, the river suggests an ancient hydrological relationship that Shoshones and Bannocks share with their western neighbors. Millennia before the first Euroamerican arrived, bands shared languages and goods, and within these interweaved cultural and economic transactions lay the threads of multiregional interethnicity.[32]

A prospective Shoshone or Bannock farmer of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would have to marshal the environmental forces on a reservation that, in its mildest climates, consists of 155 scientifically identified individual types of soil. The first speculative Shoshone and Bannock agriculturalists would first have had to immediately write off nearly a quarter of their available land. Containing the largest concentrations of rolling silt loam, 127,588 acres (24.5%) of the reservation's land is either a Neeley or Pocatello silt loam. Water runoff on an irrigated Neeley is rapid, creating a high hazard of erosion, and on an irrigated Pocatello, the erosion hazard ranks as very high. Silt loams therefore can only be used for ranging livestock.[33]

In this challenging landscape Shoshone and Bannock farmers grew crops and raised cattle to sustain themselves and their culture. Before encapsulation into a globalizing economy, they thrived in an environment and climate that required an expertise of the natural world inherited through the generational millennia. Now that the physical stage has been set, the human subjects of this study may enter.

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[32] Deward Walker, *Anadromous Fish Resources*, (Boise: Bureau of Land Management, Idaho State Office, 1994), 246.

[33] Soil Survey of Fort Hall Area, Idaho and Parts of Bannock, Bingham, Caribou, and Power Counties: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1977, 8-9, 28, 38, 40-41.

Chapter II

Newe Peoples from 6000 BCE to 1827

Once the Snake River formed, its water sustained Camas Prairie plants and the salmon and bison that fed the first indigenous inhabitants. Pre-Numics fished salmon from the Snake River as early as 6,000 BCE. Around 1000 CE, bands of Numic speaking migrants who called themselves *Neme* (person) and *Newe* (the People) moved from the inland deserts of the southern coastline into the Great Basin and northern Plateau, and evidence of pre-Numic culture disappeared within several centuries.[34]

Newe oral tradition maintains that *Appi*, the Wolf, created both the universe and people. After making them on another planet, he placed them on Earth, desiring them to remain here for eternity. Someday Wolf will allow indigenous people to reclaim the land for that purpose. While Wolf is benevolent, his rival *Ezeppa* the Coyote is a trickster who inflicts chaos on the world. Their perpetual struggle formed the physical contours of the Earth. Another tradition describes in detail the volcanic and hydrologic origins of the area. The story describes the first people on Earth, the Father, his wife and their son. Fire followed the family as they walked through their land, and the Father warned them not to turn and look. His wife felt the heat behind her and looked, but the fire turned her to stone. This tale provides a prehistoric link and cautionary tale from ancient ancestors who themselves fled from volcanic events. The story also tells of a

[34] Robert Harry Lowie. *The Northern Shoshone*. (New York: The Trustees, 1909), 173; Richard E. Ross and David Brauner, "The NW as Prehistoric Region," in *Regionalism and the Pacific NW*, 101; Justina Parsons-Bernstein, "'I hope we be a prosperous people': Shoshone and Bannock Incorporation, Ethnic Reorganization, and the 'Indian way of living through.'" (Ph. D. diss., Rutgers University, 2001), 17.

massive flood that followed the fire. The father and son made themselves small enough to float on the water, and there they lived for a long time. Beaver and Muskrat eventually came to their aid, and the Father instructed Muskrat to dive to the bottom to bring up mud. When Muskrat drowned in the attempt, the Father resurrected him and took the mud from under his claws to form the Earth and all the mountains. Later, Coyote entered the land in the shape of a man and came upon on old lady's camp. He asked to be fed, and as the woman cooked fish for him, he wandered around her camp. She warned him to stay away from her fish basket, but snooping around, he spilled the water and fish from the basket. Coyote leapt ahead of the water and built stone dams to stem the flow but the water kept washing over them, forming rivers and falls. Newes named one *Pahculaka*, or "hurling waters leaping," what Americans know as Shoshone Falls. Another creation story tells of a huge snake, miles in length that lay where the river channel now runs. After a winter's sleep, the serpent wound its way up a snow covered mountain to sun itself. Thunder and lightning agitated the snake, and it coiled itself tighter around the mountain until the rock cracked. Lava spewed out, killing the snake, and the snowmelt filled the channel the snake had left. Newes called the river *Shawpatin* as testament to it circuitous route, and Euroamericans later labeled it simply the Snake. Yet another oral tradition holds that a massive water spirit flood consolidated all people. When the waters receded they all went separate ways and with eleven mothers became the eleven different cultural groups. Oral tradition also maintains the group's Aztecan linguistic origin and that their people are the northern-most extension of the indigenous "people of the sun" that inhabit Central and South America. Newes described travel through their homeland as *ne veep*, connoting a dynamic process of spiritual, cultural and physical connection with their territory. They called the mountains *tōyä'be*, the snow that fell on them *nebabe*, and the earth itself *toeep'*. Newes wrote

on stone walls to communicate across large distances of space and time, and in that way the rocks "begin to speak" to the people about their origins. The people whom Euroamericans called Shoshones, Bannocks and Paiutes speak variations of the Uto-Aztecan language, of which Shoshone and Paiute are mutually intelligible yet distinct dialects.[35]

A Newe individual's familial roots revolved around their grandparents. Those four provided a spiritual and personal connection to history and tradition. The elderly of the family provided child care, physically while mothers and fathers worked to secure food, and culturally, by maintaining the collection of stories that defined their people. Families considered a paternal uncle to be another father and a maternal aunt became a complementary mother.[36]

Newes long traded for dried and smoked fish with their northern band relatives, as well as with the bands that lived near Pyramid Lake. Bands that concentrated further west regularly joined Newes on the upper Snake River from the earliest memories of time until well into the nineteenth century. Natural barriers in the circuitous Snake held up larger numbers of salmon than in the Columbia, in which the fish sometimes made it all the way to the northern Rocky Mountains and largely out of range of indigenous plateau fishermen, who had many options closer to home that have since been labeled by Anglo-Americans. At times bands concentrated their efforts on an offshoot of the Snake, the Big Wood River, and further onto Baker Creek, or they could take Camas Creek to Willow Creek. The Big Wood also led to the Little Wood,

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[35] Emma Dann, interview by Royce Williams, November 3, 1988, interview OH954, transcript, Oral History Collection, Idaho State Historical Society Archive, Boise, ID., 6; Emaline George, interview by Barbara Pulling and Peter Morrill, April 12 and September 20, 1989, interview OH 976, transcript, Oral History Collection, Idaho State Historical Society Archive, Boise, ID, 13; Robert F. and Yolanda Murphy. "Northern Shoshone and Bannock," in Sturtevant, William C., and Warren L. d' Azevedo, eds. *Handbook of North American Indians: Vol. 11, Great Basin* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1986), 296; Ella E. Clark, *Indian Legends from the Northern Rockies*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 171-77, 193-4; William D. Edmo. *History and Culture of the Boise Shoshone and Bannock Indians*. (Pittsburgh: Dorrance Publishing Co., Inc., 2010), 6; Bill Gulick, *Snake River Country*. (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1971); Krober, Alfred Louis. *Shoshonean dialects of California*. (Berkeley: University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, Vol. 4, 1907), 116.
[36] Dann, interview, 7.

another reliable source, where Newes fished Muldoon and Silver Creeks. Of course, if fishermen tired of the Little Wood they could always try the North Fork of the Big Wood, which led to several more reliable creeks.[37]

Long before the arrival of the horse, Newes regularly formed large fishing congregations at Shoshone Falls, the upper limit for salmon in the Snake, as far west as the Boise Valley and along the Weiser River. The Snake and its tributaries drew indigenous bands from the Pacific coastline and from the eastern plains. Annual gatherings on the Camas Prairie provided opportunities to socialize and harvest roots and to trade meat, pine nuts, buffalo hides, buckskins and eventually horses, where half a bushel of camas root could be traded for a colt.[38]

Women gathered a variety of local seeds, berries, and plant bulbs and roots on the Snake River plain, including pasigo and yamp, contributing as much as 80% of their family's food supply. One plant remained by far the most significant cultural pillar of the Shoshone-Bannock diet. Women gathered the roots and bulbs of the abundant camas lily, which they cooked and pounded into flour from which to make easily storable and transportable cakes.[39]

Before the arrival of the horse, hunting remained a pedestrian endeavor in which large groups of men participated in communal rabbit drives and pursued herds of antelope, deer, elk, bear, rabbit and mountain sheep. In such perambulatory times, when close quarters hand-to-hand combat defined warfare, Shoshone armaments remained limited to the war club and shield.

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[37] Deward Walker. *Lemhi Shoshone-Bannock Reliance on Anadromous and other Fish Resources*. (Boise: Bureau of Land Management, Idaho State Office, 1994), 231, 234, 238; Parsons-Berstein, 20; Murphy and Murphy, 325.
[38] Walker, 232; Murphy and Murphy, 320; Brigham Madsen, *Bannock of Idaho*. (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1958), 18, 21-22.
[39] Parsons-Bernstein, 18; Murphy and Murphy, 320; Madsen, *Bannock*, 18, 21-22; Liljeblad, 11.

Constructed of thick rawhide from the neck of a buffalo bull, shields usually measured about three feet in width.[40]

By 1400, Numic peoples dominated the Great Basin region and less than a century later Newes and related bands had expanded their area of settlement to encompass the entirety of the modern day states of Utah and Nevada, bordered in the west by the Sierra Nevada Mountains and in the east by the Northern Yellowstone and Wind River mountain ranges. Their personal trade networks stretched from central Idaho and eastern Oregon to the Colorado River's southern turn toward the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts, and extended connections between networks allowed Newes trade in items from as far west as the Pacific Ocean and east to Great Lakes.[41]

Eighteenth century Newes focused their camas root gathering on the semiarid Camas Prairie; 700 square miles and 138,000 acres of fertile plain along Camas Creek and surrounded by mountains to the north, west and south. A ridge that reaches 6,800 feet divides the prairie from the Snake River plain. The prairie terminates in the east, stretching into an undulating plain that rises to 5,100 feet, and the action of Willow Creek and the surrounding streams carved it into a succession of low rounded and flat-topped hills. Climatically, the region experiences the unreliable rainfall that characterizes much of the rest of the state. Of the rain that does fall, two-thirds is lost through evapotranspiration, a combination of evaporation and the transpiration of water into the air from plant matter. While that rate has been extrapolated from data recorded between 1895 and 1923, it is fair to believe that unpredictable precipitation patterns remained normal phenomenon to Newe peoples. Occurring during periods of resource depletion such as

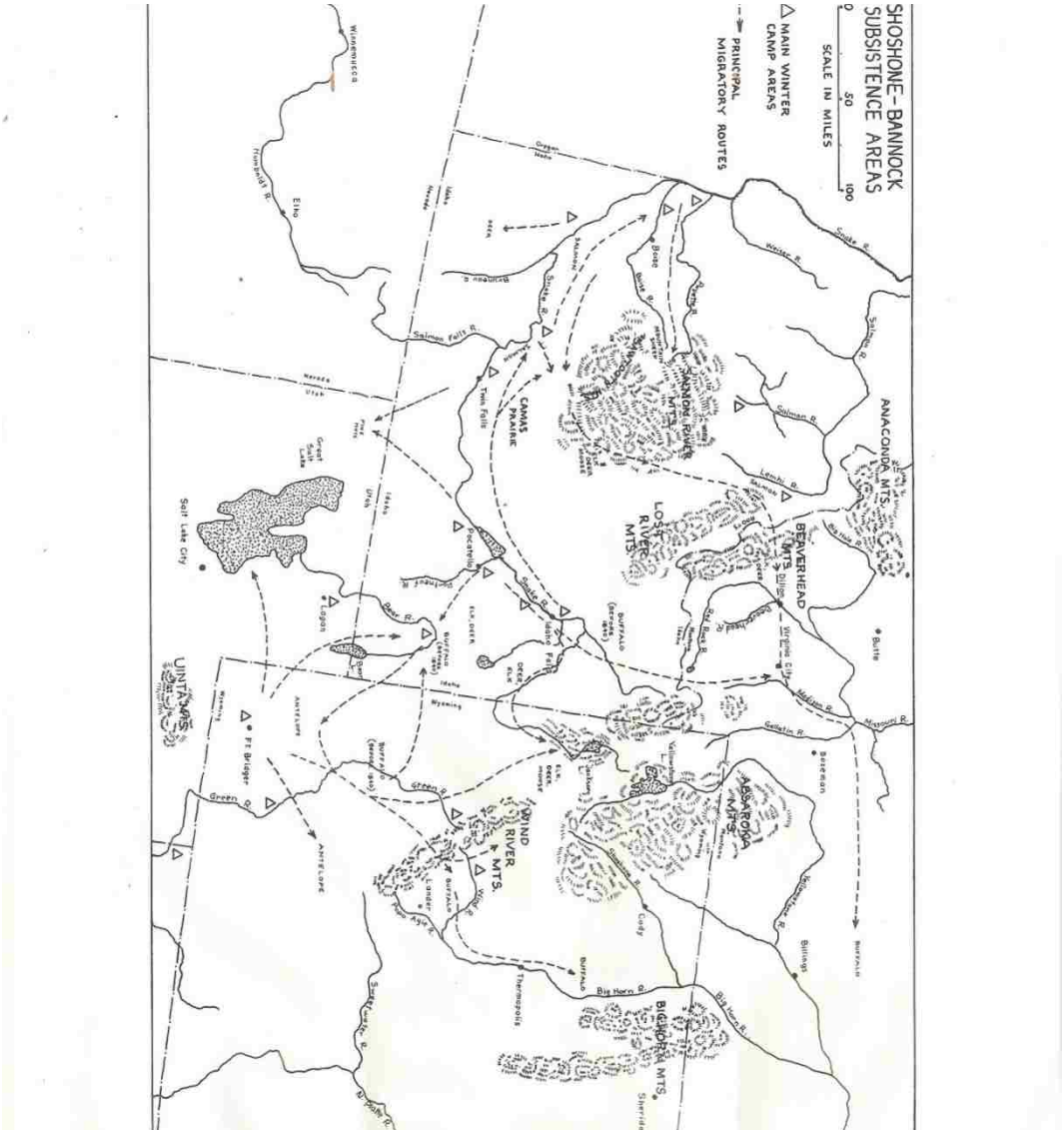
[40] Liljeblad, 12; Madsen, *Bannock*, 21; John C. Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture: With Comparative Material From Other Western Tribes*. (1955; Reprint, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1965), 203-04.
[41] Parsons-Bernstein, 17, 20; Dann, interview, 8.

the 1850s and 1860s, such fluctuation in precipitation rate could exacerbate already strained provisional situations.[42]

While the summer months found Newes hunting bison, antelope, deer, elk and moose, fishing for salmon, or gathering camas roots and berries, they wintered in larger encampments along the middle Snake River, relying on food caches of dried roots, berries and salmon that were considered private property. The *Wihinait* band preferred to winter along the Portneuf, while some bands who frequently hunted across the Continental Divide, at times had to winter in western Montana and return after the snows had melted.[43]

Prehistoric indigenous horses went extinct by the end of the Pleistocene epoch, and for 12,000 years the North American plains saw nothing of the animals that would come to inhabit the heights of regional literary mythology and history. In 1519 Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés landed horses in the Yucatan Peninsula, and by the seventeenth century Santa Fe became the hub for the dispersal of horses throughout northern New Spain. In light of scant historical data on the spread of the horse through North America, scholars hold the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 as the watershed moment in which indigenous insurgents first possessed large herds with which to trade. Before the revolt, limited horse raiding by Jumanos and Apaches could have provided small numbers to Plains and Great Basin Newes. Roughly twenty years before the turn of century is as chronologically precise an estimate as can be made for the general release of Spanish horses into indigenous trade networks. Nevertheless, Jumanos and Apaches remain the sources of the first Newe horse herds, most likely appropriated a few years after sustained Comanche raiding

[42] Arthur M Piper. *Ground Water for Irrigation on Camas Prairie, Camas and Elmore Counties, Idaho*. (Moscow: University of Idaho, 1926), 2, 5, 6, 12. 15; William Clarence Walton. *Ground-water Resources of Camas Prairie,Camas and Elmore Counties, Idaho*. (Washington, DC. Government Printing Office, 1962), 5, 22.
[43] Murphy and Murphy, 321, 327.



Shoshone-Bannock Subsistence Areas (reproduced from *Shoshone-Bannock Subsistence and Society*, Robert F. and Yolanda Murphy)

Camas plant (reproduced from *Common to this Country: Botanical Discoveries of Lewis and Clark*, Susan H. Munger and Charlotte Staub Thomas)

on New Mexican settlements began in 1705. Plains horse traders with access to abundant forage further east also probably contributed to Newe herds.

Horses drastically increased the efficiency with which mounted indigenous bands hunted bison. Attempting to assign exact numbers to the wild bison herds that indigenous Plains groups hunted can evoke considerable controversy. European and American accounts commonly referred to herds in the millions of animals, but some contemporary scholarship challenges the archaeological evidence supporting the existence of such a boundless source of protein. Most likely, inexperienced travelers exaggerated numbers of bison, and the speculative nature of western settlement no doubt contributed to an inflated and imaginary herd size. Indigenous equestrian hunters drew from an extended herd that stretched from west of the Rockies to east of the Mississippi River and most likely numbered well over ten million animals. Although Newes and other Plains groups significantly altered bison population numbers through hunting, they maintained seasonal mobility patterns that allowed a sustainable resource pool that reproduced in game sinks and buffer zones between hunting bands. Contact with the Lewis and Clark expedition set in motion the capitalistic integration of indigenous groups into the eastern economy, where bison skins became a commodity to be traded, and therefore the animals became economic units on a global scale. By the turn of the eighteenth century, Newes migrating from thinning bison herds in eastern Oregon Territory sought to associate themselves with the mounted bands of the east. While maintaining a presence near their nutritional base of the Camas Prairie, horses allowed Newes to diversify their diet and economy through bison hunting on the eastern plains.[44]

[44] Ewers, 6, 9, 14; Mary Ann Franke. *To Save the Wild Bison: Life on the Edge in Yellowstone*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 9; Steward, 201; Walker, *Geological History*, 15; F.G. Roe, *The North American Buffalo* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 355; Vine Deloria, *Red Earth, White Lies* (Golden, CO; Fulcrum Publishing), 1997.

