

# Nevada

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# NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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# ASPECTS OF PUNISHMENT

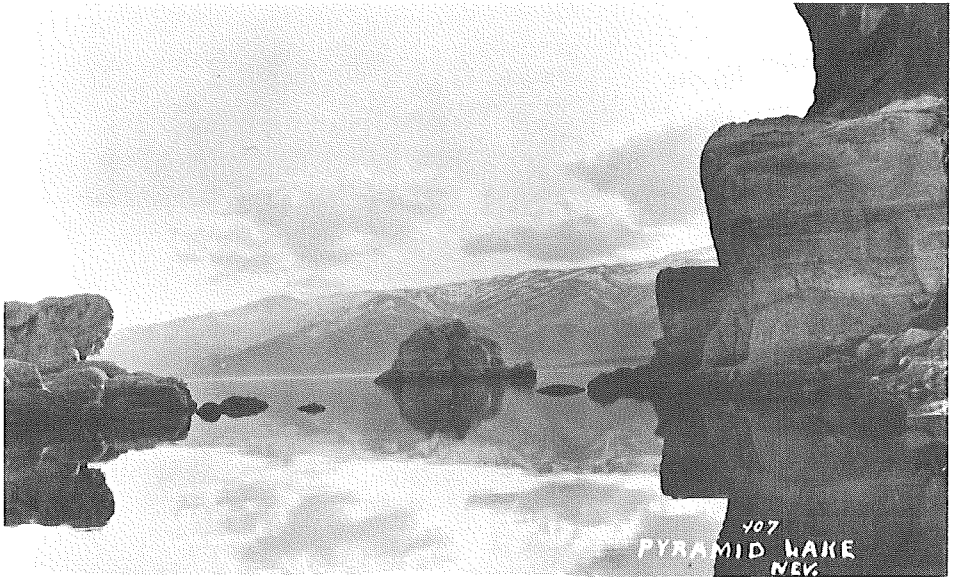
## Indian Removal in Northern Nevada

Matt Bischoff

On January 6, 1879, more than five hundred Northern Paiute Indians began a forced march that took them across 350 miles and over two mountain ranges in the dead of winter. They were close to starvation and lacked adequate clothing for such a journey. On the first night out, an old man froze to death, his body left on the side of the road. A young woman gave birth to a baby who died from exposure soon after. The next day the mother herself died, and she, too, was left by the side of the road.<sup>1</sup> The United States Army had received orders the previous winter, in 1878, to move forcibly the Paiutes from Oregon to the Yakima Reservation in Washington Territory. These Paiutes' native land was the northern Great Basin; yet more than five hundred of them were removed, taken through Oregon and across the Columbia River to the Yakima Reservation. Why were they banished from their native land? What were the conditions that prompted the United States government to take such action? Why were they removed in 1879, and not earlier? These questions have received little consideration in studies of Northern Paiute history, which usually focuses on the Pyramid Lake war of 1860.

Indian policy of the United States government after the Civil War, and to some extent before, sought to concentrate the Indian populations on newly designated reservations. The reasons for these policies evolved over the years, but emerged in clearer form after the Civil War, when the government attempted to reformulate its Indian policy; the reservation system soon became the cornerstone of that policy. To most Washington bureaucrats, the reservation was a way in which to separate Indians from whites, thereby protecting the whites from the Indians, and vice versa. The reservation was also designed to be a place in which the Indian would be taught to live a civilized, Christian life style.<sup>2</sup> Another perceived bonus of the reservation system was the opening of land to Euro-American entry. William P. Dole, as commissioner of Indian Affairs, summed up the reservation policy in 1861:

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An early photograph of Pyramid Lake. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

As the ultimate objective of all our operations among the Indians should be to better their condition, it will be my duty, as well as the duty of all other employees of the government, to endeavor to secure for them reservations of such dimensions, and possessing such natural facilities in climate, soil, and all other desirable qualities, as will, so far as possible, remove the obstacles in the way of their advancement, and present to them the greatest inducements to abandon savage and adopt civilized modes of life.<sup>3</sup>

The Northern Paiutes in far-off Nevada and southern Oregon felt the effects of these policies emanating from the East.

For centuries a group of people had subsisted in the northern Great Basin, an area consisting of present-day eastern California (as far south as Owens Valley), northern Nevada, southeastern Oregon, and southwestern Idaho. They spoke a common language, Numic, and called themselves the Numa, or The People.<sup>4</sup> Ethnographers collectively termed them Northern Paiutes. The Numic language is one branch of the Uto-Aztecan language family, a family that includes Mono, Panamint, Shoshone, Commanche, Kaiisu, and Ute (including Southern Paiute and Chemehuevi).<sup>5</sup> The Northern Paiute were linguistically distinct from the Southern Paiute, although they shared a similar life style. The term *Northern Paiute*, therefore, was a linguistic classification of the native inhabitants.

The Indians who lived within the northern Great Basin had a limited sense of being members of the greater linguistic family, however. They had no large-scale tribal structure, nor any permanent political cohesion. Because the resources of the Great Basin are so varied, native inhabitants exhibited multiple subsistence patterns, in contrast to the relatively homogeneous buffalo-hunting

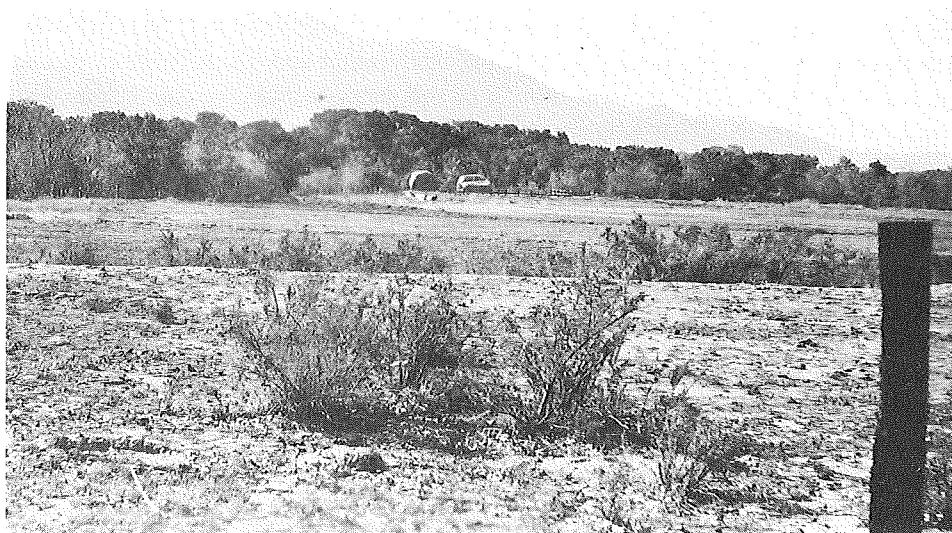
cultures of the Plains. The varied environments of the Great Basin supported only small and isolated populations, and subsistence could be quite different from one valley to the next. Northern Paiute in Owens Valley, for example, used the ample supply of water for agriculture, and supported a relatively large population. The Northern Paiute residing at Pyramid Lake subsisted primarily upon a bounty of fish from the mouth of the present-day Truckee River. The general aridity of the Great Basin and the fact that areas with ample water are often separated by large mountain ranges or extensive deserts added to the isolation of Indian groups.<sup>6</sup>

The primary social unit of the Northern Paiute was the nuclear family. Collections of these nuclear families often made up what ethnographers refer to as bands. These bands were intermarrying, cooperating units that often collected for a specific event. No rigid structure existed for the bands, and they were loosely held together.<sup>7</sup> A band often derived its name from its food source, and when the band moved its name changed also<sup>8</sup>: "The territory of the Kuyuidokado [meaning fish-eaters, the Pyramid Lake band] ranged from the desert north of the lakes, to the Truckee Meadows on the south, from the Virginia City boundary on the west, to the Kupa-dokado [Ground squirrel eaters]. To the north lived the Kamo-dokado (Jack-rabbit eaters) and the Toe-dokado" [Cat-tail eaters].<sup>9</sup>

Bands might form for a large hunt, or, more often, for military reasons. War parties were often assembled from the collection of nuclear families, and this war band existed only as long as the need for war remained.<sup>10</sup> Leadership of the bands was not rigidly defined and usually consisted of the headman of a family cluster who served as an advisor or leader of discussion.<sup>11</sup>

Contact with whites forced the bands to develop more organization, and leaders began to hold more authority over their people. Chief Winnemucca, for example, who had little authority before white contact, became known as chief because of the influence that his daughter Sarah had with the whites. Sarah spent many of her formative years with the Ormsby family in Carson Valley. The Ormsby family had been a prominent one in the valley since its founding in the 1850s. Colonel John Ormsby led the expedition against the Paiutes at Pyramid Lake, and was killed in the first battle of that war in 1860. Sarah's relationship with the Ormsby family was one of friendship, and she learned to read and write English while living with them. She was then sent to a boarding school in San Jose, California, where she became more educated in the white man's ways before returning to her people. Although Chief Winnemucca was only the headman of a single band that numbered about a hundred, the whites viewed his family as a powerful representative of the Northern Paiute people. Winnemucca and Sarah soon served as liaisons between the Northern Paiutes in Nevada and those in Oregon, thereby enhancing political cohesion among their people.