Linguistically, the effect of horse ownership redefined Newe self-images. Different mounted Newe bands at times called themselves *Bohogue* or *Bana'kwüt,* literally "horse owners," which Euroamericans later Anglicized to "Bannock." Pedestrian Newe bands further west called horse owners *Wi:nakwüt* or *Ba:naite*, and identified themselves to outsiders as *Sosoni'*, or "grass house people." Euroamericans came to label them as "Shoshones," and further demarcated them with geographical directions according to their perceived concentrations. Other Newe bands continued to migrate east from the Plateau, most likely following bison onto the plains.[45]

Keeping their herds from the sparse pasturage of the Great Basin, Northern Shoshones distributed horses to both related bands and external groups of the northwestern plateau. Crows also bought horses from the Shoshone distributors to sell as far east as the Missouri River. Shoshones temporarily extended their bison hunting range to the Canadian prairies, but the Blackfoot Confederacy kept them from holding onto the territory for any significant amount of time. By one account, some Northern Shoshone bands remained without horses as late as the turn of the eighteenth century. Unable to hunt bison in the east, they traveled in small familial units and survived on deer and sheep in the relative safety of the mountains. The equestrian advantage, or lack thereof, played the defining role in Shoshone and Bannock conflicts with Piegan neighbors on the northern plains and Blackfoot counterparts to the east. Piegan raids threatened frequently from the 1720s to 1780s, and Blackfoot tradition holds the Northern Shoshones as traditional enemies since before the arrival of the horse. Once mounted, Blackfeet bands raided as far west as Fort Hall and the western Snake River Valley. Forced south and west, but reinforced with guns by the second decade of the eighteenth century, Shoshones, Flatheads, Pend

[45] Julian Steward, *Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Groups*, Reprint of 1938 ed., (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1970), 198; Lowie, 173; Liljeblad, 10; Robert F. and Yolanda Murphy. *Shoshone-Bannock Subsistence and Society*. (Anthropological Records Vol. 16, No. 7. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 293, 298, 315.

d'Oreilles and Nez Percés maintained the rivalry by launching seasonal mounted bison hunting expeditions into Blackfoot territory. While Blackfoot raids had become infrequent by the 1860s, Shoshones continued their excursions as late as the end of the nineteenth century.[46]

The Rocky Mountains kept Northern Shoshone horse herds safe from the raids of Plains bands, and a southerly climate provided more warmth and forage than on the northern plains. Shoshone adaptations to the horse can be understood as innovations that contributed to cultural redefinition. Corralling their herds within their camp circles, one 1805 estimate placed the entire Northern Shoshone horse herd at 700 animals. By 1827, their wealth in horses increased dramatically to 3,000. The quality of their stock remained high, as even rival Blackfoot equestrians recognized Shoshones as among the owners of the best horses. Northern Shoshones sometimes staked their fortunes on their breeding skills, gambling on riders who raced around a stick in the ground and back to the starting line.[47]

The mobility provided by horses facilitated the interethnic fluidity of Northern Shoshone band membership. Northern Paiutes and Bannocks joined Northern Shoshones on annual buffalo hunts, and membership in individual bands depended largely on personal social affiliation and intermarriage. Free to follow new seasonal migratory routes, ambitious and adaptive members incorporated eastern bison into their diet and economy, while traditionalists maintained millennia old seasonal mobility patterns.[48]

The horse culture acted as the axis around which mounted Northern Shoshones bands began to distance themselves from the pedestrian fishing and camas-gathering Shoshones and align with fellow equestrian Bannocks and Eastern Shoshones. Wealthy equestrians had an

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[46] Ewers, 7, 15, 17, 19, 171-73, 244, 303, 334; Murphy and Murphy, 295.
[47] Ewers, 22, 26, 176, 209, 235; John Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks: Culture and Commerce at Fort Hall, 1870-1940*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 29.
[48] Ewers, 248; Brigham Madsen, *The Northern Shoshoni*. (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1980), 19.

ethical responsibility to share their resources, but their status relative to pedestrian Shoshones created an inequality in reciprocal obligations. Equestrian Shoshones and Bannocks commonly wintered together and pastured their horses in the lush bottomlands of the Snake River plain. When the weather warmed, they hunted bison together on the eastern plains and in the high country south of the Snake.[49]

When they returned to the relative safety on the western side of the Continental Divide, Northern Shoshones and Bannocks maintained their horse herds in the verdant area where the Snake, Blackfoot and Portneuf Rivers provided plenty of renewable forage and water. As the Snake flowed west, some bands maintained the traditional salmon fishing and camas gathering techniques that traveled east from the Northwest Plateau, and equestrian bison hunters and pedestrian fisherman complemented each other's resource pools and economies.[50]

If maintaining a sustainable horse herd through breeding and raiding preoccupied Shoshones' and Bannocks' lives, their connection with the animals transcended even those temporal limits. Bannocks provided grave escorts for a dead hunter by killing the man's horses and burying them alongside their owner in the volcanic sand dunes of the area. As those Bannocks died, younger newly equestrian males integrated into Snake country Shoshone society through marriage. Northern Shoshones and Bannocks practiced little micropolitical authority relative to indigenous cultures on the Great Plains, and the foreign Euroamerican demand for consolidated leadership in a "chief" effected their assignment of such duties more than their own cultural requirements.[51]

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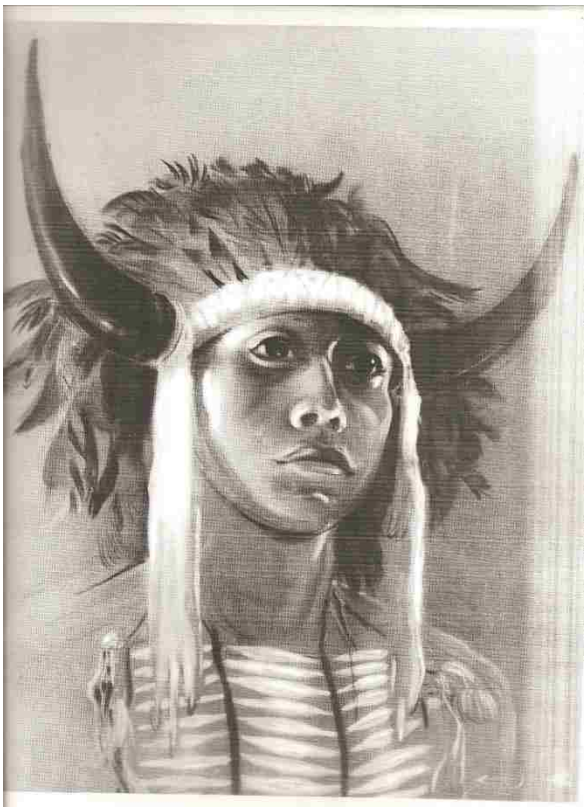
[49] Steward, 200; Liljeblad, 17; Murphy and Murphy, 321; Heaton, 29.
[50] Madsen, *N. Shoshoni*, 23.
[51] Madsen, *N Shoshoni*, 19; Heaton, 31; Ewers, 286; Mansfield, 23



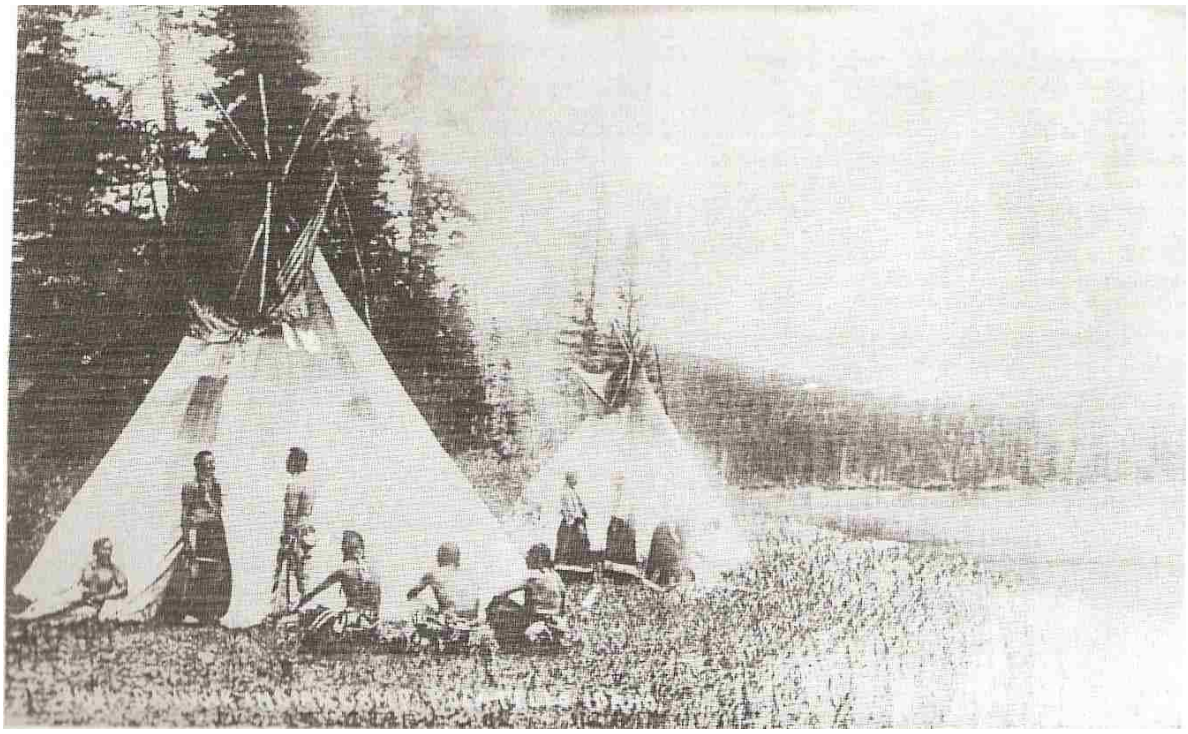
Shoshone-Bannock Buffalo Dancer, painted by Helen Hoff-Apperle (ISHS)

Willie George, Shoshone-Bannock, painted by Helen Hoff-Apperle (ISHS)

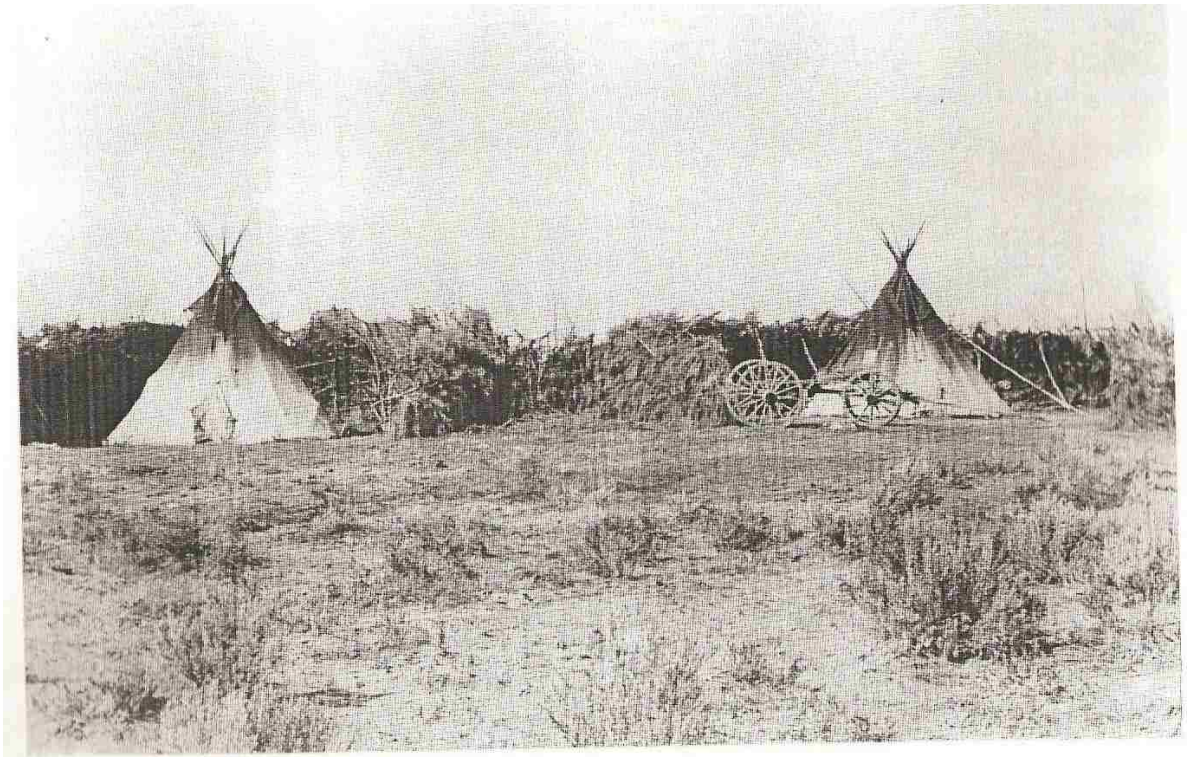
Before Lewis and Clark arrived, drastic environmental change swept the Snake River country. Late 18th century smallpox epidemics killed tens of thousands of indigenous inhabitants, and only three to four thousand Northern Shoshones survived. Contrary to a pristine wilderness, the explorers encountered an environment that had been vastly altered years before. When they met a Shoshone band in the Lemhi Valley in 1805, they set in motion a government policy of undermining traditional indigenous self-sufficiency techniques.[52]

The primary currency of this market began as beaver furs, a resource Shoshones and Bannocks did not specifically rely upon to survive. Once overhunted, beaver furs quickly gave way to buffalo skins, which resided literally on the backs of the food Shoshones and Bannocks relied upon to survive. Further, equestrian Bannock culture rested on the pillar of the bison hunt. Once that hunting became a process of commodification, a dwindling bison population began to severely strain that cultural tenet. Hunting and war remained the primary avenue to prestige and wealth, and as the eighteenth-century progressed, young and ambitious Bannocks faced fewer and fewer options for traditional advancement. As they witnessed the degradation of their environment, and therefore their path to success, many increasingly chose confrontation and violent action against invading Euroamericans.

[52] Madsen, *N. Shoshoni*, 23; Heaton, 33-34.

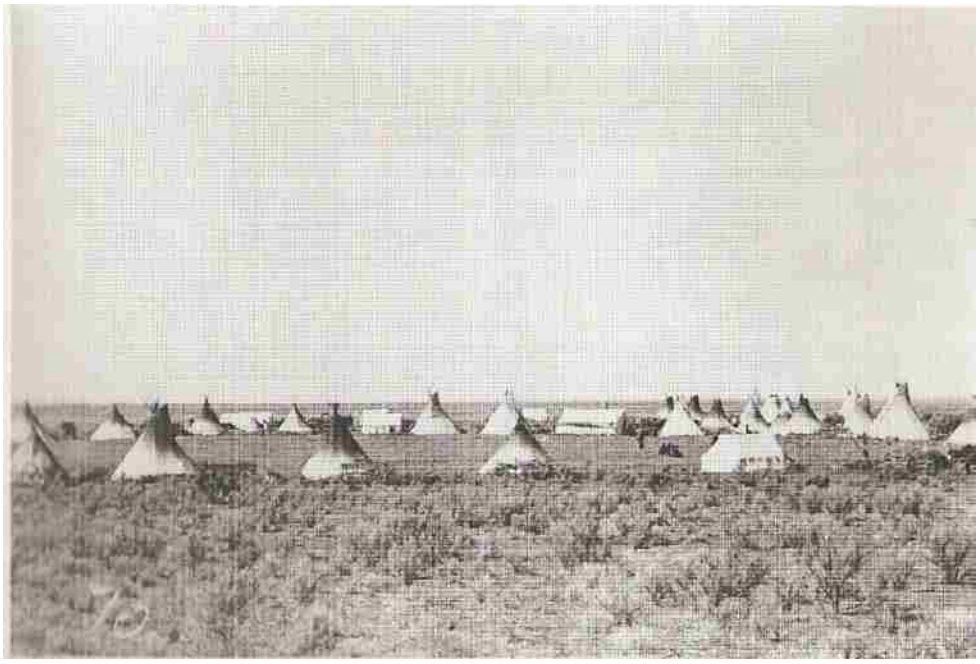


Bannock Camp, undated (ISHS)



Bannock winter quarters (ISHS)

Bannock summer tipi (ISHS)



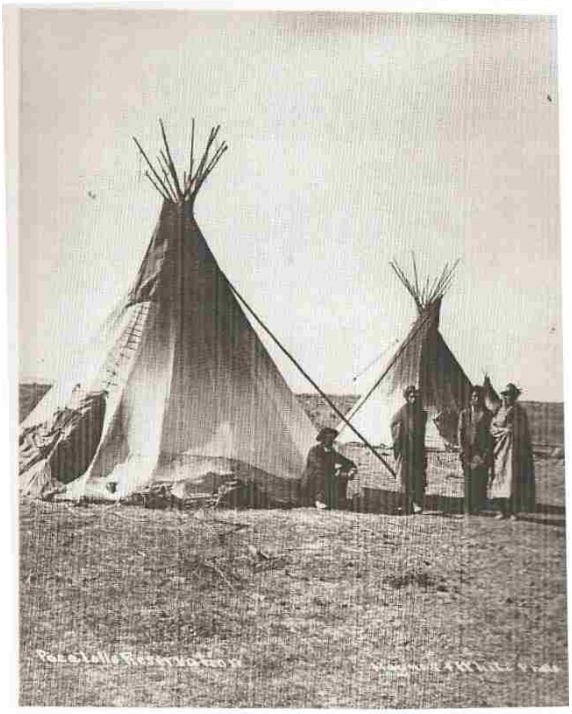
Shoshone-Bannock Camp (ISHS)

Bannock Women in costumes ornamented with elk teeth and shells (ISHS)

Bannocks, in center is "Old Ocean," aged 117 years (ISHS)

Shoshone-Bannocks, ready for “Drum” Dance (ISHS)

Shoshone woman with beaded cradle board (ISHS)



Shoshones at Fort Hall (ISHS)

Chapter III

Environmental Commodification, Resource Degradation and War, 1805-1878

Almost a century after the first smallpox epidemics, Shoshones and Bannocks witnessed a severe degradation of all three of their primary natural resource pools. American cattle depleted grasslands and Camas roots through grazing and trampling, Shoshones fished less salmon from the waterways, and the commodification of the bison through the buffalo skin exchange undermined a Bannock culture built on the accumulation of prestige and wealth through success in hunting and war. Encapsulation on a reservation spelled dependency on the Fort Hall Indian Agency and the federal government. The Agency failed to provide adequate food rations promised by treaty and slim annuity payments further aggravated rivalries between Bannock and other Shoshone leadership. These developments left few options for ambitious Bannocks to accumulate wealth and achieve prestige.

Recognizing the implications of the regular arrival of thousands of settlers via the Oregon and Overland Trails, and after their 1863 defeat at Bear River, Bannocks and Shoshones accepted the terms of the 1868 Treaty of Fort Bridger. The treaty explicitly secured portions of the Portneuf and Big Camas Prairie regions of southern Idaho against trespassing American settlers. By 1870, the vast majority of Bannocks and Shoshones had moved to the reservation established at Fort Hall and attempted a peaceful coexistence with their American neighbors. In 1877, Chief Joseph's leadership of the nearby Nez Perces gave confidence to those most disgruntled with the government's failure to provide promised annuities and enforce legal

boundaries, a failure manifested in their assigned Indian Agent W.H. Danilson and the repeated transgressions by American cattle of the accepted boundaries of the Camas Prairie.

By the time of the violence on May 30, 1878, Chief Buffalo Horn and a contingent of Shoshones, Bannocks and Paiutes had rejected any last lingering doubts about an armed resistance to American transgressions on the Camas Prairie, defined by federal law as Shoshone-Bannock property. Buffalo Horn's previous Army service led him to understand the government's military response to organized resistance, and he believed that he could emulate the leadership of Chief Joseph, who forced an arduous Army pursuit of his band of Nez Perces to the Canadian border the previous year.

After contact between Meriwether Lewis' and William Clark's expedition and northern Lemhi Shoshones in 1805, Euroamerican trappers moved into Shoshone and Bannock territory. In 1811, trapper William Price Hunt identified a group of indigenous people as Snakes and Shoshones. Euroamerican trappers commonly labeled Shoshones and Bannocks as "Snakes," but Canadian fur trader Alexander Ross attempted a somewhat finer ethnographical understanding when he described a council meeting in which he learned of several different cultural groups within this assigned name. After unidentified Indians killed nine trappers along the Snake River, a group of Shoshones at the council described as suspect a band referred to as *Bana'kwüt*. Anglicized to "Bannock," the Shoshones knew them as "robbers, warlike, and outlaws." The actions of a band of Bannock raiders lent such a reputation to the larger group, which tended to retain it, as opposed to distinct Shoshonean cultures that also hunted bison on the eastern plains and fished salmon from the lower Snake.[53]

The 1820s and 1830s were profitable decades for some Shoshones, as they utilized competition between Canadian and American fur trappers and traders to increase their wealth of

[53] Madsen, *Bannock*, 42-46.

goods from the east. Annual Snake River trapping expeditions by a variety of Euroamerican capitalistic interests provided a steady supply of guns and other tools for Bannock and Shoshone bands to incorporate new technology into their daily lives at independently variable rates. In 1824, trapper Peter Skene Ogden met two large composite bands of regional Shoshones, formed when British and American fur competition contributed to an increase of Blackfoot raids and excursions into Shoshone territory. One band consisted of Bannocks and the other of Northern and Eastern Shoshones. These new alliances formed as direct action against the new security threat created by the fur trade. Overtrapping swiftly decimated beaver populations in Idaho, hastened the transition to buffalo skins, and in turn fostered the beginning of Shoshone and Bannock economic dependency that integration into a globalizing economy demanded.[54]

Bannocks at times stole horses they viewed as trespassing within the boundaries of their equestrian realm, at times escalating such a routine mobile practice into confrontation. Horse stealing common instigated interthnic violence. Bannocks maintained their prestige by requisitioning the private property of Euroamerican settlers, commonly with unsympathetic views toward indigenous culture and a mythic code to respond to transgression with violence. In 1825 James Bridger led a group of Rocky Mountain Fur Company trappers to reclaim eighty stolen animals. The men killed six Bannocks, retrieved their horses, and themselves stole forty more. British trapper Peter Skene Ogden reported that Snakes had stolen 180 traps and killed thirteen trappers since September of 1824. In a vast oversimplification, Ogden divided the Snakes into only two large groups: 1,000 Plains Snakes and 1,500 Lower Snakes. Four years later Ogden modified his terminology to describe Lower Snakes as Bannocks, distinct from Shoshones who lived along the lower Snake River. Yet Ogden's understanding of the interethnicity of Shoshones and Bannocks remained only as complex as his own cultural

[54] Liljeblad, 20; Madsen, *N. Shoshoni*. 24.

relativity allowed. Ogden's understanding of Shoshones as Plains Snakes further compounded the complexity of the issue, as most Shoshones who raided onto the eastern plains did so in alliance with Bannocks who frequented the area. In 1829 Bridger reported 1,200 Bannock lodges with 8,000 residents, but this must have certainly included associated Shoshones.[55]

While salmon fishing remained a mainstay of Shoshone culture and subsistence, the Bannocks' use of horses to hunt bison incorporated at times any mounts on which they could lay their hands. In September 1833 explorer Nathaniel J. Wyeth described the Snake River as "full of salmon," and that for miles along the river Shoshones erected dams and weirs in order to spear them from the water. According to Washington Irving, Captain B.L.E. Bonneville reported myriads of salmon in every river and stream in the area west of the Rocky Mountains, as numerous as the bison on the plains to the east. Though he considered the Bannocks to be friends, when Bonneville camped along the Portneuf River, he kept his distance from a Bannock horse camp that dominated the closest grazing range. The Bannocks then "borrowed" some of his horses to hunt bison and returned them in a much fatigued state. In a quickly evolving economy that sought to subjugate them, for a moment Bannocks had indeed moved a step ahead of the game by resting their animals for a hunting cycle and limiting Bonneville's mobility.[56]

In his second attempt at success in the Oregon fur trade in 1834, Wyeth established the Fort Hall trading post on the Snake. The post quickly became a trading hub, and as a center of commerce it focused the attention of Euroamerican settlers onto the surrounding land as excellent pasturage. In 1835, trapper Osborne Russell spent several days in a Bannock hunting camp. The Bannocks fed him and treated him amicably, informing him of the presence of two

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[55] Madsen, *Bannock*, 49.
[56] Jennie Broughton Brown and Susie Boice Trego. *Fort Hall on the Oregon Trail: A Historical Study*. (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1932), 108, 114; Washington Irving, *Three Western Narratives: A Tour on the Prairies, Astoria & The Adventures of Captain Bonneville*. (New York: The Library of America, 2004), 688-89, 816-17; Walker, *Anadromous and other Fish Resources*, 234.

within their camp wanted for the murder of two trappers. By relaying this information, the Bannocks revealed they had little loyalty to the killers. Perhaps they saw an opportunity to collect on reward money, or to counter a phase of Bannock violence against trappers, but they demonstrated that Bannock reaction to Euroamerican encroachment was far from monolithic. Two years later, Russell reported that Bannocks stole numerous Nez Perce horses and traps. A contingent of Nez Perces and trappers attempted to retrieve their property, resulting in a shootout that killed thirteen Bannocks. Russell observed firsthand the internal complexity of Bannock society as well as that of the intercultural politics of the region. Yet perhaps it was the violence of the latter encounter that overshadowed any attempt at an enlightened understanding when he claimed that "the best way to negotiate and settle disputes with hostile Indians is with the rifle." Indisputable is a violent thread weaved through Euroamerican/Shoshone-Bannock relations until the culmination of war in 1878. The root of the confrontation lay in the commodification of two of the natural resources the Nez Perces and Bannocks relied on: furs and horses.[57]

Bannocks continued to regularly hunt bison on the eastern plains, which remained Blackfeet territory. Complementary cultural endeavors for young male Bannocks, hunting bison, stealing horses and waging war on Blackfeet provided multiple opportunities to provide sustenance for the kin network and accumulate material wealth and martial prestige. Killing bison and Blackfeet at times became foundationally synonymous masculine acts. This tenet of culturally appropriate violence grew from the incorporation of horses and guns and led some Euroamerican settlers to understand Bannocks as potentially "hostile." To some Euroamerican witnesses, many Bannocks seemed to gather courage to fight the enemy as they consumed their bison meat. They consumed the energy of the sun, captured in the grass that fed the bison, and

[57] Madsen, *Bannock*, 57, 60-62; James A. Young. "Snake River Country: A Rangeland Heritage." *Rangelands* 8, (Oct. 1986), 99.

personally internalized the environmental cycles of the climate they inhabited. The intake of the flesh increased their desire to wage war, and as cultural expression, Bannocks commonly boasted about exploits in war and verbally challenged their Blackfeet enemies.[58]

After witnessing a successful bison hunt, Captain Bonneville described to Washington Irving the type of braggadocio that no doubt contributed to a tough Bannock image. Predictably dehumanizing the participants, Irving and Bonneville laid the literary foundation for colonization by coloring Bannocks as the "warlike," "hostile," childlike and animalistic Indians paternalistic Euroamerican readers demanded:

> The Banneck braves, who, in proportion as they crammed themselves with buffalo beef, grew stout of heart, until, the supper at an end, they began to chant war songs, setting forth their mighty deeds, and the victories they had gained over the Blackfeet. Warming with the theme, and inflating themselves with their own eulogies, these magnanimous heroes would start up, advance a short distance beyond the light of the fire, and apostrophize most vehemently their Blackfeet enemies, as though they had been within hearing. Ruffling, and swelling, and snorting, and slapping their breasts, and brandishing their arms, they would vociferate all their exploits; reminding the Blackfeet how they had drenched their towns in tears and blood; enumerate the blows they had inflicted, the warriors they had slain. Then, having said everything that could stir a man's spleen or pique his valor, they would dare their imaginary hearers to come and take their revenge—receiving no reply to this valorous bravado, they would conclude by all kinds of sneers and insults, deriding the Blackfeet for dastards and poltroons, that dared not accept their challenge. Such is the kind of swaggering and rodomontade in which the "red men" are prone to indulge in their vainglorious moments. Having vented their valor in this fierce effervescence, the Banneck braves gradually calmed down, lowered their crests, smoothed their ruffled feathers, and betook themselves to sleep, without placing a single guard over their camp; so that, had the Blackfeet taken them at their word, but few of these braggart heroes might have survived for any further boasting.[59]

An 1835 report counted a Bannock bison kill without guns and using only bows and arrows of "upward of a thousand." By 1838, Wyeth's business failed, and Northern Shoshone trapping territory came under British influence. The bison west of the continental divide existed in smaller and more scattered herds than on the plains until about 1840, the same year the land

[58] Madsen, *Bannock*, 56, 63; Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown. *Indians of the Pacific Northwest: A History*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), 54.
[59] Irving, *Narratives*, 811-12.

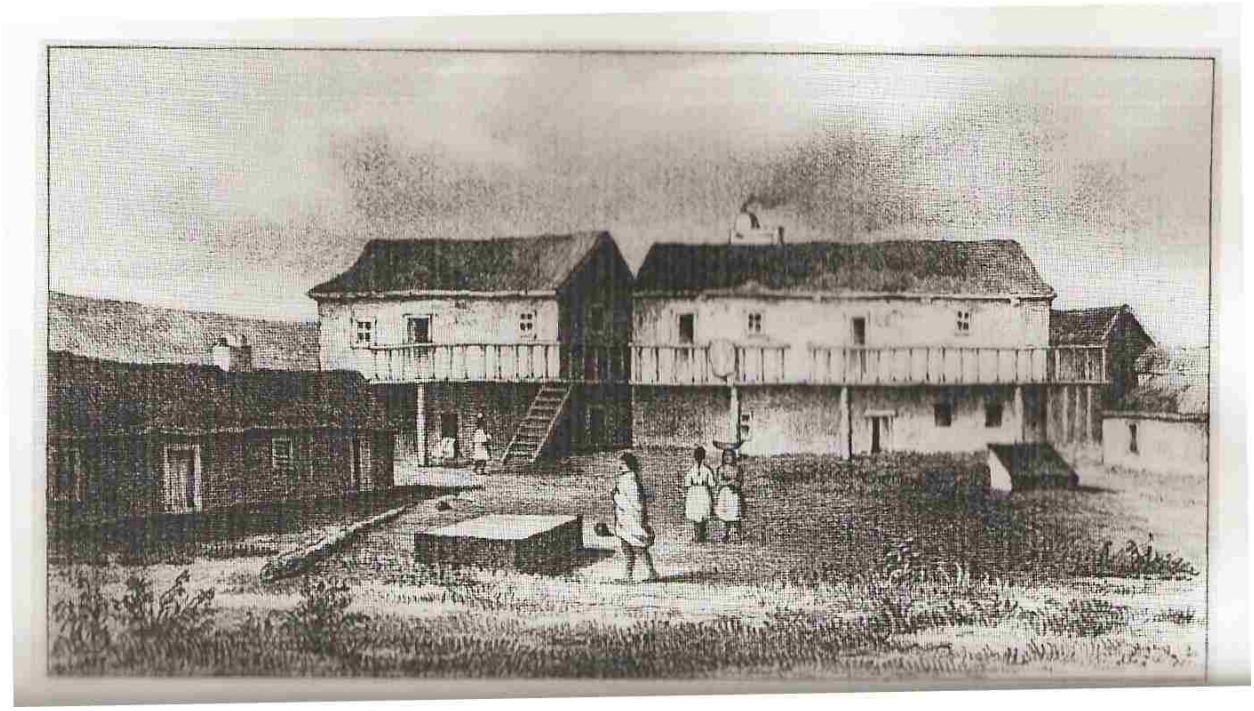
became trapped out and the beaver fur trade no longer remained a reliable source of income. By the end, some Northern Shoshones had accumulated significant wealth by balancing an adaptation with Euroamerican goods that eased their living with traditional values and customs.[60]

The 1840s also saw Euroamerican emigrant traffic on the Oregon Trail approach 10,000. As human and animal traffic on the Oregon and Overland Trails further degraded plant resources and soil quality, Bannocks and Shoshones responded by encroaching on neighboring hunting and harvesting lands. In 1841, the resulting strain on central and eastern forage resources pushed a Bannock band to attack a small Flathead camp. Though war with the Flatheads was uncommon and infrequent, a shortage of reliable resources forced an expansion to an enemy other than the Blackfeet. As some Bannocks made new enemies, federal surveyors explored the agricultural potential of the area. An 1843 soil analysis of the clay in the Snake River Bottoms circulated in the East, describing it as 68.5 percent silicon dioxide (silica). Sandy but wet, the bottoms loomed in speculative eastern minds as a source of future wealth.[61]

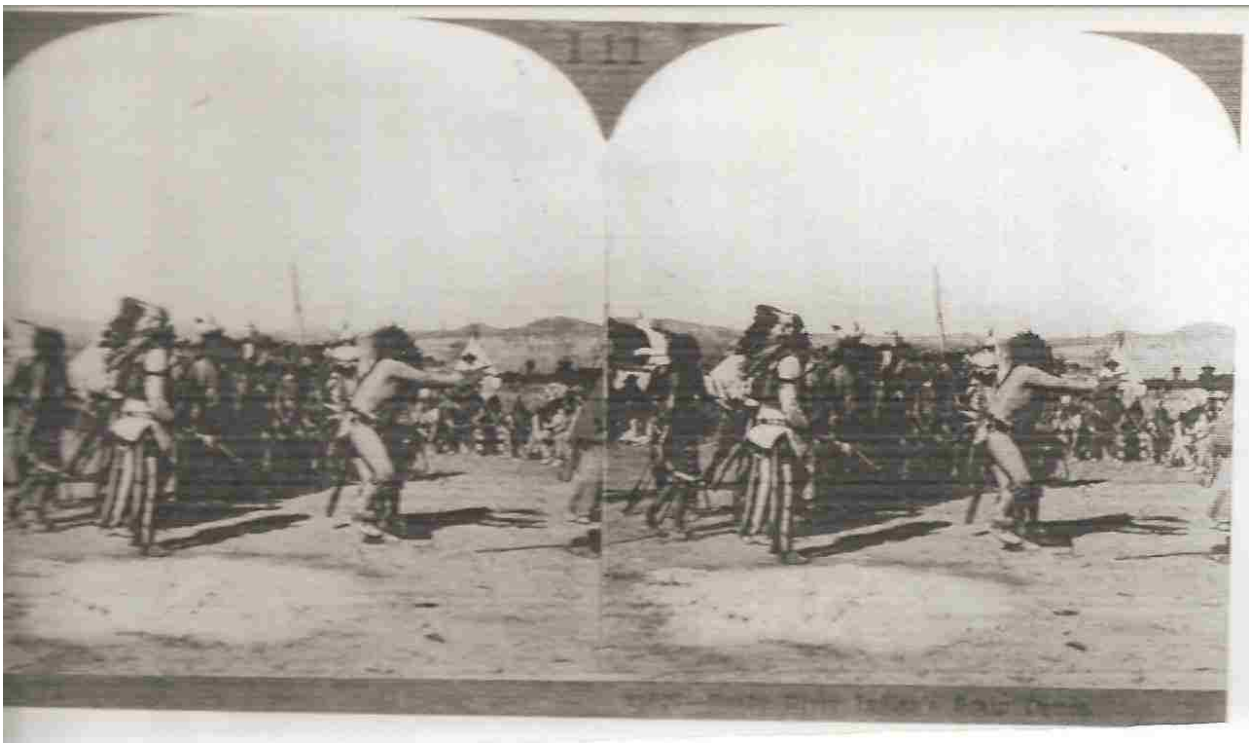
In 1846 Great Britain and the United States agreed on the boundary between Oregon Territory and Canada at the 49th parallel. Now officially American land in the minds of hundreds of thousands of eastern Americans, the grasslands and water of the Idaho region remained a choice destination for colonizers. Between them and that land lived a population of about 4,000 Shoshones and Bannocks, through whose territory 22,500 settlers brought 60,000 animals in 1849 alone.[62]

By the end of 1840s large settlements of Mormons near the Great Salt Lake became the largest American population closest to the Northern Shoshone homeland. A much more conservative estimate of the settler traffic places only about 18,000 people and 50,000 animals

[60] Brown and Trego, 187-88; Liljeblad, 21; Madsen, *N. Shoshoni*, 25, 27; Murphy and Murphy, 293.
[61] Liljebald, 29; Madsen, *Bannock*, 58; Mansfield and Heroy, 118.
[62]Lowie, 172-73; Madsen, *Northern Shoshoni*, 27.



Fort Hall lithograph, early period (ISHS)



“Scalp” Dance (ISHS)

traveling through southeastern Idaho on the Oregon and Overland Trails between 1842 and 1852.[63]

As the 1840s turned into the 1850s, Shoshones witnessed the arrival of significant wealth through the fur trade that began to coincide with the degradation of their environment. As they accumulated the proxy capital of horses and guns, they used their new wealth and consequently superior weapons to dominate their Blackfeet neighbors and evacuate depleted resource areas. The decade also saw intermittent Shoshone attacks on emigrant parties, but the low intensity of such forays brought little government attention during the concomitant Comanche crises far to the south, the California Gold Rush and increasing eastern political strife. 1854 and 1858 Bannock attacks garnered more publicity. When Bannocks killed several members of a migrant party near Fort Boise, vigilantes retaliated by killing a Bannock man and hanging three more. Trader William Charles abandoned his venture because of the incident, evidence of the repellant economic effects of the militancy on both sides. After purchasing it from Wyeth, the Hudson's Bay Company only maintained the Fort Hall trading post until 1856, when they abandoned it. By 1857, 165,000 emigrants and more than a million animals had crossed through Shoshone and Bannock territory en route to California. In 1858 Bannocks targeted the Mormon mission for Nez Perces in the Lemhi Valley. In February of that year a raiding party descended on the mission, killed two missionaries and drove the livestock away.[64]

In 1860, prospectors found gold on the Clearwater River, signaling the beginning of permanent American settlement. The discovery transformed the inland Northwest into a destination, from what had been merely a waystation on the journey to the Pacific coast. By 1861, the federal government established the 42nd parallel as the Utah border, giving to Eastern

[63] Madsen, *Northern Shoshoni*, 27.
[64] Heaton, 52; Liljeblad,22; Ruby and Brown, 148, 161.

Shoshones the attention of Utah Territory. In May of 1861, the government created the Washington Superintendency from Oregon Territory, including the land that would become Idaho.[65]

Shortly thereafter, in 1862, prospectors discovered gold deposits in Montana and a new regional gold rush began. Facing an ever increasing stream of invading animals that consumed their forage, Bannock raiders increased their attacks. The most notable remained a sustained December 1862 attack on the Mormon livestock herds in Franklin, Washington Territory. Residents then appealed to the Army garrison at nearby Fort Douglas, Utah for help against Bannock "terrorism." Bannocks killed a trespassing miner the same year. Such incentive as the presence of gold and hostile Indians quickly galvanized government bureaucrats to begin a new round of geographical administration, thereby creating Idaho Territory in 1863. By that time, ninety percent of the emigrants over the Oregon, Overland and California trails traveled through, foraged their animals, and cut firewood in Shoshone and Bannock territory. In total, that amounted to at least 240,000 emigrants and 1.5 million animals. Such a burden on the land set in motion events that culminated in a fight seen as survival for its indigenous participants, but for the moment, American settlers and their horses and cattle simply "deprived [Shoshone-Bannocks] of tribal assets essential to their livelihood…with zero financial compensation." During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the free-for-all of unregulated cattle grazing severely degraded Idaho rangeland and forest ecosystems.[66]

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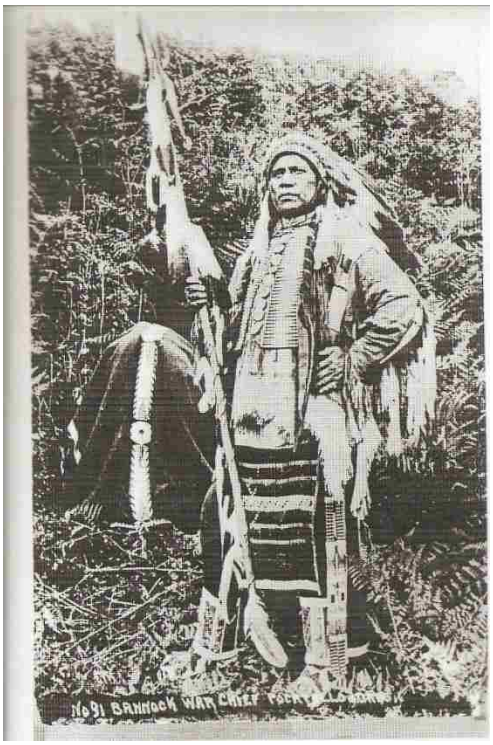
[65] Liljeblad, 30; Madsen, *N. Shoshoni*, 27-29.
[66] Ray Hoard Glassley. *Pacific Northwest Indian Wars*. (Portland, OR: Binfords & Mort, 1953), 225-26; Madsen, *N. Shoshoni*, 27-28; Young, 199; Kathleen A. Dwire, Bruce A. McIntosh and J. Boone Kauffman. "Ecological Influences of the Introduction of Livestock on Pacific Northwest Ecosystems," in *Northwest Lands, Northwest Peoples: Readings in Environmental History*. Dale D. Goble and Paul W. Hirt, eds. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 315.