Cattle and horses of the white emigrant and settler depleted the land and food



The site of the first battle of the Pyramid Lake War. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

sources of the Paiute. These new animals, conversely, represented an irresistible new food source to supplement the Paiute's meager existence. Raiding and stealing of this stock fostered an amalgamation of the Indian bands, for a larger group was a more effective raiding party and offered more protection. For hostilities against the whites, various headmen recruited neighboring warriors who owned horses and who would then range over large areas, attacking white settlements and eluding the United States Army. The friction that developed between whites and Paiutes as a result of this contact, as well as its inherent threat of violence, further necessitated a more cohesive form of band organization. The acquisition of horses, reduction of native resources, dislocation, and other effects of white contact produced further amalgamation of the bands. A persuasive leader was often able to play upon these factors and gain a substantial amount of power over a given group.<sup>12</sup>

In the late spring of 1860, the Pyramid Lake War, the first organized warfare between Northern Paiutes and whites, suddenly changed the world of the Paiute. Although the Paiutes almost totally annihilated the first group of whites sent against them, and fought the second group to a stalemate, they were eventually defeated. Most of the Paiute bands that resided in the Pyramid Lake region scattered across the Nevada Territory following the conflict. The first Indian agent for Nevada Territory, Warren Wasson, reported only seven thousand Indians in western Nevada in an 1861 communication to the commissioner

of Indian Affairs.<sup>13</sup> Wasson also indicated that these Indians were relatively poor, owning only twelve hundred ponies among them. By the time of Wasson's report only two reserves had been designated for the Northern Paiute, one at Walker Lake and the other at Pyramid Lake. Pressure on the government from white settlers for the release of these lands was growing steadily by the early 1860s.

Under these conditions the Paiutes realized that they could not win against such an organized and numerous foe as the white man. Throughout the early 1860s large numbers of Pyramid Lake Paiutes left Nevada for sparsely populated southeastern Oregon. Most of these wished to avoid further contact with the whites, and Nevada was becoming more and more populated. Southeastern Oregon offered open land with relatively few whites, and presented the Indians with a chance to return to their precontact life style.<sup>14</sup> The Paiutes who remained in Nevada were concentrated at the Pyramid Lake Reservation, established in 1859 by the Utah Superintendency of Indian Affairs. The superintendency maintained a general agency in Carson Valley, headed by Frederick Dodge, which administered the affairs of both the Pyramid Lake and Walker Lake reservations. Although Dodge was sympathetic to the Paiutes, he carried out basic governmental policy that consisted of placing Indians on reservations. Official recognition of the Pyramid Lake Reservation suffered many setbacks, and it was not fully recognized until 1874, when a presidential decree solidified its existence.

Paiutes in Nevada who were not willing to settle on reservations were not free to roam; Fort Churchill on the Carson River, established after the Pyramid Lake War, presented an armed force that watched over their activities. Bands such as Winnemucca's were not comfortable living in Nevada under the watchful eye of Fort Churchill, and considered the Pyramid Lake Reservation too vulnerable to this military force. Sparsely settled southeastern Oregon lured Paiutes in search of game and fish, while volunteer and regular troops in Nevada pacified the more belligerent bands.<sup>15</sup> Many bands of Northern Paiutes were already residing in southeastern Oregon, and their presence offered encouragement to Pyramid Lake Paiutes to move north.<sup>16</sup>

Two groups of Northern Paiute-speaking Indians in southeastern Oregon were the Yahooskins and the Walpapis. These two freely roaming bands were designated as Snake Indians by the first whites to come into contact with them. The Yahooskins and Walpapis, however, were Northern Paiute bands who had come from Surprise Valley and Warner Valley in southern Oregon and northern California, and were closely related to the Pyramid Lake Paiutes.

The Yahooskins resided primarily around the Goose Lake basin, hunting in the western Warner Mountains. The Walpapis, owning a large number of horses, were a more mobile band that ranged throughout the Silver-Summer Lakes region between 1859 and 1867, led by an infamous and warlike leader named Paulina. Although these portions of Oregon were relatively isolated, a north-south wagon road was constructed in 1859 to link Yreka, California, to

southeastern Oregon and Washington in order to service the Canyon City gold strikes. This wagon road passed through the Sprague and Summer Lake valleys, in the heart of Yahooskin and Walpapi land, and travelers along it increasingly complained of Indian attacks.

Because of the mounting number of attacks by predatory bands, and the



Warren Wasson, the first Indian Agent for Nevada Territory. (*Nevada Historical Society*)



continuing desire to place all Indians onto reservations, government emissaries ventured out to conclude treaties with bands such as the Yahooskins and Walpapis, beginning in 1864.<sup>17</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Drew of Fort Klamath was ordered in July of 1864 to complete treaties with the troublesome Oregon bands. Eventually most of the Indians came into Fort Klamath and signed treaties, and as a result both the Yahooskins and the Walpapis were convinced to move onto the Klamath Reservation in Oregon by August of 1865.

Meanwhile in Nevada, soon after the Pyramid Lake and Walker Lake reservations were established and Paiutes in large numbers were convinced to reside on them, suffering began. The reservations were created in the understanding that they would hold only approximately one quarter of the Indian population of northwestern Nevada. Most of the Paiutes who inhabited the two reservations lived a hand-to-mouth existence; farming operations had not begun as the agents had hoped, and many Indians began to work for nearby whites in menial, poorly paid jobs. Soon reservation populations declined as many Paiutes drifted away in search of a more satisfying life style. Not only was the original Pyramid Lake Reservation unable to support its inhabitants, parts of it were taken away from the Indians. The land surrounding and including present-day Wadsworth, originally part of the reservation, was removed in 1865 to be sold to white settlers in preparation for the transcontinental railroad. Indian dissatisfaction in Nevada was extremely high by 1865, and war between whites and Indians appeared likely.