Bannock Chief (ISHS)



Bannock War Chief (ISHS)

Responding to the Franklin Marshall's request for assistance, Colonel Patrick E. Connor rode from Fort Douglas into the deep January snow with 200 California Volunteers. The temperature was -23°F and Colonel Conner knew a large camp of Bannocks and Shoshones wintered along the warm springs at Battle Creek, a tributary of the Bear River. As cavalry and infantry detachments made their way toward the creek, Shoshone leader Bear Hunter rode into Franklin with his own. Low on supplies, the Shoshones demanded wheat from the citizens, who provided 24 bushels. Unsatisfied, the Shoshones threatened future violence, but departed. Prepared for the Army assault, hidden Bannock and Shoshone riflemen killed 14 exposed cavalrymen before the infantry surrounded the camp. As the dismounted cavalry advanced into the camp, most Shoshone-Bannocks fled along well known escape routes occupied by Volunteer infantrymen. Colonel Conner noted the transition from battle to massacre when the Volunteers killed 224 retreating men, including Bear Hunter. The soldiers captured 160 women and children, burned 70 lodges and seized 175 horses and 1,000 bushels of wheat, but released the prisoners with a small grain supply and withdrew. Before their defeat, the Shoshone-Bannocks inflicted significant casualties. They killed 23 soldiers and wounded 44 while enduring brutally cold conditions that incapacitated 79 more. After Bear River, the first instance in which the U.S. Army severely checked their power, Bannocks largely ceased raiding supply trains.[67]

Colonel Conner reinforced the new structure of authority by leading cavalry patrols along the Snake that April. As shows of force, the deployments encouraged independent Bannocks and Shoshones to come to terms with the United States government and begin the process of treaty negotiations. The 1863 Treaty of Soda Springs established Fort Bridger, Wyoming as the headquarters of the new Indian Agency charged with supervising the assimilation of Shoshones

[67] Glassley, 226; Madsen, *Bannock*, 133, 136-39.

and Bannocks. An extended band of a thousand members led by a Bannock named Taghee agreed to the treaty terms.

In the summer of 1864, Taghee led his band to meet Agent Luther Mann at Fort Bridger to receive provisions promised as gifts for their cooperation with a future treaty and reservation. After the Agency delivered no supplies, the Bannocks left for their fall bison hunt. The next year, the Agency again failed to deliver the promised supplies, and in 1866 the Bannocks returned with a delegation of Eastern Shoshones. Led by Washakie, the Shoshones received $10,000 worth of annuities, but Washakie refused to share with the Bannocks, and Mann appealed to his superiors for an equitable settlement with Taghee. Taghee complained that the government offended his people, and that their peaceful coexistence after Bear River had earned them nothing.[68]

On June 14, 1867 President Andrew Johnson established the Fort Hall Reservation by executive order. The reservation containing about 1,800,000 acres, and Johnson originally intended it for the Boise and Bruneau Shoshone bands. Its northwestern border remained the Snake River from the mouth of the Blackfoot to that of the Portneuf. The same year James Bascomb established the first ranch and stage station on Rock Creek near Twin Falls, Idaho. On August 21, 1867 Taghee met with Idaho Superintendent David W. Ballard in a preliminary council to discuss a treaty and reservation. Ballard spoke about a theoretical future of the Bannock people as yeoman farmers. Taghee conceded to moving to a reservation but required that it incorporate the Camas Prairie and that his Bannocks be allowed to depart to hunt bison. At the meeting Ballard and Taghee agreed that the Bannocks would move to the Fort Hall

[68] Glassley, 226; Madsen, *Bannock*, 152, 156-57.

Reservation by June 1, 1878. President Ulysses S. Grant's executive order two years after the meeting, in 1869, officially incorporated the Bannocks into the community.[69]

Further complicating their loyalty to Taghee, Bannocks saw how the first Fort Hall residents gravitated toward Eastern Shoshone leader Washakie's new reliable source of goods. While Taghee hunted bison on the plains, Washakie signed another agreement in his place for annuities in exchange for peace.[70]

The 1868 Treaty promised "peace and friendship forever" between the Shoshone-Bannocks, Eastern Shoshones and American settlers as a condition for the establishment of a future reservation. The treaty also encouraged Shoshone-Bannocks to farm the Portneuf and Camas Prairies, allowing heads of household up to 320 acres of land, and promised $500 annually along with basic farming equipment. Taghee returned to his people with the news, and they maintained their seasonal hunting, fishing and camas gathering for another year. Taghee then impressed Agent Mann by marshaling eight hundred Bannocks to Fort Bridger by May 15, 1868. This time, Washakie's Eastern Shoshones arrived late, and Mann struggled to provide the provisions promised for the summit. Road conditions delayed wagon trains for weeks, and hungry Bannocks trickled away to their fishing posts. The government delegation arrived on June 15 led by General C.C. Augur, who held informal talks with Taghee and Washakie while they waited for the supply trains to arrive. While he relayed the familiar government case for settlement and agriculture, one of General Augur's main points remained the decline of animal resources, most notably bison. Washakie maintained his position on an Eastern Shoshone reservation in Wind River country, while Taghee delineated essential Bannock territory as the

[69]ARCIA, 1868; Nybroten, 4; Young, 200.
[70] Heaton, 43.

Portneuf and Camas plains. A rivalry existed, and while each leader expressed friendship with each other, they both insisted on separate reservations.[71]

In 1869, the same year the Transcontinental Railroad completed the first phase of the transportation network necessary to incorporate indigenous western cultures into the globalizing economy, Taghee and the first Shoshones and Bannocks began to make their way to Fort Hall. Fleeing the continuing encroachment of American cattlemen onto their ancestral homelands, but mostly confident in their receipt of annuities and provisions promised by the treaty, they received upon arrival $15,000 worth of goods. Some Shoshones viewed the payment with suspicion, but Bannocks quickly used the provisions as the foundation for their new life. Rather than viewing the reservation as confinement until homogenization into model American farming citizens, they incorporated the concept of the reservation as a central staging point from which to maintain their traditional mobility patterns. Military patrols also began to track mobile bands to pressure them to come to the reservation.[72]

President Grant's peace policy theorized an Indian administration guided by delegates of selected Christian denominations. This policy was in fact more commonly executed by the U.S. Army, escalating at times into a contradictory collision of war for the sake of peace. Nominated by a Quaker delegation, Army 1st Lieutenant W. H. Danilson reported to Fort Hall as the reservation's first Agent in 1869. Tensions between the Boise and Bruneau bands of Shoshones and the newly incoming Bannocks surfaced quickly. To the Bannocks, Danilson seemed to favor the Shoshones. Danilson's misallocation of promised provisions contributed to the Bannock perception that he favored Shoshones who had given up their equestrian hunting. Danilson often distributed provisions to Shoshones while Bannocks hunted bison on horseback, understood

[71] George F. Brimlow. *The Bannock Indian War of 1878*. (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1938), 39-42; Nybroten,, 8; Madsen, *Bannock*, 160-64.
[72] Brimlow, 42; Madsen, *Bannock* , 166-68; Parsons-Bernstein, 48-49.

clearly by the latter as preferential treatment. Contributing to Bannock resentment, Danilson grazed a personal cattle herd of 600 head on the reservation.[73]

Danilson routinely wrote his immediate superior, Superintendent Colonel L. DeFloyd Jones, that the agreed upon provision numbers remained inadequate to supply the Shoshone-Bannocks, both of whose independent food sources dwindled. He eventually admitted that "it seems as though the government has failed in almost every particular in complying with the terms of the treaty. Nevertheless, at Danilson's direction Shoshone and Bannocks started a 35-acre communal farm. It failed largely because of an infestation of grasshoppers, but their communal endeavor the next year expanded to 145 acres. After another seasonal appearance of the insects, the land yielded only 500 bushels of wheat, 2,800 of potatoes, 25 of peas and 50 of beets. Of an 1870 reservation population of 800, two-thirds left to look for food elsewhere, the same year a new law required military officers in civil service to resign their commission. A Methodist missionary group nominated J. N. High to replace Danilson, but the original Agent remained.[74]

In 1871 there still remained an abundance of salmon in the Salmon River, but the Shoshone and Bannock camas fields came under sustained attack. American ranchers repeatedly violated treaty terms by trespassing and grazing their cattle and hogs on the Camas Prairie. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, the Indian Office received numerous complaints from Fort Hall residents about the continual American encroachment, while simultaneously the range- and-

[73] Glassley, 226-27; Jerome Greene. "Indian Wars in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1850s-1890s," in *The American Military Tradition*, edited by John M. Carroll and Colin F. Baxter. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 112; Joel C. Janetski, *Indians in Yellowstone National Park*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2002), 89; Madsen, *Bannock*, 170-71.
[74] Madsen, *Bannock*, 171, 175; Parsons-Bernstein, 51.

ranch cattle industry in the Northwest reached the peak of its development. Despite these difficulties, an Idaho newspaper described "flourishing" conditions on the reservations.[75]

By 1872, salmon resources in the Salmon River became scant. To the north, Lemhi Agent J.C. Rainsford blamed overfishing and barriers erected on the Columbia. Far fewer fish made it upstream from that river and into the Snake, which deposited them into the Salmon, and Bannocks and Shoshones across the region saw the first depletions of a once reliable protein source.[76]

Railroads soon encircled and connected the reservation to the capitalist economy. If Shoshones and Bannocks recognized the influence of the railroads on the transformation of their culture, they did not react aggressively. The Union Pacific line that ran within one hundred miles of Fort Hall reported no Indian interference in its 1872 operations. That same year though, the government still referred to the 1,200 residents of the Fort Hall reservation as "wild blanket Indians." White settlers living in proximity to Lemhi communities regularly petitioned County Commissioner George L. Shoup to remove them to Fort Hall. One settler wrote that he "took it for granted that the people of Lemhi County would like to have the Indians removed." While Shoup considered his options, the letter writer assumed that the Commissioner "must certainly have a much better set of Indians in [his] county than we have in my county or would be anxious to get rid of them." Possessing no schools, the reservation at that point remained at 1,568,000 acres. Shoshone-Bannocks actively cultivated only three acres while the Agency worked 250. In total, Shoshone-Bannock and government farms produced 2,500 bushels of wheat, 500 of oats, 450 of barley, 4,300 of potatoes, 100 of hay and 1,235 of vegetables. Valued at $13,871, the Fort

[75] Liljeblad, 35; Orin J. Oliphant. "Encroachments of Cattlemen on Indian Reservations in the Pacific Northwest, 1870-1890." *Agricultural History* 24, (Jan. 1950), 44; Walker, *Anadromous Fish Resources*, 235; 'The Fort Hall Indian reservation," *Owyhee Avalanche*, Nov. 18, 1871.
[76] Walker, *Anadromous Fish Resources*, 235.

Hall crops earned almost double that of reservation stock, valued at $7,325 in the form of four horses, 180 cattle and 61 pigs.[77]

Despite the Shoshone-Bannocks' notable agricultural successes, problems remained with the vague definition of reservation boundaries, which were not explicitly marked until an 1873 agreement. Though the boundaries remained largely porous to American cattle, the significance of the agreement is in its official recognition of the animals' increasing encroachment and trespass. The document promised that open range pasturing would stop, but in reality there was little enforcement.[78]

Despite Danilson's assurance, he exerted little control over American ranchers, and Bannocks turned to stealing horses and other livestock on the prairies. Concurrently, the financial panic of 1873 stopped construction on the Northern Pacific railroad at Bismarck, North Dakota. The same year Union Pacific took over the Transcontinental and reorganized it as the Utah and Northern Railroad, completing it to Blackfoot five years later. In August, Hunkpapa and Minneconjou Lakotas attempted to ambush two companies of Seventh Cavalry scouts commanded by Lt. Colonel George Armstrong Custer in the Yellowstone Valley. The militants escaped across the Yellowstone River, but may have believed their resistance contributed to the railroad postponement. If that happened, some Bannocks and Shoshones may have perceived yet another instance of successful militant resistance in an area climatically and geographically similar to their own. American complaints continued that the protection of their lives and economic interests required more than the fifty soldiers stationed at Fort Boise.[79]

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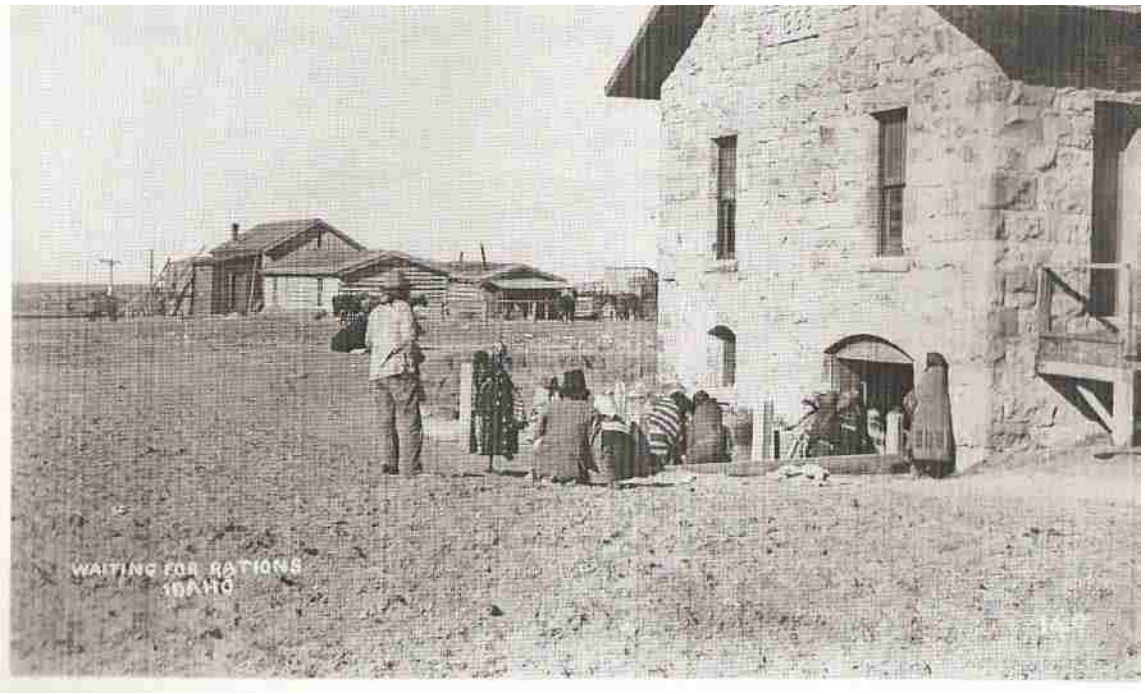
[77] ARCIA, 1872, 79, 273, 406-07; M. Hailey to Shoup, June 27, 1872, ISUSC, GSP.
[78] Madsen, *N. Shoshoni*, 69, 144-45.
[79] Madsen, *N. Shoshoni*, 109; Jeffrey Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 53; Ruby and Brown, 233.

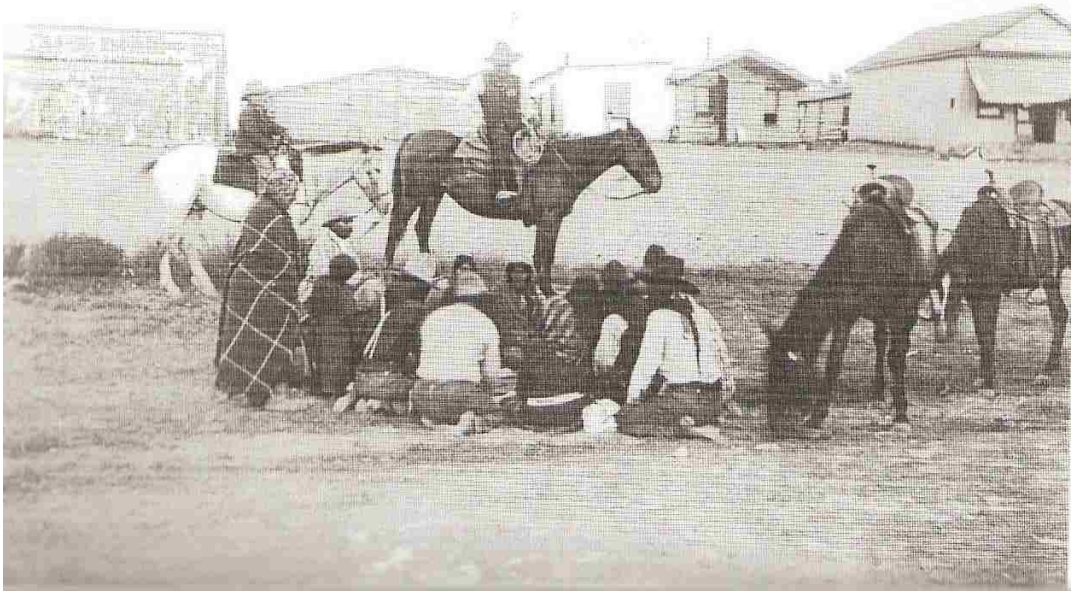
In the spring of 1874 Bannocks arrived at the Agency expecting their promised rations, they received none. In response to an unreliable agency, Bannock raiders bolstered the Fort Hall horse herd to 1,200. By April, the Transcontinental Railroad arrived in Franklin, Idaho Territory. About 250 Bannocks left the reservation for the summer to hunt and search for food, while about 400 stayed and therefore remained dependent on the Agency. Barely surviving the winter on extremely short rations, most of the remaining Bannocks joined mobile bands as soon as the first thaw of 1875. Many Bannocks viewed themselves as more independent and self-sufficient than the Shoshones who remained close to the Agency, and began to resent the administration that had failed to feed them. Lacking alternatives, but wary of a full scale war with the U.S. Army, Bannocks raided and skirmished with neighboring Nez Perces and Flatheads. Forced on longer and further hunting expeditions, Bannocks clashed with Arapahoes, Crows and Lakotas as far away as central Montana.[80]

By the mid-1870s it had become abundantly clear to Fort Hall residents that federal officials were waiting out their terms, expecting Shoshones and Bannocks to become self-sufficient farmers, or to fail to adapt and simply die out. Meanwhile, for his merchandise operation Shoup locked in discounted freight prices with the Union Pacific Railroad between March and October 1876, greasing the rails for colonization to continue apace. Rather than receiving their roughly $75,000 a year promised by treaty, in itself a vast underestimation of the reservation's actual aid requirements, Shoshone-Bannocks actually received less than half that

[80] Ewers, 28; Madsen, *Bannock*, 181, 196, 200; Madsen, *N. Shoshoni*, 109; Carl Schurz to George McCrary, May 14, 1879; Letters Sent by the Indian Division of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, 1849-1903, NARA M606, roll 20.



Shoshone-Bannocks wait for rations (ISHS)



Shoshone game circle (ISHS)

Tetoby, a Bannock (ISHS)

Unidentified Shoshone (ISHS)

amount. Much of the Anglo-American attitude concerning conditions on the reservation remained that Shoshones and Bannocks spent most of their time "begging and loafing."[81]

While Bannocks struggled to feed themselves, a young leader named Buffalo Horn began to gain popular support. In 1876, he distinguished himself in combat against the Lakota, serving a scout to General George Crook's campaign. In January 1877 he scouted and fought for General Nelson Miles against the combined Oglala Lakota and Cheyenne force in Montana Territory. When the Nez Perce War erupted in June, Buffalo Horn led the first Bannock detachment to the aid of General Oliver O. Howard's offensive. In August, Buffalo Horn's warriors fought at Big Hole where they celebrated their martial exploits by exhuming and mutilating Nez Perce corpses. After the battle, another group of up to 200 Bannocks joined General Howard's pursuit of the retreating Nez Perces. Anxious to defeat an old regional rival, Buffalo Horn urged Howard to attack a vulnerable and exhausted Nez Perce camp north of the Camas Prairie. The General refused, and appeared to the Bannocks to be shaken from days of skirmishing and a failed attempt to encircle the enemy. A troop of forty Bannock scouts commanded by an Army captain served as an advance unit, closely pursuing the Nez Perces while allowing Howard, his command and the larger force of slower troops to rest at Henry Lake until the end of the month. If some Bannocks attempted to prove their loyalty by serving with the Army, others remained discontented on the reservation. [82]

While Bannocks fought Nez Perces in an attempt to garner favor with the U.S. Army, the May 1877 surrender of Crazy Horse signaled the end of the Great Sioux War. As indigenous

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[81] Parsons-Bernstein, 49; E.P. Vining to Shoup, March 20, 1878, ISUSC, GSP; "The Indian Farmers," *Desert Evening News*, Oct. 3, 1877.

[82] *Idaho Weekly Statesman*, May 18, 1878; Don Rickey Jr. "The Battle of Wolf Mountain." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 13, (Spring 1963); Carl Schurz to George McCrary, August 15, 1877, Letters Sent by the Indian Division of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, 1849-1903, NARA M606, roll 18; Elliott West, *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 202-03, 209, 225.

Buffalo Horn (ISHS)

military resistance waned, the Bannocks maintained their options. They worked toward a future of peace by fighting on the side of the Army, while simultaneously learning that army's limits. Lakotas and Cheyennes, as well as informed Bannocks and Shoshones, may have recognized an Indian victory in the Sioux War. After destroying Custer's cavalry at Little Big Horn the previous year, the Plains fighters largely avoided the retaliatory Army force and won significant concessions from the U.S. government, namely an agreement to a reservation within the boundaries of their traditional homeland instead of the arrest and deportation of militant leaders to an Indian Territory prison.[83]

In that year, the Army rounded up a total of a thousand illegally grazing cattle on the reservation and drove them back north across the Blackfoot River, but the commanding officer recognized the futility of the action and the impossibility of regular enforcement. Despite the Army's efforts to at least nominally appease distressed Shoshones and Bannocks, the excitement of the Nez Perce War led some Bannocks to believe an imminent Army invasion of the reservation would follow the conclusion of the conflict. Maintaining their traditional camas gathering became increasingly dangerous for Bannocks. On August 8, 1877, an intoxicated Bannock shot and wounded two teamsters, ostensibly in retaliation for other Americans' "shameful" use of his sister, whom they assaulted while she dug roots. Deputy U.S. Marshall Morgan Morgan arrested the man on November 23 and incarcerated him in Boise City.

The same night, Tambiago, brother of the accused, shot and killed 30-year old cattleman Alex Rhoden. An Army report on the incident described no provocation for the murder. Both Bannocks and Shoshones expressed regret over the incident, and promised to arrest Tambiago and deliver him to the sheriff. While many Bannocks remained upset over the killing of Rhoden, Danilson requested 100 soldiers for his own protection. In retaliation, Bannocks attempted to kill

[83] Ostler, 84.

a neighboring farmer and contractors experienced difficulty hiring men to deliver beef rations to the agency. Agency employees feared for their lives and planned to depart unless Army reinforcements arrived. Troops from the 14th Infantry Regiment arrived in December and captured Tambiago on January 9, 1878. That night, and with the assistance of three men, Tambiago escaped from the agency jail. A contingent of fifty to sixty Bannocks and Shoshones then pursued the outlaws and after a skirmish drove them across the Snake. Buffalo Horn then led fifteen of his men across the river and recaptured Tambiago.[84]

As Brigadier General George Crook's first order of business for the new year, he ordered three companies of cavalry from Fort Russell in Washington Territory to Fort Hall in order to "disarm and dismount" the Bannocks there. He believed that militant Bannocks bided their time on the reservation until the warm weather of spring, when they "will go on the War-path." His use of mounted American troops to explicitly remove Bannocks from their cultural perches in the saddle posed a disastrous threat to traditional Bannock culture while describing the expectations for their survival and assimilation in the twentieth century.[85]

The cavalry troop arrived on January 18, and immediately "captured" a Bannock camp. The soldiers disarmed ten Bannocks and took two hundred and fifty horses in another instance of the general application of military force upon a Bannock group with at best a dubious connection to the militant minority. The confiscation and sale of the Bannock horses remains a symbol of

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[84] Brimlow, 62, 64; Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins. *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1994), 139; Carl Schurz to Secretary of Interior, August 24, 1877, M606, roll 18; February 14, 1878, M606, roll 17; Carl Schurz to George McCrary, March 2, 1878, M606, roll 17; Capt. Augustus Burroughs to Assistant Adjutant General, November 26, 1877; Danilson to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, November 26, 1877; Sec. of War to Sec. on Interior, November 30, 1877, NARA M666, roll 377; Madsen, *N. Shoshoni*, 145.

[85] Gen. Crook to Gen. Sheridan, January 3, 1878. NARA M666, roll 377.

the government's continuing economic conquest of the west, though military bureaucrats disputed for months through correspondence the proper use of the resultant funds.[86]

Shoshones and Bannocks first expressed interest in the purchase of young cattle for the reservation by the end of February. The Army largely supported the idea that young cattle be bought for the residents of the reservation, but if tensions between the soldiers and Bannocks began to cool, it was only because Fort Hall residents saved the worst of their criticism for Agent Danilson. He received regular death threats and believed his assassination to be imminent without more Army protection. A Major at the army post disagreed, and in his view the Bannocks remained "peaceable and well disposed," especially given the talk of the possibility of new cattle. The major believed Danilson's worry to be "imagin[ary]" and the result of being a "thorough coward… [and] unfit for his position, he should be removed." The reality of affordable cattle remained elusive as the year progressed. White ranchers regularly inflated beef prices for the reservation community, so much to the concern of the U.S. Treasury Office.[87]

After giving the order, though, General Crook came to believe that disarming and dismounting the Bannocks as reaction to Rhoden's murder "appears to have been unnecessary, leaving the burden of the punishment to fall upon our best friends, and upon those we should have to rely in case of any trouble." He further described that although confiscation of their horses would effectively prevent them from martial resistance, he also understood that the Bannocks required their horses to be the farmers the government expected them to become.[88]

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[86] Col. John Smith to Assistant Adjutant General, January 19, 1878. Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General, 1871-80. NARA M666, roll 377; Lt. Gen Sheridan to Gen. Sherman, February 25, 1878. Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General, 1871-80. NARA M666, roll 377.

[87] Maj Bryant to Assistant Adjutant General, March 7, 1878. Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General, 1871-80. NARA M666, roll 377; Second Auditor to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Feb. 15, 1878. NARA M234, roll 347.

[88] Gen. Crook to Adj. Gen. April 3, 1878.Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General, 1871-80. NARA M666, roll 377.

Rations at the reservation remained woefully inadequate, and many residents had nothing to eat as many as three days a week. An Army captain predicted that "if these Indians commit any depredations this summer, it will be due to the fact that they are rendered desperate by hunger, for which the government nominally feeds, it practically starves them." He suggested diverting rations from the Crow Agency to Fort Hall, no doubt further complicating the situation on that reservation. Agent Danilson exerted little control over hungry and frustrated Bannocks.[89]

Buffalo Horn returned from the Nez Perce fight to discover the continually deteriorating conditions that his people had endured in his absence. Starvation and poverty plagued the reservation, and as payment for their war service the Agency gave to the returning fighters rations of stale tobacco. In addition to his reluctance to attack according to Buffalo Horn's designs, General Howard had disallowed Bannocks from executing Nez Perce prisoners taken during the war. Buffalo Horn and about 200 of his band remained discontented over the issue, and they arrived at Payne's Ferry on the Snake in early May. Buffalo Horn wasted little time acting upon the situation he perceived on the reservation, circumstances borne of the process of colonization. He sent verbal warnings to the roaming cattlemen on the Camas Prairie and began communication with neighboring Shoshones and Paiutes about the possibility of war. Many Shoshones expressed their support, but others remained cautious. When Buffalo Horn's requests turned to threats, many felt cornered. Bullied, some shunned a fight. Others believed a war could be won, and a band of 200 Shoshones who lived along the Weiser River joined the Bannocks.[90]

As spring turned into summer, Bannocks along the Snake, on the Camas Prairie and on the reservation mulled their options. Their very survival seemed at times in question. The

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[89] Capt. Trotter to Asst. Adj. Gen., April 3, 1878. Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General, 1871-80. NARA M666, roll 377; "Starving the Indians," *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 15, 1878.
[90] Brimlow, 74, 76; Hank Corliss. *The Weiser Indians: Shoshoni Peacemakers*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 98; Madsen, *Bannock*, 209; Ruby and Brown, 250.

Agency continued to fall short of its promises for provisions, and while that became predictable, many remained unsure about the escalating possibility of war. The failure of the Agency to meet treaty obligations and enforce boundaries resulted in the injustices of poverty and starvation. Different political requirements over the management of the Nez Perce War only contributed to those injustices, as did an overwhelming strain on the bison, salmon and camas resources coincident with colonization. For such reasons, Buffalo Horn and his circle decided on the necessity of war. Americans largely viewed the coming hostilities as an inevitable and necessary outcome of the conquest of the frontier through newspaper and literary depictions that favored indigenous assimilation into a "centralist order" through military action.[91]

By the end of 1877, Buffalo Horn envisioned a northwestern confederation to challenge the authority of the United States, which at that time experienced the "twilight of [its] Old Army." Though most Great Basin Shoshones refused to ally with Buffalo Horn, Northern Paiute leader Egan led a large contingent from Malheur Reservation. A combined force of roughly 600 indigenous men of fighting age roamed through eastern Oregon and southern Idaho Territory.[92]

On May 30, 1878 simmering tensions exploded into war when Bannocks used violence to enforce treaty boundaries by shooting two cattlemen who had driven their herd onto the southern Camas Prairie. The Americans survived and escaped, and news of the attack reached Governor Mason Brayman in Boise City by that night. The governor immediately ordered the deployment

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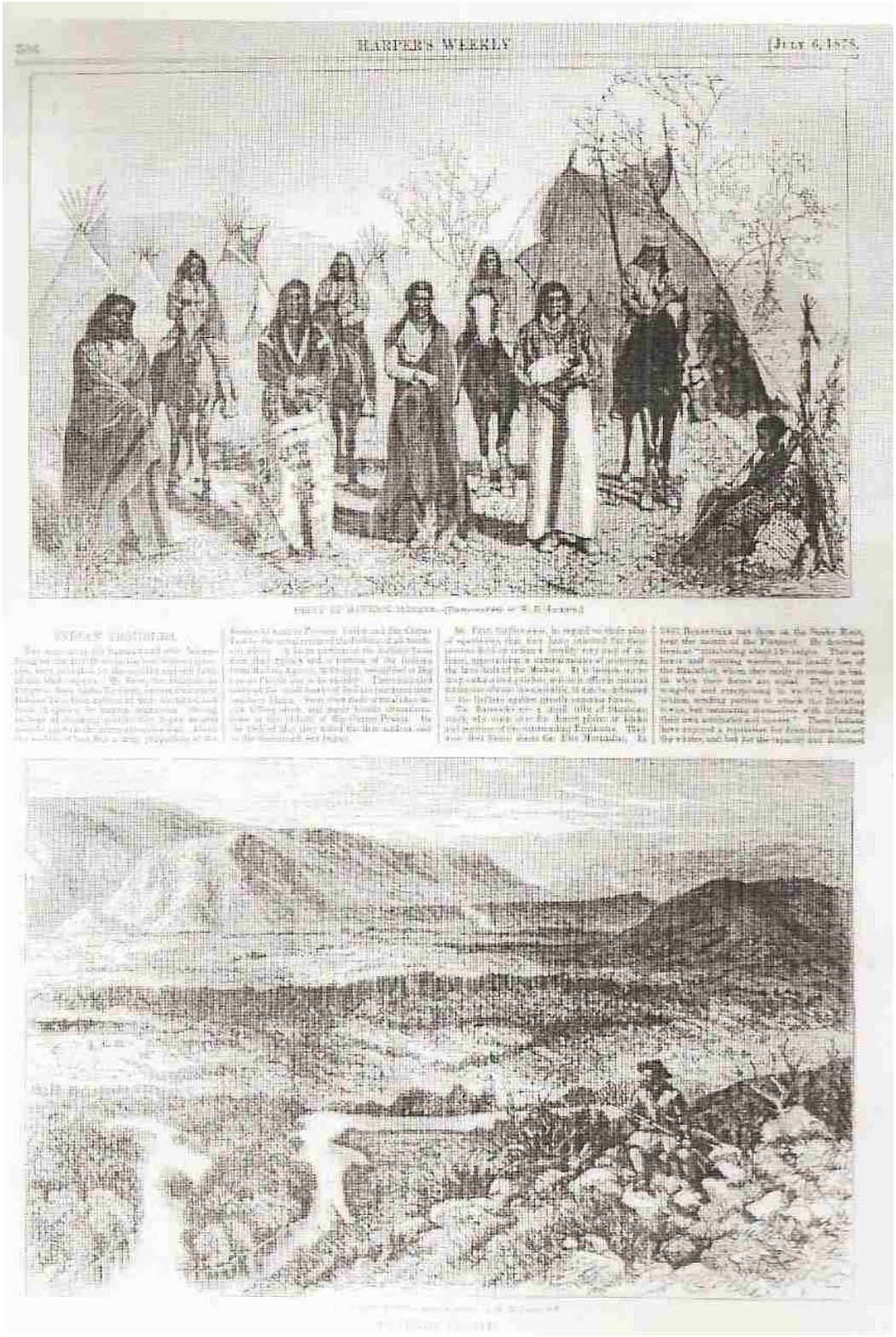
[91] Roger Beaumont. "Small Wars: Definitions and Dimensions." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 541, Small Wars (September 1995), 28; Steven J. Crum. *The Road on Which We Came: A History of the Western Shoshone*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 27; Janetski, 86.
[92] Brimlow, 76; Crum, 29; Jack D. Forbes. *Nevada Indians Speak*. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1967), 7; Robert Wooster. *The Military and United States Indian Policy, 1865-1903*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 174.



Shoshones from *Harper's Weekly, July 6, 1878* (ISHS)

of troops from Fort Boise, and sixty cavalrymen of Company G, 1st Cavalry Regiment under the command of Captain Reuben Bernard departed for the prairie. The next morning, 1st Lieutenant T.F. Riley led a squad of a dozen infantrymen from the 21st Infantry Regiment in support of the cavalry, and the speed of this advance force surprised the Bannock camp on the Snake. The soldiers continued a running skirmish with the Bannocks for the first week of June.[93]

That month, the Army believed that all male Shoshones, Bannocks and Paiutes between Boise, Lemhi and Fort Hall would participate in a coming conflict. While Buffalo Horn maintained a camp of about three hundred in the lava beds seventy miles east of Boise and occupied the full attention of the Army, bands of Paiutes raided American horse herds in Nevada.[94]

As his men began to engage the Bannocks, General Howard expressed frustration with the nature of the warfare he witnessed. He had believed the Nez Perce conflict to truly be the last Indian War on the continent, and insisted the Bannock insurgents goaded his troops into action in order to retaliate upon vulnerable settlers. As Buffalo Horn led his faction west toward Oregon to link up with his Paiute allies, Howard contemplated his next action. On June 12 the General reached Boise on June 12 and hesitated. The massacre of Custer two years prior and Howard's own experience fighting the Nez Perces kept him from deploying too small a force, an instance in which the previous indigenous victories over the Army contributed nothing to Buffalo Horn's favor. Buffalo Horn desired a running gun battle with smaller mobile Army units, while General Howard waited for the reinforcements necessary to force a final confrontation.[95]

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[93] Brimlow, 77-79.
[94] Gen. Sheridan to Gen. Townsend. June 8, 1878; Commanding Officer, Fort Hall to Gen. Crook, June 5, 1878; Capt. Vorvell(?) to Asst. Adj. Gen. June 23, 1878. NARA M666, roll 378.
[95] Brimlow, 90; O.O. Howard. *My Life and Experiences Among Our Hostile Indians*. (Hartford, CT: A.D. Worthington & Co., 1907), 379, 381, 389.