In the spring of 1865 army captain Almond Wells attacked a band of Paiutes encamped at Mud Lake, near Pyramid Lake, in reprisal for their theft of cattle from white ranchers. Wells was pressured by the ranchers to punish the menacing Indians, and the result was a massacre of mostly women and children at Mud Lake. Soon after, a few whites were killed in an apparent reprisal at the Walker Lake Reservation to the south.<sup>18</sup> A virtual war soon developed between whites and Indians in northern Nevada and parts of southern Oregon.

Trouble had been brewing for some time in southern Oregon and southwestern Idaho, as well as in northwestern Nevada. The Paiutes at Fort Klamath had grown restless and dissatisfied with their new home, and by early 1866 Paulina had taken his band of Walpapis off the reservation, creating apprehension among whites and Indians alike. With Paulina's reputation for raiding and stealing, his departure from the reservation caused a panic. The Yahooskin band at Fort Klamath was so afraid that Paulina might return to attack those on the reservation that they, too, decided to abandon Fort Klamath.<sup>19</sup> Paiutes from the Humboldt and Quinn river areas, as well as many in other parts of southern Oregon and southwestern Idaho, attacked white settlements throughout the northern Great Basin region, fighting detachments of army units from various military camps in the area.

The ensuing war was especially brutal, as civilians as well as combatants on both sides suffered. White settlers affected by the conflict pressured various

army posts to conclude the war and punish the Indians. Governor George L. Woods of Oregon in 1866 made a plea to the commander of the Military Division of the Pacific, General Henry Halleck, to put an end to the continued attacks upon white settlers and to use Indians against Indians in the struggle.<sup>20</sup> Oregon volunteer units had been fighting the hostile Indians since the spring of 1865, but the volunteers' numbers were too small to deal effectively with the scattered Indian attacks. The volunteers were dismissed in October of 1865, replaced by federal troops from the area. But even with the arrival of these troops, the white military presence in southern Oregon was still limited. Only one company of infantry was stationed at each fort in southern Oregon and northern Nevada, and the size of each company was greatly reduced from regular strength in every case. Although federal troops launched expeditions into the Malheur and the Owyhee river areas, their capacity for aggressive action was limited, as their primary responsibility was to guard the settlements.<sup>21</sup>

In 1866 an aggressive military campaign was launched against the offending Paiutes, led by the famous Indian fighter General George Crook. After numerous campaigns, Crook's troops in May of 1867 moved out of their base at Fort Harney into the Malheur River country in southcentral Oregon, where they engaged various Paiute bands. Under Crook's leadership almost every hostile band had surrendered by 1868, and he placed them, when he could, at various army posts throughout southeastern Oregon. The Indians were to be temporarily under the watchful eye of the military until more permanent arrangements could be made.<sup>22</sup>

In late 1868 orders from the headquarters of the Division of the Pacific specified that all Indians captured in the Owyhee River region were to be moved, forcibly if necessary, to Fort Vancouver in Washington Territory. Although Crook was able to convince some Indians, and force others, to move onto other reservations, his power was not sufficient to carry out these orders completely. A few powerful bands, like one led by a man named We-ah-we-ah, were able to maintain their nomadic life styles. According to a military correspondent for the Division of the Pacific, any removal of Indians at that time would have caused another Indian war, a war that the white troops were not prepared to fight again.<sup>23</sup>

The Paiutes at the Pyramid Lake Reservation continued to suffer. The reservation in 1869 contained no buildings, its boundaries were undefined, there were no records for the agency, no farming operations existed, and white squatters abounded. The reservation agent attempted to remove many of the squatters, but they continued to encroach. With the eventual construction of the Central Pacific Railroad across reservation land in 1868, "wild," or nonreservation, Paiutes were reluctant to move onto the reservation, and many who lived there were ready to leave.

Two bands led by Egan and Oyetes joined Winnemucca and his band at the close of the war. These three Paiute bands, originally from different geographic



Chief Winnemucca of the Northern Paiutes. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

areas, moved south together into Nevada. They, along with many other non-reservation bands, located themselves close to army forts, for protection and occasional handouts of food. The government wanted to collect these bands on reservations, but could not force them to move. The government instead relied on treaty councils to persuade them.

A. B. Meacham, superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon, was unable to remove the Indians through treaty councils as hoped, and so in the late 1860s decided to begin work on a reservation in the Paiutes' native region of south-central Oregon. He reasoned that having the Indians concentrated on a reservation would be better for the interests of both whites and Indians, even if they were not removed from their country. Meacham's proposed reservation was immediately accepted by the secretary of the interior. One month later, President Ulysses S. Grant accepted the proposal; the reservation was established in March 1873, becoming known as Malheur, from the river that passes through the region.