A Paiute named Bruneau John warned Bruneau Valley settlers of the approaching Bannock war party, and witnesses saw a detachment of 150 Bannocks driving 600 horses. Any advantage or momentum the Bannocks possessed quickly halted on June 8 when they met a force of 26 mounted volunteers from nearby Silver City. Seven miles along Battle Creek from South Mountain, Buffalo Horn and sixty fighters engaged the volunteers. A fierce fight ensued, in which the seemingly unbelievable occurred for the Bannocks. A Paiute scout with the volunteers shot Buffalo Horn from his horse. Bannocks killed two volunteers and quickly withdrew. Wounded but alive, Buffalo Horn traveled for two days. Slowing their escape, he ordered his men to hide him in the underbrush and leave him to die.[96]

On June 12, Paiute Sarah Winnemucca arrived by train in Silver City en route to Washington, D.C. to publicize the condition of her people on the Malheur Reservation. The daughter of Paiute leader Old Winnemucca, who had argued for peace when the Bannock war delegation came to Malheur, she learned of the hostilities at the train station. Winnemucca quickly became convinced that to best serve the Paiutes, she had to assist the Army in securing an early peace. Many Americans in Idaho distrusted her, no doubt in part because of a widely circulated false newspaper report that she had been arrested for smuggling ammunition to the Bannocks. “Rope is too good to hang her with,” one woman said.[97]

Determined to lend assistance, Winnemucca met with an Army Captain at a nearby house, where she learned that her brother Natchez was missing and presumed killed. Emboldened to honor her brother, she constructed a risky plan. She presumed to infiltrate the Bannock camp where her father and other Paiutes had decided to join the fight and convince

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[96] Brimlow, 91; Glassley, 230; Howard, 384; *Idaho Weekly Statesman*, June 8, 1878;
[97] Gae Whitney Canfield. *Sarah Winnemucca of the Northern Paiutes*. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 137; Hopkins, 168; Sally Zanjani, *Sarah Winnemucca*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 148, 152.

them to defect in return for protection and rations. Then she would lead them to Juniper Lake, and away from the destruction of the looming Army offensive. General Howard approved the plan via telegram, and she moved out with the Captain.[98]

Winnemucca stayed with the Army for a few days as they had sporadic contact with the quickly moving Bannocks, who kept up a constant harassing fire and traveled over the roughest parts of the country. The terrain slowed even the fastest Army scouts, and the Bannocks further delayed their advance by building stone figures with round tops that feigned as skirmishers. She outrode many volunteers, contributed to the basic nursing and religious needs of the wounded, and prayed alongside a dying soldier with General Howard. On June 15, she snuck into the Bannock camp while most of the men slaughtered beef for the evening meal. Much has been made of her infiltration of the camp but considering the fluid participation of the interethnic combatants, especially at this point in their losing fight, her entry most likely required little secrecy. There, she convinced forty Paiutes, including her father, to escape. By then the Paiutes resembled hostages more than allies of the Bannocks, and they quickly began the long journey by foot to Juniper Lake.[99]

After the death of Buffalo Horn, Malheur Paiute-Shoshone leader Egan assumed command of the force and decided to link up with the last militant contingent of Paiutes from his reservation. At the same time, Shoshones and Bannocks who had remained at Fort Hall realized that the Utah Northern Railroad Company began construction on a road from Salt Lake City to the goldfields of Montana, directly across the reservation. On June 20, 1878 Congress authorized

[98] Zanjani, 153-54.
[99] Brimlow, 86; Hopkins, 171, 178.

the construction and railroad representatives who promised the Shoshone-Bannocks 500 head of cattle for consent and right-of-way failed to pay.[100]

As the fighting wound down, instances of extreme Army violence reveal the military perception of the imagined environment in which it fought. One of the first soldiers ordered into action, Cavalry Private and German immigrant Frederick Mayer recorded in his journal a short battle at Silver Creek on June 23. After the fight, his unit captured a Bannock scout and burned him alive. While a significantly less than glamorous example, the incident highlights the effect of warfare on the "savage frontier" that the Army sought to conquer. Five days later, prison officials in Boise City hanged Tambiago, Alex Rhoden's killer.[101]

Though June saw Idaho settlers organize volunteer militias and secure arms and finances from the Governor, by the first week of July both sides de-escalated the conflict. There would be no final culminating battle, and by the time he joined his command in the field on July 8, General Howard realized that he pursued fugitives rather than enemies. Bands of fighters scattered across the area. Some again headed for the plains in search of dwindling bison. Gatling gun armed steamboats harassed Egan's group along the Columbia River, and dissension within his ranks increased as many realized the Army force grew only stronger. On July 15, a group of a hundred Umatillas caught up with Egan, and feigning to join the insurrection, lured him from his bodyguards. They then killed him, stabbing him multiple times in the chest and groin. Sarah Winnemucca later claimed to have dreamt about Egan's assassination, days before she learned of its actual occurrence. The death of their second leader spelled destruction for the remaining militant Bannocks, and their resistance collapsed at the same time the Army exerted its last push. The next day, the Weiser Shoshones abandoned the fight and fled to their homeland, along with

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[100] Ruby and Brown, 263.
[101] Brimlow, 66; Brimlow, ed. "Two Cavalryman's Diaries of the Bannock War, 1878: II. Pvt. Frederick W. Mayer." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 68 (Dec. 1967), 315.

50 non-Weiser Shoshones and Bannocks driving 400 horses. The arrival of a force of cavalry guided by Nez Perce scouts further drove the Bannocks west, forcing a hasty retreat in which they abandoned large quantities of provisions along six miles of their route. The Umatillas rode into the Army camp with the head of Egan and ten scalps, but sporadic violence against teamsters on the nearby Wolf Creek Road continued, with scattered Bannocks killing seven within five days.[102]

As the war ended, American hysteria remained at vigilant levels. As far away as Klamath country in Oregon and Goldendale, Washington, Americans formed home guards and militias to defend against the dispersion of fleeing Shoshone, Bannock and Paiute fighters.[103]

Compared to the grandeur of the Plains Wars, the Army defeated the Bannocks relatively quickly. The Bannock objective remained in part to halt ranching transgressions on the Camas Prairie, and the war achieved a small victory by setting the regional industry back a decade, killing the first southern Idaho rancher James Bascomb, and costing the federal government roughly half a million dollars of the time.[104]

By the first week of September, the troops of Colonel Miles guarded the passes through the eastern side of Yellowstone Park that they thought fleeing Bannocks would use to escape. Troops from Camp Brown in the Wind River Valley observed those to the south, but the

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[102] Brimlow, 137; Canfield, 144-45; Hank Corless, *The Weiser Indians: Shoshoni Peacemakers*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 105; Howard, 406; Robert M. Utley. *Frontier Regulars: The U.S. Army and the Indian, 1866-1891*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1973.), 327; Wheaton to Maj. Gen McDowell, July 20, 1878. NARA M666, roll 378; Adjutant General correspondence, June 8, 14, 29, 1878, NARA Microfilm 666; Frank J. Parker to Gov. Brayman, ITC, ISHS; Joseph Skelton to Shoup, July 22, 1878, ISUSC, GSP.
[103] Kent D. Richards. "Insurrection, Agitation, and Riots: The Police Power and Washington Statehood." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 37, (Autumn 1987); Chandler B. Watson. "Recollections of the Bannock War." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 68, (Dec. 1967), 318-19.
[104] Brimlow, 215; Young, 200.

conclusion of the war virtually ended a regular indigenous presence in the park. Only small Bannock hunting parties occasionally returned to the south years later.[105]

On September 13, soldiers picked up a party of Bannocks consisting of five men, two women and a boy who had fled a battle at Clark's Fork. Claiming to be the last survivors of the militant faction that originally left Fort Hall in the spring, they reported 28 casualties in their last battle at the fork.[106]

A glowing Army report described the uprising as "murdering and robbing" Bannocks sweeping across southern Idaho. In response, the U.S. Cavalry waged war against the "hostiles," complete with the "gallant and dashing" descriptions that characterized mythic American expectations about the conquest of western indigenous cultures.[107]

By 1879, Indian Affairs Commissioner Ezra A. Hayt decided the fate of 131 Bannock prisoners of war held at Forts Hall, Keogh, Washakie and Omaha. He relegated thirteen of the "worst and most dangerous of their class" to confinement at Fort Vancouver and released the rest to return to Fort Hall.[108]

Whatever gains the Bannocks believed they earned through their defeat remained transitory, as the 1880s saw the range livestock industry boom. A July council of that year also granted the Utah Northern Railroad right-of-way for a new line running east to west across the reservation. Shoshone-Bannocks ceded 800 acres to the railroad for $6,000, and then another thousand acres for $20,700 six years later.[109]

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[105] Janetski, 94; Gen. Sheridan to Gen. Townsend, September 7, 1878. NARA M666, roll 378.
[106] Col. Williams to Gen. Sheridan, September 13, 1878. NARA M666, roll 379.
[107] Report of Maj. Edwin C. Mason, Acting Assistant Inspector General, October 4, 1878, Headquarters, Dept. of the Columbia. NARA M666, roll 377.
[108] Carl Schurz to George McCrary, April 5, 1879, NARA M606, roll 20.
[109] Ruby and Brown, 264; Young, 200.

The Office of Indian Affairs failed to protect the Fort Hall Reservation from the highly damaging effect of encroaching American cattle. By neglecting to adopt measures to offset such economic temptation, the U.S. government perpetuated a problem that the Office could never solve. Indeed, Shoshone-Bannock attempts during the 1880s and 1890s to collect payment on heads of cattle allowed to graze the range resulted in selective American adherence to the policy. During the private property based political and economic expansion of the late nineteenth-century United States, cattlemen had little incentive to observe the stipulations of a treaty, the details of which they hardly informed themselves, especially when the larger American culture remained intolerant of alternative forms of cultural organization and expression.[110]

As Bannocks fought with Army soldiers in the high Idaho forests, the Great Dakota Boom that started in 1878 claimed 24 million acres of fertile plains land for American farmers in nine years. The front line in the contest between indigenous and Euroamerican perceptions of the environment and land had advanced westward by a factor of hundreds of miles, and as advance agents and supply lines, Chicago-owned railroads began to traverse the entirety of the Dakota prairie. The end of the war highlighted the differences between bands at Fort Hall, while simultaneously reinforcing American control of the Snake River plain and the futility of militant resistance to that authority.[111]

As a nineteenth-century trend, Shoshones and Bannocks experienced the erosion of the material basis for their traditional subsistence and identity. Confinement on a reservation, integration into a globalizing economy and the consequences of federal agrarian assimilation policies contributed to the disintegration of their pre-contact identity, but after the war Fort Hall residents adapted to their capitalistic circumstances with at times collectivist values. Reservation

[110] Madsen, *N. Shoshoni*, 147; Oliphant, "Encroachments of Cattlemen," 58; Ostler,14.
[111] Ostler, 215; Heaton, 51.

farmers began to grow crops that they could sell on the American market, but the aridity of the region demanded large scale organized irrigation to make any agricultural endeavor profitable. If farmers desired an extraction of capital to improve economic conditions on the reservation, they needed capital to invest in the first place. The wild American speculation that began with the 1894 Carey Act and would come to characterize western irrigation financing largely excluded the Shoshone-Bannock community. Impoverished Fort Hall farmers lacked the capital for significant investment in Carey Act projects, and therefore remained self-reliant on small scale family farming operations.[112]

[112] Heaton, 6.

Chapter IV

Reclamation, Irrigation, the Carey Act and Fort Hall Agriculture and Cattle, 1863-1927

After the 1878 war, Shoshones and Bannocks at Fort Hall created a new reservation community in which subsistence farms complemented growing hay and cattle industries. While the federal government sought to assimilate indigenous culture across the United States through boarding school education and religious organization, Shoshone-Bannocks preserved their identity through interethnic social and familial relationships. Shoshone-Bannocks had long used intermarriage to link together an extended kin network that served as the dominant constellation of membership loyalty, rather than then entire "tribe." The fluidity of kin group membership disturbed some assimilationists, as families formed and dissolved contrary to American social values. By collecting and raising traditional crops for personal use they maintained ancient subsistence patterns, but their adoption of hay and cattle signaled a significant agricultural adaptation and their integration into a capitalist economy. As the potential of organized irrigation loomed on the horizon, Fort Hall farmers may have foreseen an opportunity to practice hydraulic syncretism despite continuing land loss. But the environmental reality of the Snake River Plain quickly tempered the speculation to come, and the future agricultural success to be enjoyed by the State of Idaho largely contradicted the experience of reservation farmers.[113]

Henry Spaulding initiated the first irrigation project in Idaho in 1839 when he built a small farming operation at the Lapwai Nez Perce mission. The expansion of the Mormon

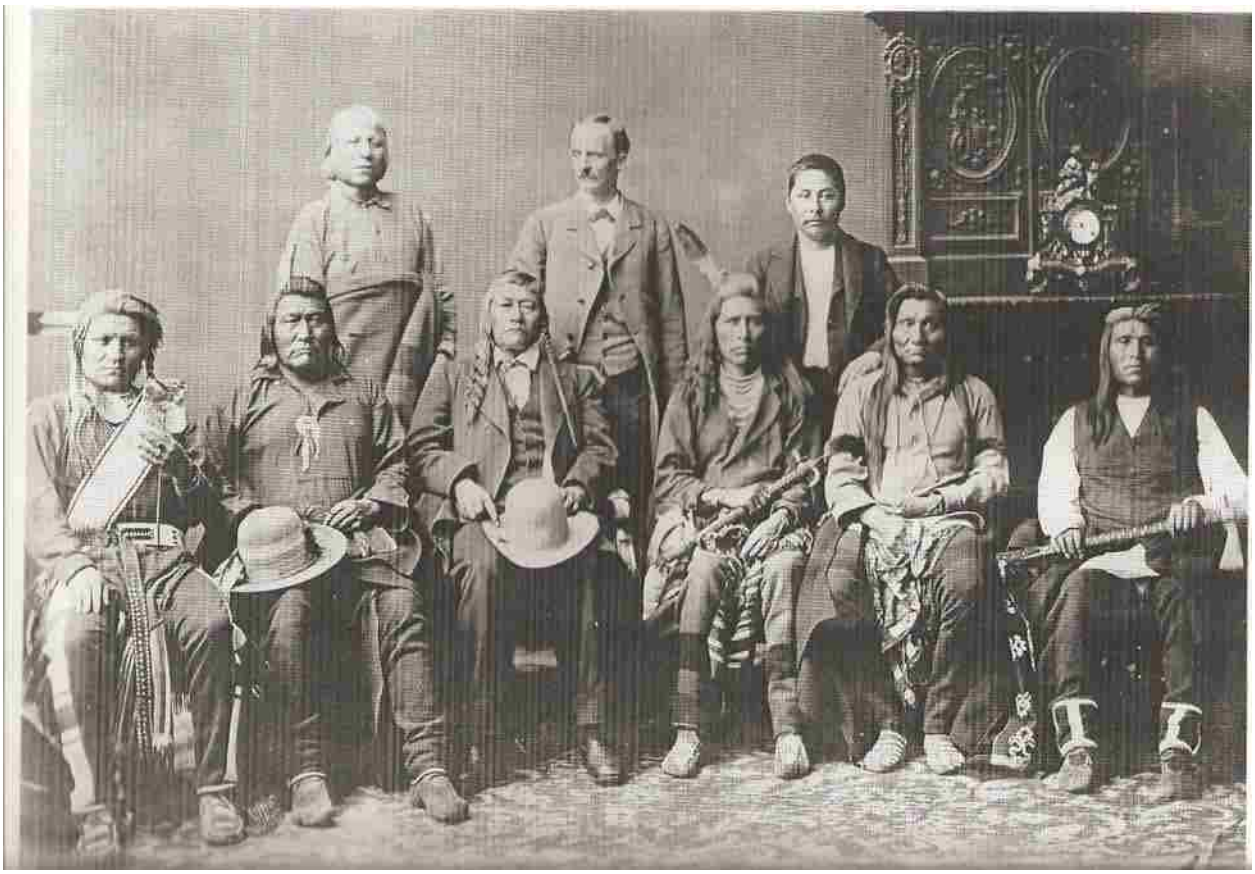
[113] Heaton, *Shoshone-Bannocks*, 3, 83, 88.

population from Utah that influenced much of Idaho's history began a larger irrigation mission by 1856 at the junction of the Lemhi and Salmon Rivers. Despite the relative agricultural success of both attempts, the first was abandoned eight years after its construction and the Mormon farm lasted only two. Both cited security from Indian attack as the primary reason for their withdrawal. If independent settlers experienced some difficulty in their private irrigation ventures, larger economic forces gathered in their absence. Between 1863 and 1870, Idaho Territory reclaimed 602,568 acres under the Homestead Act and Desert Land Act.[114]

Again, Fort Hall reservation land came under scrutiny by the federal government. Approved by the House Committee on Indian Affairs on May 14, 1880, the Cession Agreement of 1881 traced its origins to a combination of pressure from American Marsh Valley settlers and the new Utah and Northern Railroad. The provisions of the act succeeded in convincing Lemhi Shoshones to move south to Fort Hall and Shoshone-Bannocks to cede 325,000 southern acres of their current reservation.[115]

While the Fort Hall community struggled with this new phase of reservation contraction, the Indian Agency expanded and began preliminary cattle financing. Between 1879 and 1884, the Agency added eight new buildings, including a 1,800 square foot warehouse, a 1,080 square foot barn and 384 square feet of grain storage. Once the infrastructure had been laid, cattle posed a profitable investment and in 1879 Agent Wright directed J.B. Harkell, a Shoshone-Bannock carpenter, to travel to the Blackfoot Rim to check on cattle prices. Most of the vendors Harkell met charged $2.50 per 100 pounds gross, with only one asking $2.75. Later, again at the

[114] Scott, "Idaho and Carey Act," 62-64, 70.
[115] Madsen, *N. Shoshone*, 110-11.



Shoshone delegation, Washington, DC 1880

Back row, left to right: Tyhee, Agent Danilson, interpreter

Front Row, left to right: Jack Tendoy, Capt. Jim, Tendoy, Pete Grouse, Jack Gibson, Tissi Dismit (ISHS)

Agency's instruction, he bought 200 head. Cowboys delivered the 192 heifers and eight bulls to the reservation on December 19. The acting Agency inspector found the cattle herd to be "a nice good lot [and] suitable for the purposes for which they were required."[116]

Despite optimism over the Fort Hall cattle industry's future, traditional horse raids continued into 1881, when several Bannocks rode into Yellowstone Park and stole 20 horses from a Blackfeet encampment. Such activities contributed to an almost annual regional scare of another war. The next year, mere rumors, in addition to inflammatory newspaper reports, caused Duck Valley Western Shoshones to report the possibility of a Bannock attack. An Army investigation of a Western Shoshone council on October 2 reported no such plans.[117]

Hunters began to exterminate the last wild bison in the Northwest and Canada by 1883, and Shoshone-Bannocks looking for alternative means of survival in the changing world began to learn the agricultural trade, adapting their traditionally intimate knowledge of the region's climate to the science of American farming. An ambitious Fort Hall farmer had to learn that the average date of the first killing frost in southeastern Idaho is October 12 and April 20 is the last. Growing seasons have lasted as long as 175 days, but are on average closer to 125. If he could look up those figures in a book, that same farmer learned other travails of an agricultural existence the hard way, such as when in 1884 hordes of grasshoppers destroyed wheat and oat crops grown by American farmers on the Camas Prairie.[118]

By April of that year, trains rolled over the entirety of the Northern Pacific transcontinental railroad. Simultaneously significant public pressure existed on Idaho's

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[116] Reports of Inspection of the Field Jurisdictions of the Office of Indian Affairs, 1884, NARA M1070, roll 13; US Indian Inspector transcript of interview with J.B. Harkell, August 14, 1880, NARA M1070, roll 13; Report of Inspection of the Field Jurisdictions of the Office of Indian Affairs, 1880, NARA M1070, roll 13.
[117] Madsen, *N. Shoshone*, 128-29.
[118] Mansfield, 21; U.S. Weather Bureau, *Climates of the States*, 3; Nelson, *Brief History*, 26; F.G. Roe, *The North American Buffalo* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970, 467.

Territorial representative T.F. Singiser to further open a large southern portion of the reservation to settlement under the justification that Shoshone-Bannocks did not consistently occupy it and never ventured further than about 21 miles south of Pocatello. By the end of 1884, Secretary of the Interior Henry M. Teller reported to the Senate that the Utah and Northern Railroad had yet to compensate Shoshone-Bannocks according to their original 1881 agreement.[119]

By 1885, the cattle herd at Fort Hall grew to 350, but part of the colonization process required a similarly clinical head count of the reservation's human inhabitants. The Agency's June census of that year drew Fort Hall residents into two groups, Shoshone and Bannocks, dividing a traditionally cohesive and fluid community into distinct government racial classifications. The year 1886 brought the arrival of Agent Peter Gallagher, for whom Shoshones-Bannocks had "progressed but little…for the last seventeen years." While Fort Hall residents demonstrated willingness to fence plots and cultivate the soil, he explained that farming operations on the reservation remained a "burlesque on civilization." Still, he insisted that work continue on improving current farming techniques rather than no attempt be made.[120]

Gallagher also reported that though most reservation residents preferred not to farm, agriculture and livestock combined to provide half of their resource base. A quarter came from fishing, hunting and root gathering and the other quarter from government aid. Believing in the necessity of a strong Christian influence on the reservation, he criticized the Methodist Episcopal Church for their failure to establish a mission by his arrival. According to Gallagher, "a civilizing tendency…is due more to the railroads than any other cause." He concluded his report

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[119] T.F. Singiser to Sec. of Interior, June 30, 1884; Fred Dubois to T. F. Singiser, April 16, 1884; Reports of Inspection of the Field Jurisdictions of the Office of Indian Affairs, 1873-1900, NARA M1070, roll 13;
Letter from the Secretary of the Interior transmitting report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs relative to the failure of the Utah and Northern Railway Company to compensate certain Indians for right of way. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1884.