As soon as the Malheur Reservation was created, officials in southern Oregon and northern Nevada began a concerted effort to bring all Indians in the area onto the reservation: "[It is the] intention of this department to eventually locate all the roving and straggling bands in Eastern/Southeastern Oregon which can be induced to settle there. The Indians who should be collected upon this reservation are now a constant source of annoyance to the white settlers."<sup>24</sup> Attempts to gather roving bands in southeast Oregon finally yielded some successes between 1872 and 1875. Winnemucca and his hundred other Paiutes had roamed all over northern Nevada and southern Oregon since the end of the Pyramid Lake War in 1860, but by 1875, there were many more whites in the region, including large numbers of government and military personnel. Winnemucca's band, like other Paiutes, suffered from lack of food, and so agreed to move to the Malheur Reservation in 1875.

By 1877 the government's Indian policy was solidified, and the continued efforts at concentration on reservations became more vigorous. The Malheur Reservation was a convenient place to collect roaming and straggling bands, but the government was unwilling to use military force to collect resistant bands. Although the government doubtless had the power in 1877 to remove any straggling Paiutes forcibly, it chose not to. Perhaps it then saw no need for forced removals that might cause another war, but by the summer of 1878, the need, or excuse, for forced removals was present.

Conditions on most reservations had deteriorated drastically by the late 1870s. Discontent rose to an all-time high at Malheur, as William V. Rinehart replaced the well-liked Samuel Parrish as agent. Rinehart was a political appointee of Grant's in 1876, and the Indians soon grew to despise him. According to Rinehart, the land on which the Indians resided was government land, and not Indian land, as many Indians had previously understood. Because of this view, the new agent treated the Paiutes at Malheur as if they were his wards; he ran



General O. O. Howard, Commander of the Military District of the Columbia.  
(*Nevada Historical Society*)

the reservation with an iron fist, punishing misbehaving Indians often and severely. There was so much dislike for Rinehart among the Malheur Paiutes in the late 1870s that many bands began to leave the reservation.<sup>25</sup> A large number of Malheur Paiutes went east to Steen's Mountain in eastern Oregon, where the rebellious westward-traveling Bannocks later met them.

Conditions for the Bannock Indians on the Fort Hall Reservation in Idaho were similar to those on Malheur. Indians received stingy rations, and generally received poor treatment from their agent. In a visit to the Fort Hall Reservation in 1877 General Crook realized the seriousness of the Bannocks' condition: "Starvation is staring them in the face, and if they wait much longer, they will not be able to fight. They understand the situation, and fully appreciate what is before them."<sup>26</sup> Tensions between the Bannocks and nearby white settlers was high by the late 1870s. The settlers accused the Bannocks of committing a variety of depredations and urged the Fort Hall agent to control them. The Bannocks, in turn, resented the strict control placed over them by the agent and resented also the increasing number of white squatters who were locating themselves upon Bannock land.<sup>27</sup>

After a few fiery exchanges with their white agents, the Bannocks left the reservation, resolved for war. Leadership was assumed by an individual named Buffalo Horn, well known for his military exploits and experience, serving under Crook in the Nez Perce war the previous year. The Bannock war party began by attacking the white settlements outside the reservation in a fit of rage, and determined to head west. Once they reached the Camas Prairie in western Idaho, two bands, tired of the bloodletting and wishing to avoid further armed conflict, returned to the reservation. The remaining warriors numbered 150, with a herd of 600 ponies.<sup>28</sup>

Soon troops were raised from a variety of areas to combat the Indians. A number of pitched battles resulted, with Buffalo Horn being killed on June 8. Now leaderless, the war party attempted to avoid contact with the army and gain recruits from surrounding reservations. The party came to Steen's Mountain, where it was supplemented by a number of disgruntled Paiutes from the Malheur Reservation.<sup>29</sup> Egan's band was one of these groups, and Egan himself assumed leadership of the combined Indian force.

General O. O. Howard, commander of the Military District of the Columbia, took charge of the campaign against the Bannock uprising. Howard was at first unable to move troops from eastern Oregon and Washington to the center of the action because of fear of attacks in these regions. Howard was also unable at this time to enlist the services of any other Indian groups to serve as scouts or auxiliaries. The Warm Springs and Umatilla Indians refused to serve the army as there developed an understanding among many of these tribes that the whole region might go on the warpath if the Bannocks proved successful in any way.<sup>30</sup>

The hostile Indians numbered close to two thousand, with six hundred warriors and the rest noncombatants. The war party consisted of Bannock, Paiute,

Klamath, and Weiser Indians. The destination of the hostiles became the various reservations in central and western Oregon, where further Indian recruits could be obtained. Along the way the Indians killed, burned, and looted all white settlements in their path.