[120] Parsons-Bernstein, 73; Heaton, 76; ARCIA, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1886, 107.

Fort Hall Agency Staff, 1886

Fort Hall Agency Building, 1887

by referring to his largest priority, Indian labor, through Bible verse: "As I told them in the beginning…the true doctrine, which is written, 'By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.'"[121]

By 1887 Gallagher had further separated the population of 1,530 Fort Hall residents, this time along ethnic and labor lines. Shoshones took "more kindly to labor and are more disposed to settle down," while Bannocks "pride themselves on the feats of daring of the present and generations past." He expressed difficulty in convincing Bannocks to abandon their "nomadic wanderings" and take up farming. What he viewed as spontaneous mobility to avoid work remained a pillar of Bannock culture, which despite contradictory declining bison numbers, possessed the cultural potential for renewal. Shoshones made little progress farming, but their efforts proved to be "reasonable," with much of the potential for development tied up in the promise of future irrigation funds. Yet Inspector R.S. Oariner found Fort Hall farms in better shape than he had expected, and that Shoshones and Bannocks made "commendable progress in civilized pursuits." A consistent bureaucratic description of the reservation between federal agencies remained elusive. Only three months elapsed before yet another Inspector, Frank Armstrong, declared more accurately the dire need for federal money to build irrigation ditches. He recommended an expense of $7,500 and Shoshone-Bannock labor. Without the investment, "farming [at Fort Hall] is a waste of labor, time and money."[122]

The General Allotment Act of 1887 authorized President Grover Cleveland to allot land in severalty to residents of a reservation in order to be used for agriculture or grazing. Allotments would not exceed 80 acres of farming land and 160 acres of grazing land. Individual heads of household would ostensibly select their tract of land, pending final approval by the reservation

[121] ARCIA, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1886, 108.
[122] Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1887, 67-68; Report of Inspector, Fort Hall Agency, May 13, 1887; August 26, 1887, NARA Microfilm 1070, roll 14.

Ellen Lavatta (ISHS)

Jack Hurley, Shoshone scout popular among Blackfoot, Idaho residents (ISHS)

Indian Agent. In reality the Allotment Act disregarded traditional Shoshone-Bannock interpretation of land use and forced them to adopt Euroamerican notions of private property and inheritance. In 1888, 311 Shoshone-Bannocks signed an agreement selling 1,840 acres that had already been constructed upon at Pocatello Station, the junction of the Utah and Northern and Oregon Short Line railroads, for $8 per acre, receiving a total of $14,720.[123]

In 1889, the Lemhi Shoshones agreed to relocate to Fort Hall. In the fall of the same year, Bannocks welcomed a traveling Lakota delegation onto the reservation. The Lakotas and Bannocks jointly participated in a sacred Ghost Dance the Bannocks had previously learned from the Northern Paiute prophet Wovoka, and at that moment the reservation served as a critical communication point for the west to east spread of the revolutionary Ghost Dance faith.[124]

The perceived safety and stability granted Idaho through statehood in 1890 only enticed the arrival of more Euroamerican settlers from the east, and the railroad provided them the necessary transport. Shoshone-Bannocks at Fort Hall posed little obstacle to further development, as Governor Shoup regarded them as "half-savage people." He officially advocated that they select lands in severalty according to Congressional resolution, as had his territorial predecessors since the end of the 1878, thereby opening up the remaining land to white settlement. He believed such "would break up and destroy their tribal relations and superstitions [so] they would become respectable and useful citizens." Once transformed into yeoman farmers, the government would provide Shoshone-Bannocks with the construction of irrigation canals. Disease finally ended the grasshopper plague on Camas Prairie grain crops that year as well, but a two-year infestation of army crickets quickly replaced them. An Allotment Act modification of February 28, 1891 then authorized individual Shoshone-Bannocks to lease their unfarmed and

[123] Laidlaw, *Federal Indian Land Policy*, 8; Madsen, *N. Shoshone*, 114; Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1887, 69.
[124] Laidlaw, 7; Ostler, *Plains Sioux*, 251.

ungrazed land to mining interests. The same modification allowed Secretary of the Interior John W. Noble to make irrigation arrangements for Fort Hall as he deemed in "the best interest" of its inhabitants.[125]

A step in the right direction, the Fort Hall Irrigation Project of 1894 failed to produce its projected investment and fell far short of its most conservative estimate of return. Farmers allocated a third of the acreage cultivable from the project to small grains. They used another third for hay, one-sixth for potatoes, and the rest for a variety of miscellaneous personal choices, most frequently their increasingly profitable sugar beets. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s white settlers bought premium cattle from impoverished reservation residents for exploitatively low prices, to the indifference of the reservation agent. Not until 1895 could the unlawful transactions be stopped, when Agent Thomas B. Teter arrived and began to prohibit locals from purchasing reservation livestock. American cattlemen responded by selling their cheap cattle, fed illegally on reservation forage, back to Fort Hall residents who faced critical food shortages.[126]

By the 1890s, the last of the lands immediately surrounding the Snake River had been taken and it became clear that any development further from water needed irrigation. Settlers began pressuring their elected officials to reclaim federally owned land. There existed large tracts of arid yet attractive federal land and water that needed engineering and financing. Senator Joseph Carey of Wyoming introduced two amendments to the Sundry Civil Appropriations Bill of 1894, proposing to reclaim and irrigate arid federal lands. The amendments passed with little opposition in either the House or Senate, authorizing Secretary of Interior M. Hoke Smith to sell arid federal land plots to the western states for irrigation and settlement.[127]

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[125] Laidlaw, 13-14; Report of the Governor of Idaho, 1878, 1885, 1886, 1890, ISHS, ITC.
[126] Nybroten, 40; Parsons-Bernstein, 73, 76.
[127] Mikel H. Williams, *History of Carey Act in Idaho*, 1.

Fort Hall Irrigation Project, 1894

As Senator Carey originally envisioned, the act authorized states to act as construction companies and fund their own projects. In reality, states lacked the startup capital and most state constitutions prohibited their governments from obtaining the necessary credit. As fundamental economic law, there existed little private incentive to invest in a project with no clear payoff. An 1896 amendment created a lien on reclaimed lands for construction costs from reclamation to sale. The amendment also allowed reclamation through the retention of water in large ditches and reservoirs.[128]

The 1896 amendment created the potential for an interesting singularity in United States history: private companies constructed irrigation works under state supervision and sold water rights to settlers and farmers. Once a settler had reclaimed his acreage, he applied through the state to the Department of the Interior for a patent on the land. Once construction was completed, the operating company ran the irrigation system. The Carey Act also required reclamation by irrigation, occupation and cultivation on 160 acre tracts to issue a patent.[129]

Under Idaho Code, the state had complete control and supervision over Carey Act construction projects. The state remains by far the most influenced by the Carey Act, applying for 3.8 million acres to reclaim, authorized for 2.9 million, and eventually patenting some 620,000 to settlers. The next closest state was Wyoming, applying for half the acreage and patenting roughly a third. Sixty-five projects were proposed in Idaho from 1895-1930. One project patented more acreage than all of Wyoming projects combined.[130]

First proposed in 1895, the American Falls project, also known as Carey Act Project Number 1, patented 50,500 acres by 1910, including much of the Fort Hall reservation. Starting in that year, the American Falls Canal and Power Company twice requested segregation of

[128] Williams, 2-3.
[129] Williams, 3.
[130] Williams, 5, 15.

reclaimed land, but did not receive any until 1899, and then more than 57,000 acres. The American Falls Canal Security Company bought American Falls Canal and Power in 1905. Because of a fourfold increase in the cost of the project, the new company raised the price of water per acre from ten dollars to forty.[131]

Idaho established the Office of the State Engineer in 1895, and F.J. Mills as the first, who spent most of his time in office attempting to temper the speculative time and financial estimates that characterized much of the investment spurred by the Carey Act. His failure mirrored that of the Idaho Canal Company to deliver promised water to Fort Hall reservation throughout the 1890s.[132]

Plans for the future construction of a dam and reservoir at American Falls coincided with potential irrigation projects on the reservation, ostensibly to be completed from the 1890s to the 1900s. When water became scarce, farmers had to bring water to their lands by hand, horse and wagon, but more commonly joined groups closer to the river bottomlands. They further endured an extended dry period that ran from 1898 to 1903, during which the yearly average rainfall dropped to 10.5 inches. Despite the lack of water, some Bannocks literally plowed ahead, even in dry areas of sagebrush that confounded white settlers. Others left, as did one contingent to Wyoming led by Jim Ballard.[133]

The largest reduction of the Fort Hall reservation occurred in 1900, when Shoshone-Bannocks ceded 416,000 acres to the federal government for $525,000. Excited settlers began staking early mining claims to the ceded land, as many as a hundred in the first three days, before

[131] Scott, "Idaho and Carey Act," 77; Williams, 16-18.
[132] Scott, "Idaho and Carey Act," 76; Heaton, 131.
[133] Heaton, 71-72.; Mansfield, 21; Walter H. Gravis to Sec. of Interior, May 15, 1899, NARA Microfilm 1070, roll 14; "Earlier Indian News," *Idaho Statesman*, July 27, 1895.

Tendoy and son, 1896 (ISHS)

Shoshones near Pocatello (ISHS)

Presidential proclamation officially opened the area. As early as February the House Committee on Indian Affairs authorized the land within a five-mile radius surrounding Pocatello to be auctioned to the public. Bidding started at $10 an acre. By the end of that year, another network of railroad lines connected the Snake River Plain to Spokane, the Puget Sound and the trade of the Pacific Ocean.[134]

As Shoshone-Bannocks ceded land to the railroads, they maintained traditional fishing practices on the Snake River into the twentieth century without the extensive commercialization experienced by indigenous Columbia River fishermen. The fevered speculation of the Carey Act dissipated, and Governor Frank Steunenberg and Interior Secretary Ethan A. Hitchcock signed a 1901 agreement that absolved the federal government of any financial or supervisory responsibility of land reclamation and irrigation construction.[135]

Every single Carey Act application had vastly underestimated the cost of its project, and in almost every case there was a significant shortage of water for the proposed acreage. By 1900, the problem of securing enough water to justify a project had become so well established that companies simply failed to excite enough private investment. The lack of investment caused construction companies to fail on almost every project, further lowering the incentive to invest. These financial problems compounded the fact that many ambitious promoters knew little of the

[134] Nybroten, 4; Nelson, 26; Riegger, 13, 15-16; Madsen, *N. Shoshone*, 123; U.S. Congress. House. 1900. "Agreement with Indians of Forth Hall Reservation." Committee on Indian Affairs, 56th Cong., 1st Sess. Serial No. 4022.

[135] Patricia Lyn Scott. "Idaho and the Carey Act, 1894-1930: Reclamation by the States." (Master's thesis, University of Utah, 1983), 78; Deward E. Walker. *Lemhi Shoshone-Bannock reliance on Anadromous and other Fish Resources.* (Boise: Bureau of Land Management, Idaho State Office, 1994), 217.

Original mission school building, which burned in 1900 (ISHS)

environmental engineering required to irrigate their proposed tracts. Therefore almost every project fell short of their required water demands, and either had to raise water distribution prices exorbitantly or fail outright. Despite these significant failures, the Carey Act is largely seen as a success for the state of Idaho. In total Idaho reclaimed 629,724 acres, more than in all other Carey Act states combined. Balanced against the costs and failures of most of the project applications, the millions of dollars of investment, the millions of acres of arid desert converted to irrigable farmland and the arrival of thousands of settlers and farmers set in motion the events that would make the state one of the union's most agriculturally productive.[136]

The Fort Hall community, though, experienced yet another diversion of one of their millennia-old resource bases, the Snake River, which they had successfully harnessed for their agricultural pursuits before the introduction of Carey Act. Another skillful adaptation to the new global economy had again been undermined by federal government intervention.

On May 7, 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the 1900 agreement, and officially opened what had once been the southern reservation to American settlement. By this time most Shoshone-Bannocks had replaced their traditional buckskin clothing with that of the stroud blanket material they received from the agency. Their eventual integration of Euroamerican dress styles such as shirts, pants and hats, accompanied by beaded buckskin gloves, necklaces and pendants illustrates a significant cultural vector of adaptation at a time a new phase of land loss had begun.[137]

In order to further bring ancient indigenous lands into the realm of colonization, the U.S. Geological Survey established the first official measuring station on the Snake River, at Neeley,

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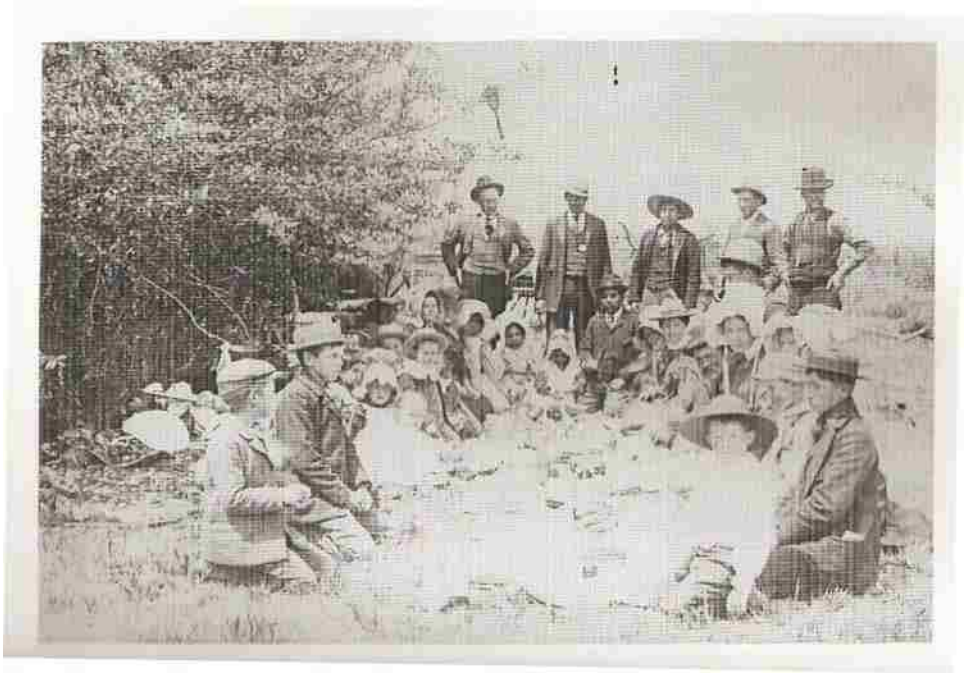
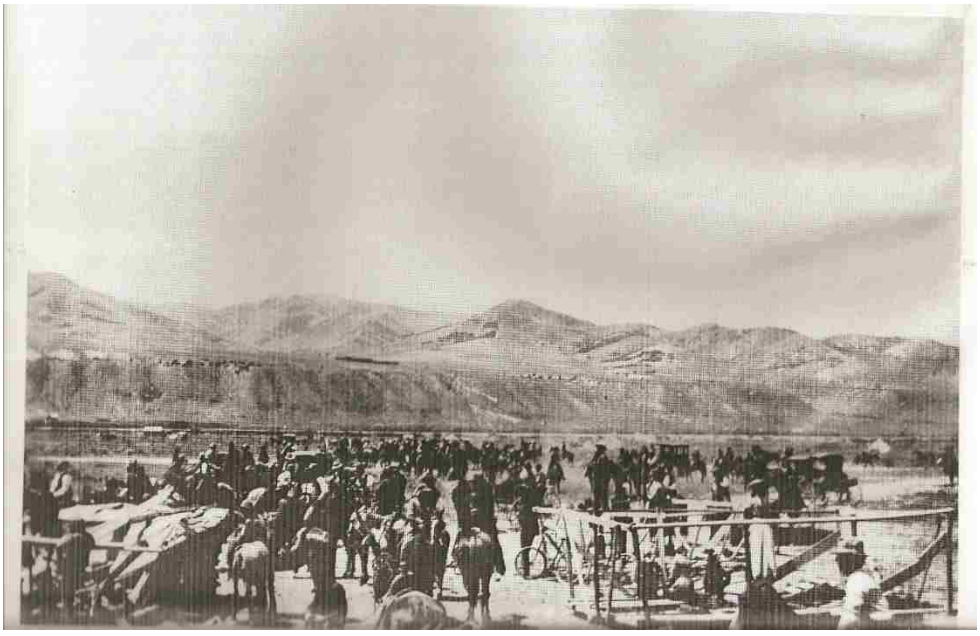
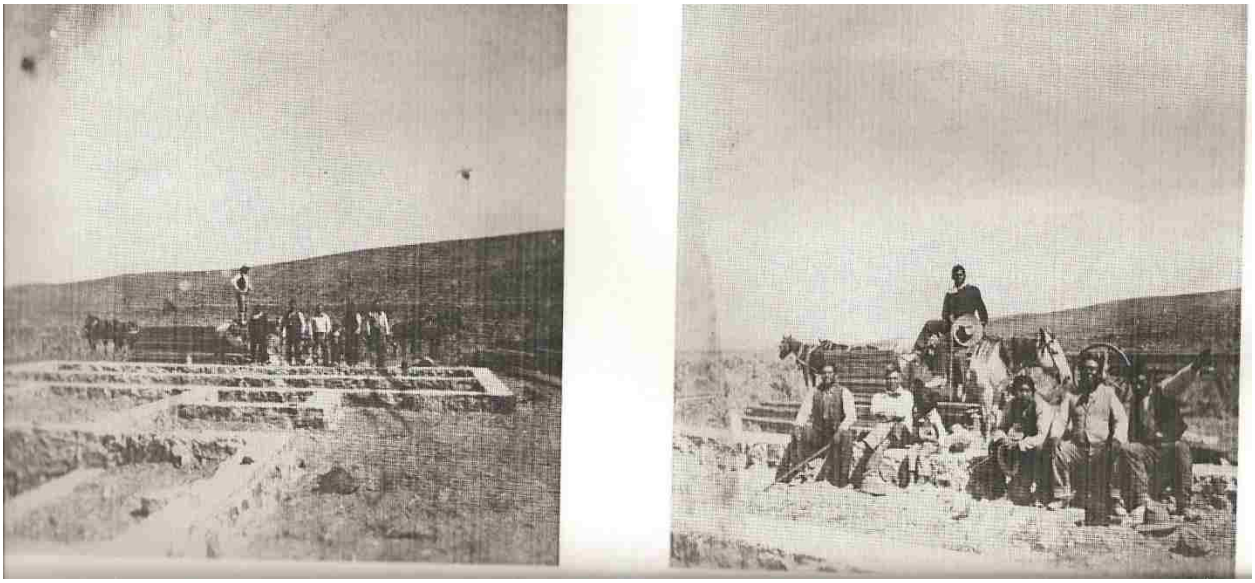
[136] Williams, 80-82; Scott, "Idaho and Carey Act," 62.
[137] General Land Office. *Fort Hall Indian lands opened to settlement*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1902.; Anne Merkley, "Cultural Contrast and material Change," 191.