Howard organized a three-pronged attack that would prevent the Indians from crossing the Columbia River, where they hoped to enlist the aid of the Columbia River Indians under Chief Moses. Steamships were placed in the Columbia River, and their cannons devastated any Indians who attempted a crossing. The Indians then ventured to the Umatilla Reservation, where they fought troops under Captain Evan Miles on July 13, sapping much of their energy and supplies. Eventually a treacherous group of Umatilla Indians killed Egan, and the outbreak crumbled from a lack of leadership. The war party broke into a number of smaller war parties that scattered eastward.<sup>31</sup>

The majority of the Paiutes separated from the Bannocks and headed toward the Malheur country, but eventually they traveled to northern Nevada to surrender at various army posts in that country. The majority of the Bannocks retreated to the Fort Hall Reservation to blend in with the peaceful Indians there. Other Bannock groups were rounded up and imprisoned at various army installations across the country. A small group of Bannocks ventured to Montana to join with Sitting Bull's Hunkpapa Sioux, who were viewed as one of the last true "wild" bands of Indians in North America.<sup>32</sup>

General Howard had most of the Paiutes under his control at Camp Harney in southern Oregon, and he continued to capture stragglers and bring them to camp. All Indians under Howard's authority at Camp Harney were treated as prisoners of war as he awaited orders from the Office of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. Preliminary orders came in October of 1878 to collect all Paiutes who had lived on the Malheur Reservation and bring them to Camp Harney. Further, in November came the stunning order to move the guilty Indians from Camp Harney and Fort McDermitt to the Yakima Reservation in Washington.<sup>33</sup> Paiute bands led by Ocheo, Panguitch, Paddy-Cap, Leggins, the late Egan, and Tanwahta were forcibly removed to the Yakima Reservation in Washington in the winter of 1878-79, as punishment for their part in the Bannock War.

The Bannock War provided the United States government with the excuse and opportunity to remove the offending Indians. After the hostilities the army remained a strong presence in the region, and the government utilized the troops to pursue its policies. The depredations committed by the Indians provided the impetus for punishment, and the removal was such punishment. It also implemented the government's policy of concentrating Indian groups. The Yakima Reservation was to be one of a select number of reservations upon which Indian populations would be collected.<sup>34</sup>

The need for punishment was recognized by General Howard, and he agreed with his orders to remove the Indians: "It would have been a reward to misconduct to have given them back the reservation which they had robbed and



deserted when they went to war."<sup>35</sup> In his 1880 annual report, written two years after the Paiute removal, the commissioner of Indian affairs alluded to the fact that the Indians were removed as punishment: "At the close of the war those who had taken part in the hostilities, together with 100 other Paiutes who belonged at Malheur, were removed with their women and children to the Yakima Agency. There remained about 230 Indians, under Chief Ocheo, Winnemucca, and a small group of Weiser Indians who properly belonged at Malheur."<sup>36</sup> The commissioner drew a connection between those who were removed and those who took part in the hostilities. He also claimed that certain Indians "properly belonged" at Malheur. Winnemucca, Ocheo, and the band of Weiser Indians did not take part in the Bannock outbreak, and perhaps this was why the commissioner referred to them as properly belonging at Malheur.

By the time the order to transport the offending Paiutes was finally undertaken, the severe winter of 1878 had fallen over the northwest. The Paiutes were rounded up like animals and forced to march the long and arduous trip to Washington Territory. A soldier at Camp Harney described the procession:

The bucks were all herded off to one side by the soldiers and held up there. The large government wagons were lined up. They had high top covers with doors in the rear ends. The squaws were ordered to get in, this they refused to do. The soldiers grabbed them, dragged them to the wagons and threw them in while the others held the doors. The poor creatures fought like wild cats, kicked, scratched, and screamed. The children were loaded after the others were quieted. It was getting late in the season, some had about 150 miles to their destination, and it must have been terrible. Strange as it may seem, the next year several bucks showed up in hiding in the Blue Mountains. The stockmen secretly killed them whenever found.<sup>37</sup>

Agent William Wilbur at the Yakima Reservation seemed to understand why the Paiutes had been sent to his reservation, which consisted strictly of Yakima Indians: He referred to the new arrivals as prisoners, and treated them as such.<sup>38</sup> The transfer of the Paiutes to Yakima, though directly ordered, was not carefully thought out, and the source of their support was unclear. Wilbur was materially unprepared for the prisoners, having barely enough food and supplies for the Yakima Indians.<sup>39</sup>

The removal of these Paiutes to Yakima as punishment for their participation in the Bannock War was not an isolated event. The commissioner of Indian affairs, E. A. Hayt, in 1879 verbalized the government's need for some kind of penalty for offending Indians:

It is impossible to properly govern a barbarous people like our wilder Indians without being able to inflict some punishment for wrong-doing that shall be a real punishment to the offender. At the present time the military are called upon to suppress insurrections, and chastise, by the penalties and losses of war, those who rebel against the government. These are temporary evils to the Indians, and unless the punishment inflicted is unusually severe the lesson is soon forgotten.<sup>40</sup>





Sarah Winnemucca. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

The Paiute bands that were not removed to Washington continued to roam throughout southern Oregon and northern Nevada. The Malheur Reservation was reopened in late 1878, soon after the Bannock War ended. Rinehart desperately needed to bring Indians onto his reservation in order to maintain his profitable and influential position of Indian agent, but the Paiutes unanimously refused to go back to Malheur. Because of Rinehart's failures and because of pressure from ranchers to open Malheur to white settlement, the reservation was discontinued on December 23, 1880. By 1882 the land was returned to the public domain.<sup>41</sup>