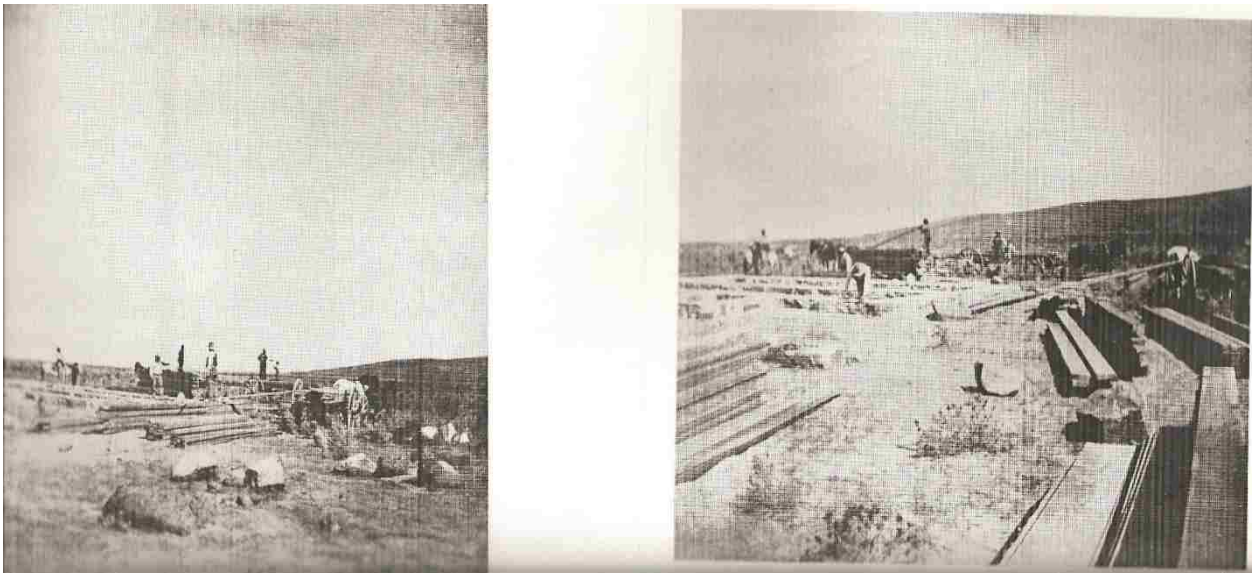


Shoshones and white settlers, 1900 (ISHS)



Opening the reservation to white settlement, June 17, 1902 (ISHS)



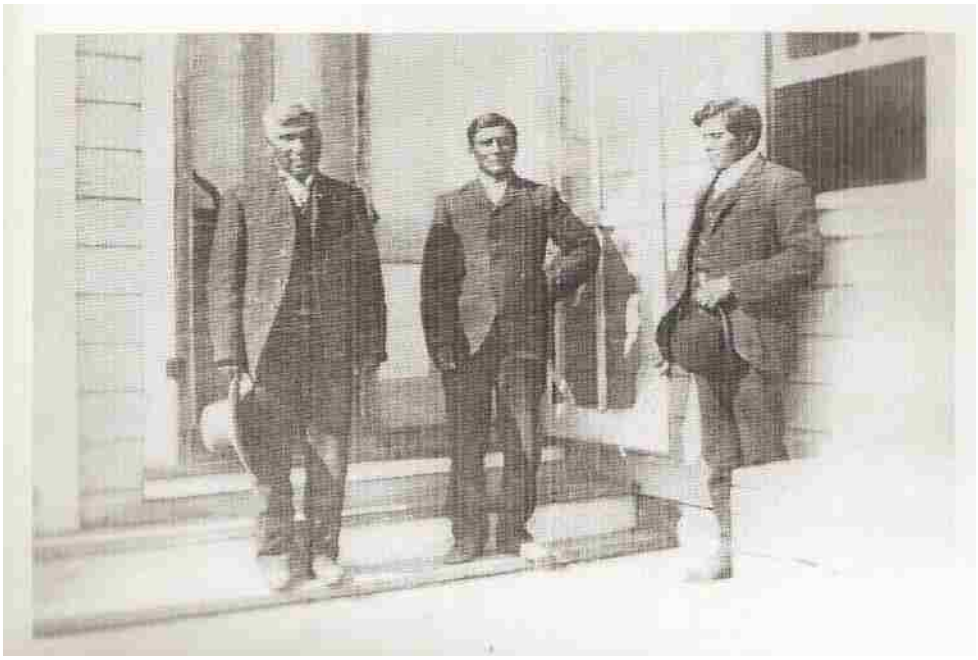


Shoshone construction workers (ISHS)

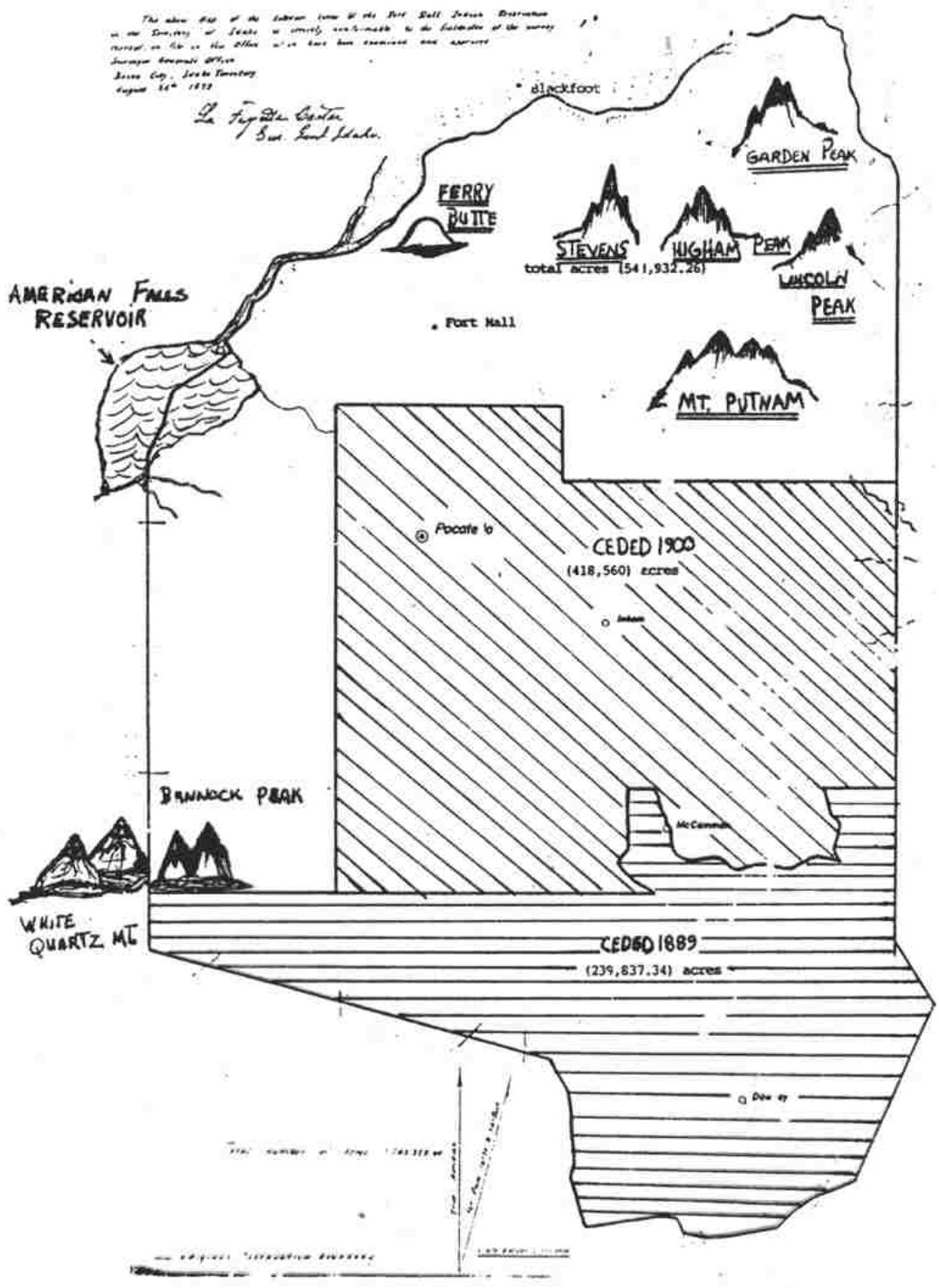
Fort Hall Presbyterian church (ISHS)

Presbyterian chapel and mission school (ISHS)

Evangelical revival in the Fort Hall Bottoms (ISHS)



Shoshone Presbyterian church elders: Ed Grant, Alex Nation and Hubert Tetoby (ISHS)



Fort Hall Reservation (reproduced from trailtribes.org)

Idaho on March 17, 1906. Then coincidentally began a period of the region's greatest recorded precipitation, which lasted until 1909, averaging 17.17 inches of rain per year.[138]

Therefore a wet year greeted Lemhi Shoshones as they made their transition to life at Fort Hall in 1907. Simultaneously, a federal court decision on April 9 awarded Shoshone-Bannocks prior right to 16.25 cubic feet of water per second from Bannock Creek. Within two years farmers had sufficiently developed the area around the creek to earn a provisional increase, and the court awarded them 18.25 cubic feet per second. Despite these seemingly promising developments in securing water for agriculture, the character of the soil remained the primary obstacle. An arid sand plain covered in sagebrush and rabbit brush posed a significant challenge to a Lemhi community who had, over thousands of years, inextricably adapted themselves to a higher and wetter climate.[139]

This increase in irrigation water proved crucial, as rainfall remained unreliable. Precipitation reached 18.78 inches that year, the highest ever recorded, but quickly waned to a record low of 7.94 inches three years later. On September 3, 1907, the Fort Hall Irrigation Project applied to the Idaho State Engineer's Office for permits to appropriate the flow of the Blackfoot River into a reservoir, estimating an output of 200,000 acre-feet per year. Designed to irrigate 50,000 acres of the Snake River Plain's Gibson terrace, the project would water 38,000 acres on the reservation, as well as some 12,000 across the southern boundary near Pocatello.

American settlers saw before them a future of agricultural wealth. Construction began on the Blackfoot Reservoir dam in the summer of 1908. Forty feet in height above the riverbed, the dam boasted a 120 foot bottom length and 250 foot crest length. It created a reservoir 17 miles in length, with a maximum width of 5 miles, a total area of 15,000 acres and a capacity of 200,000

[138] W. B. Heroy, *Water Resources of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation* in Mansfield, 122; Mansfield, 21.
[139] Nybroten, 31; Dann, interview, 2.

acre-feet of water. Water released from the dam flows fifty miles along the natural Blackfoot River channel to the headgates of two main canals. The upper canal irrigates 30,000 acres to the east of town of Blackfoot, and the lower 20,000 acres between the Blackfoot River and Ross Fork. Engineers carved these networks to transform the arid soil, but the climate resisted. Cold winters crumbled the concrete canal linings, driving up construction costs until the technique was simply abandoned. Irrigators lost untold millions of acre-feet of water through seepage, which altered an already precarious and delicate hydraulic balance.[140]

As the power of irrigation quickly transformed the arid Idaho plain to farmland, Shoshone-Bannocks continued to experience the consequences of land reform. A District court decision provided for the addition of 600 feet per second to the reservoir from the Snake River. The twelve mile long Idaho Canal carries water from the Snake at Shelley, Idaho to the Blackfoot. Along its route, it also carries large amounts of wasted irrigation water surrounding the town of Blackfoot. A special Allotment Act modification of March 3, 1911 then allotted land to all living Shoshone-Bannocks from 1911 to 1916, comprising more than half of the reservation's total land area. Shoshone-Bannocks born after 1916 remained entitled only to inherited land, and received no allotment.[141]

If spare land was short in a seemingly empty space, Fort Hall residents had always recognized the Snake River as a potential source of agricultural income. The Idaho State Engineer's Office spent 1911-12 busily fielding applications for rights-of-way and irrigation construction funds. The river's runoff onto the reservation totaled 4.91 million acre-feet from 1910-11, 5.84 million in 1911-12, 6.5 million in 1912-13, and 5.47 million from 1913-14. But

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[140] Mansfield, 20; Heroy in Mansfield, 141-43; Mark Fiege. "Creating a Hybrid Landscape: Irrigated Agriculture in Idaho," in *Northwest Lands, Northwest Peoples: Readings in Environmental History*, Dale D. Goble and Paul W. Hirt, eds. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 369.
[141] Laidlaw, *Federal Indian Land Policy*, 12; Heroy in Mansfield, 142.

Fort Hall famers largely lacked the capital to harness such volume through canal construction. Despite a seemingly reliable supply of water, family farms relied increasingly on low water crops such as wheat, alfalfa and oats instead of more profitable sugar beets and potatoes. As allotees passed 20 and 160 acre portions to their descendants, arable land became further and further divided into smaller plots. A 160 acre plot was hardly enough for a sustainable farm, and the repeated divisions created thousands of acres of small, individually unfarmable plots.[142]

In 1915, during an irrigation season from April 20 to October 10, 91,000 acre feet of reservoir water irrigated 18,542 acres, of which 7,447 acres belonged to 209 Shoshone-Bannock farmers involved in the project. This was far from enough to sustain regular income, as even Euroamerican farmers in the area defaulted on their water payments, illustrating the circular nature of the southeastern Idaho irrigation system. A year later in June 1916, the Blackfoot Reservoir contained 132,000 acre-feet of water. The water remained, though statically.[143]

Choked with willows by 1922, canals had become ecosystems unto themselves. Maintenance included regular hunting and trapping to rid the waterways of squirrels, gophers and beavers. The advice of one economic analyst remains that instead of perpetuating more and more thinly divided individual plots, land owners should have invested in commonly held grazing lands. From the fall of 1923 to the summer of 1924, several small drilling operations installed fifty deep wells on the Camas Prairie. By August, thirty-nine of them provided reliable groundwater. Farmers and settlers received as little as a gallon per minute from these wells, but most averaged roughly 20. Drilled in June 1924 by a busy J.B. Britton, one strong 247 foot well

[142] Heroy, *Water Resources* in Mansfield, 121; Nybroten, 10; Parsons-Bernstein, 132; State Engineer to State Board of Land Commissioners, Jan. 31, June 27, July 1, 1911, Nov. 12, Dec. 12, 1912, ISHS, CAC.
[143] Heroy in Mansfield, 142-43; Letters to State Land Board, Jan. 7, Feb. 3, 7, 1915; E.E. Hardy to J.M. Haines, July 14, 1914, ISHS, CAC.

pumped fifty-five gallons per minute through a three-inch diameter pipe. These wells then became a crucial water source for farmers whose Carey Act speculation had fallen flat.[144]

Begun in 1925 and completed in 1927, the Big Wood River Reservoir and Canal Company constructed a new canal from the American Falls Reservoir. The canal further diverted Snake River water west to the fields surrounding the town of Shoshone. By 1960, the Fort Hall reservation contained 524,000 acres, and a mere two years later wells on the Camas Prairie routinely pumped out between 500 to 1,200 gallons a minute. Deeper wells drilled into the underlying basalt yielded from 2,000 to 3,000 gallons per minute. Wells remained the primary water source for Fort Hall residents.[145]

By 1971, the Snake River Basin within Idaho contained almost 750,000 acres of irrigated farmland, on which grew a large variety of crops. 90% of Idaho's potatoes grew on 110,000 acres, while another 100,000 acres had been devoted to dry beans. Sugar beets grew on more than 50,000 acres, while more than a third of Idaho's crop area consisted of hay and alfalfa. The majority of irrigated farms remained less than 80 acres, and in addition to those listed above, their crops included onions, lettuce, hops, mint, spring wheat, cherries, prunes, peaches, apples and a large variety of seeds.[146]

The state of Idaho possesses a well-established reputation of agricultural prosperity, indeed as one of the union's most historically productive. Despite such a rosy narrative, though, there exists a small subregion within the Northwest's breadbasket: the Fort Hall Reservation. At times forced to exploit traditional resource bases to integrate into the globalizing capitalist

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[144] Nybroten, 10; Arthur M. Piper. *Ground Water for Irrigation on Camas Prairie, Camas and Elmore Counties, Idaho*. (Moscow: University of Idaho, 1926), 16; Mark Fiege. "Creating a Hybrid Landscape: Irrigated Agriculture in Idaho," in *Northwest Lands, Northwest Peoples: Readings in Environmental History*, Dale D. Goble and Paul W. Hirt, eds. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 372.
[145] Williams, 45; Nybroten, 29; William Clarence Walton. *Ground-water Resources of Camas Prairie, Camas and Elmore Counties, Idaho*. (Washington, DC. Government Printing Office, 1962), 1.
[146] U.S. Weather Bureau, *Climates of the States*, 3-4.

economy, Shoshone and Bannock farmers struggled to participate in the new phase of irrigation and reaped far fewer economic rewards than the American farmers that surrounded the reservation.

Conclusion

The history of the American West is rooted in its environmental history. In many areas, such as Idaho, aridity is the defining characteristic of such a history, and the Snake River provided the water for human settlement within the area. Much history is limited to the actions of people, but in this study geological and hydrological forces defined the actions of those indigenous peoples that relied on the Snake. It watered the Camas plants that Shoshones and Bannocks gathered and consumed, as well as the grasses that fed the herds of bison on which they depended for both protein consumption and economic exchange. They literally reached into its waters for their salmon. The history of the earth and water that surrounded them is as just as important as the history of their interethnic relations with other indigenous groups and colonizing Euroamericans.

The relationship between Shoshones and Bannocks illustrates the complexity of indigenous interethnicity. The fluidity of their kinship and band networks reveals a much more sophisticated reality than the popular notion of the monolithic Indian tribe, with the static "friends" and "enemies" that come along with it. The Snake River not only provided these cultures with sustenance, but tied them together through collective fishing congregations. The Snake also remained the hydraulic root of the fight to come, watering the Camas Prairie that Shoshones and Bannocks relied upon and that Americans lusted after to feed their ever-increasing cattle herds, and therefore their bank accounts.

The Bannock War of 1878 may be relegated to the declensionist dustbin of the history of the American West, but lesser known events can be just as significant as the popular grandeur of the colonial period of the eastern seaboard and the experiences of the Plains Indians. Losing a war against the U.S. Army does not exclude the tale from the larger narrative. It was never a foregone conclusion, nor was the war itself inevitable. Most significant are the reasons Shoshones and Bannocks went to war, but in order to fully understand the consequences of defeat, a narrative of the actual fighting must be included.

Unrealistic financial speculation characterized Idaho's Carey Act. Though Fort Hall farmers lacked large capital reserves to reap much economic or hydraulic reward from Snake River irrigation plans, their self-reliant techniques did not exist in a vacuum. In fact, the failure of the Carey Act actually helps illustrate the resilience of the reservation community in their creation and maintenance of agriculture and a pastoral industry.

This study also includes other religious, social and bureaucratic developments in order to better illustrate the dynamic process in which Shoshones and Bannocks adapted to survive as time progressed. While lines must be drawn, some events which may seem to be extraneous illustrate the difficulty with which reservation community members tried to maintain a traditional environmental relationship in the face of economic and political colonization.

APPENDIX A: ABBREVIATIONS

ARCIA	Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs
CAC	Carey Act Collection
GSP	George Shoup Papers
ISHS	Idaho State Historical Society and Archives
ISUSC	Idaho State University Special Collections
ITC	Idaho Territorial Collection
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration

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