Soon after her people were removed to Yakima, Sarah Winnemucca, Chief Winnemucca's English-speaking daughter, decided to use her influence among the whites to draw attention to her people's plight. With the money she earned as an interpreter at different reservations, Sarah decided in late 1879 to go to San Francisco, and then to Washington, D.C., in January 1880.<sup>42</sup> There, Sarah met with Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz, and later with President Rutherford B. Hayes. Both men wished to end the negative publicity surrounding the Paiute affair, and, in order to pacify her, Schurz assured Sarah that her people could return from Yakima and that all Paiutes would receive land allotments.<sup>43</sup>

Sarah, however, was soon disappointed as no official actions were taken to allow the Paiutes to return home. She grew impatient and resolved to take her case to the American public, traveling to Boston in 1883. Two Boston women were especially inspired by Sarah's speeches: Elizabeth Palmer Peabody and her sister, Mrs. Horace Mann. The sisters helped Sarah obtain speaking engagements throughout the country, and Mrs. Mann provided further help by assisting Sarah in the writing of her autobiography, *Life among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*.<sup>44</sup>

The removal of the Paiutes and Sarah's campaign on their behalf coincided with, and fueled, an Indian-policy reform movement in the United States. Although she died in 1891, Sarah helped propel the crusade into the 1890s. The event, or series of events, that the reformers increasingly focused upon and which captured the attention of the public, was that of forced removal of Indian populations. The long-held government policy of Indian concentration required movement of large groups of Indians, often over long distances. As people began to hear of Indian hardships endured in the execution of this policy, public opinion began to shift toward sympathy for Indians.

Sarah Winnemucca's writings and, more important, the speeches she made on behalf of her people had an immeasurable impact upon public sentiment. Many other Indian leaders also spoke in attempts to help their people. The speeches came from many sources, covering a variety of Indian experiences, but all shared the common goal of touching public sympathy. Sarah's speeches were received by a public that was ready to listen to any eloquent plea, especially from a full-blood Indian.

The Indian reform movement evolved through a number of stages, seeking

varied reforms, some ultimately improving the life of the reservation Indians, others worsening the situation. Often the reformers' goals were contradictory, but all were aimed primarily at "de-Indianizing" the Indians and making them more "American." These goals led to such measures as the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, which gave citizenship to American Indians and parceled out reservation land, giving each head of a family 160 acres of land.<sup>45</sup>

By the early 1890s the Indian reform movement was beginning to lose its widespread public enthusiasm. Although the general public eventually lost interest, the reformers felt they could point to a variety of improvements in the Indian condition. These included health care, decreased alcohol consumption, and a movement toward citizenship that was achieved only in 1924.<sup>46</sup>

Conditions for most Indians by the end of the century, however, were far from what the reformers had envisioned. The Indians did not in general become hard-working individual farmers as hoped. The tribal identity that the reformers tried so hard to eliminate could not be erased so easily. Most Indians, understandably, continued to identify with their tribes. Part of the reason for this continued identification was the hardship that the Indians faced and their need for security. Hundreds of years of tribal organization and identity was also an important factor. In addition, the government itself prolonged tribal aggregation through such policies as group removals and negotiations with tribes as distinct units.

The Northern Paiutes at Yakima were so unhappy with their new home that by the summer of 1882 two hundred of them attempted to escape to Nevada. An agent at Yakima, however, caught them, and sent them back to the reservation. Eventually the Indian Bureau became more lenient toward the Paiutes, or at least looked aside when they attempted to return home. Agent Wilbur's replacement was an agent who did not seem concerned with the loss of Paiute residents on the reservation. Most of the escaped Paiutes roamed around their original lands in southeastern Oregon and northern Nevada, finding temporary homes at army camps such as Fort McDermitt or in towns like Winnemucca.<sup>47</sup> Those who went back to the Pyramid Lake Reservation found that there was little or no room for them there. Other bands, such as Ocheo's, went to Fort Klamath. We-ah-we-ah and his band eventually made their way to the Warm Springs Reservation in northern Oregon, while others journeyed to the Umatilla Reservation, also in northern Oregon. Some went to the Malheur vicinity, eventually receiving allotments near present-day Burns, Oregon. By the fall of 1883 almost all the Paiutes at Yakima had escaped or gained permission to leave. The only remaining Paiutes were Paddy-Cap and about seventy followers who, in 1884, moved to the Duck Valley Reservation, where the group remained.<sup>48</sup>

The Paiute removal of 1879 was designed as a punishment for misbehaving Indians, a punishment that was repeated for other tribes at other times and places. The removal was not an aberration, but had its origins in years of government Indian policy. Conditions in 1879 set the stage: The Paiutes had been

defeated in a general war, and the government authorities in the region were finally strong enough to force them to move. Thus, although the removal was primarily a punishment, it also fit the government's policy of concentrating the Indians on reservations. Public awareness of this removal added momentum to the general movement for reform of Indian policy that was sweeping the eastern United States in the late nineteenth century.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Gae Whitney Canfield, *Sarah Winnemucca of the Northern Paiutes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 155.

<sup>2</sup>Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846-1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 36.

<sup>3</sup>Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1861 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 646-47.

<sup>4</sup>Julian H. Steward and Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin, *Paiute Indians*, Vol. III: *The Northern Paiute Indians*, David Agee Horr, ed. (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1974), 127.

<sup>5</sup>Smithsonian Institution, *Handbook of North American Indians, Great Basin*, Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986), 98.

<sup>6</sup>Julian Steward, "The Foundations of Basin-Plateau Shoshonean Society," in Earl Swanson, *Languages and Cultures of Western North America* (Pocatello: Idaho State University Press, 1970), 115.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>8</sup>Steward and Wheeler-Voegelin, *Paiute Indians*, 18.

<sup>9</sup>Pamela J. Brink, "The Pyramid Lake Paiutes of Nevada" (M.A. thesis, University of Michigan, 1963), 42.

<sup>10</sup>Steward, "The Foundations of Basin-Plateau Shoshonean Society," 116.

<sup>11</sup>Steward and Wheeler-Voegelin, *Paiute Indians*, 60.

<sup>12</sup>Steward, "The Foundations of Basin-Plateau Shoshonean Society," 143.

<sup>13</sup>Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, Nevada Superintendency, 1861 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office).

<sup>14</sup>Nellie Shaw Harnar, *The Indians of Pyramid Lake* (Sparks, Nevada: Dave's Publishing, 1974), 110.

<sup>15</sup>George Brimlow, "The Life of Sarah Winnemucca," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* (June 1952), 117.

<sup>16</sup>Harnar, *Indians of Pyramid Lake*, 104-5.

<sup>17</sup>Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin, "The Northern Paiute of Central Oregon: A Chapter in Treaty Making," *Ethnohistory* (Spring 1955), 120.

<sup>18</sup>Alfred Street Hamlin, "The Federal Policy in Relation to the Nevada Indian" (M.A. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1918), 51.

<sup>19</sup>Wheeler-Voegelin, "Northern Paiute of Central Oregon," 128.

<sup>20</sup>Malheur County Historical Society, *Malheur County History* (n.p.: Taylor Publishing Co., 1988), 44; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Oregon*, vol. II (San Francisco: The History Company, Publishers, 1888), 530-31.

<sup>21</sup>Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Oregon* (San Francisco: The Historical Company, Publishers, 1888), 518.

<sup>22</sup>George Crook, *Autobiography of General George Crook*, Martin F. Schmitt, ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), 308-10.

<sup>23</sup>Bancroft, *History of Oregon*, 540.

<sup>24</sup>Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 435.

<sup>25</sup>Canfield, *Sarah Winnemucca*, 155.

<sup>26</sup>Brigham Madsen, *The Bannock of Idaho* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1958), 7.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 228

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>Malheur County Historical Society, *Malheur County History*, 46-47.

<sup>30</sup>J. F. Santee, "Egan of the Paiutes," *Washington Historical Quarterly*, 25 (January 1935), 18.

<sup>31</sup>Edwin Masson, "The Bannock-Piute War of 1878, Letters of Major Edwin Masson," *Journal of the West*, 11:1 (January 1972), 140-41.

<sup>32</sup>Madsen, *The Bannock of Idaho*, 220.

<sup>33</sup>Oliver O. Howard, *My Life and Experiences among Our Hostile Indians* (Hartford, Conn.: A. D. Worthington and Co., 1907), 244-45.

<sup>34</sup>Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1876 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 386.

<sup>35</sup>Howard, *My Life and Experiences*, 419.

<sup>36</sup>Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1880 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 46.

<sup>37</sup>Thomas Morgan, *My Story of the Last Indian War in the Northwest, The Bannock, Piute, Yakima, Sheepstealer Tribes, 1878-1879* (Forest Grove, Oregon: The News Times Publishing Co., 1954), 10-11.

<sup>38</sup>Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, Yakima Reservation, 1881 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 174.

<sup>39</sup>Dorothy Morrison, *Chief Sarah: Sarah Winnemucca's Fight for Indian Rights* (New York: McClelland and Stewart, 1980), 120.

<sup>40</sup>Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1880 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 140-141.

<sup>41</sup>Ruth Herman, *The Paiutes of Pyramid Lake* (New York: Harlan Young Press, 1972), 113.

<sup>42</sup>Canfield, *Sarah Winnemucca*, 158.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup>Kathleen C. Turner, *Red Men Calling on the Great Father* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), 177.

<sup>45</sup>Loring Benson Priest, *Uncle Sam's Stepchildren: The Reformation of United States Indian Policy, 1865-1887* (New York: Octagon Books, 1969), 212; Francis Paul Prucha, comp., *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian,"* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973).

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, Yakima Reservation, 1880 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office).

<sup>48</sup>George Brimlow, *The Bannock War* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1938), 196.