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THE WESTERN SHOSHONES OF SMOKY VALLEY, NEVADA, 1900–1940

Steven J. Crum

Up to the early twentieth century, Big Smoky Valley in central Nevada had one of the largest populations of Western Shoshones in the Great Basin. In 1873 Levi Gheen, federal agent (farmer-in-charge) for the Shoshones in Nevada, estimated 150 Shoshones in the valley. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) identified 123 living there in 1917.¹ In fact, Smoky Valley, as it is popularly called, had the second largest number of Western Shoshones in 1917. Only the Duck Valley Reservation in northeastern Nevada had a larger community of Shoshones. But while the valley had the second largest number in 1917, this sizable population no longer exists. There are probably fewer than ten Shoshones living in the valley today. Three major reasons can be identified to explain why nearly all the Smoky Valley Shoshones left their native valley and moved elsewhere in Nevada in the first half of the twentieth century: the creation of national forests, the decline of the mining economy in central Nevada, and the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934. It must be stressed that none of these reasons was connected to a revived Indian removal policy.

In the name of conservation, Theodore Roosevelt's presidential administration set aside millions of acres of land as national forest land in 1907. Specifically, in March 1907, his administration created twenty-one new national forests in five western states.² In central Nevada alone, the government created the Toiyabe National Forest, consisting of 2.1 million acres and covering much of the area between Austin and Tonopah. It included the mountain ranges lying between the Reese River Valley, Big Smoky Valley, and the Monitor Valley.

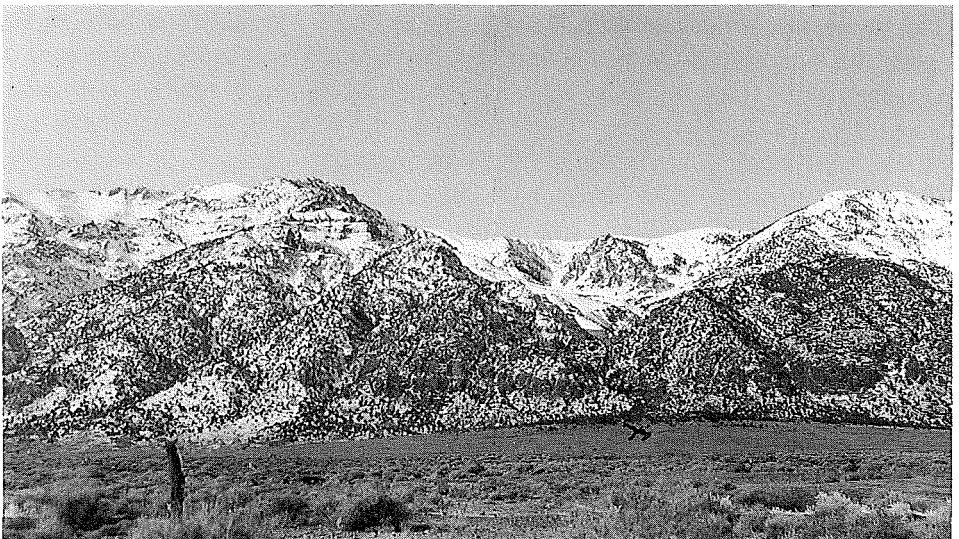
The creation of the new forests in 1907 happened so quickly that critics called them "midnight reserves." One historian called Roosevelt's forest policy a "massive land grab."³ Certainly, his administration did not bother to determine if people currently lived on the land set aside as national forests.

The creation of the Toiyabe National Forest in central Nevada disrupted the

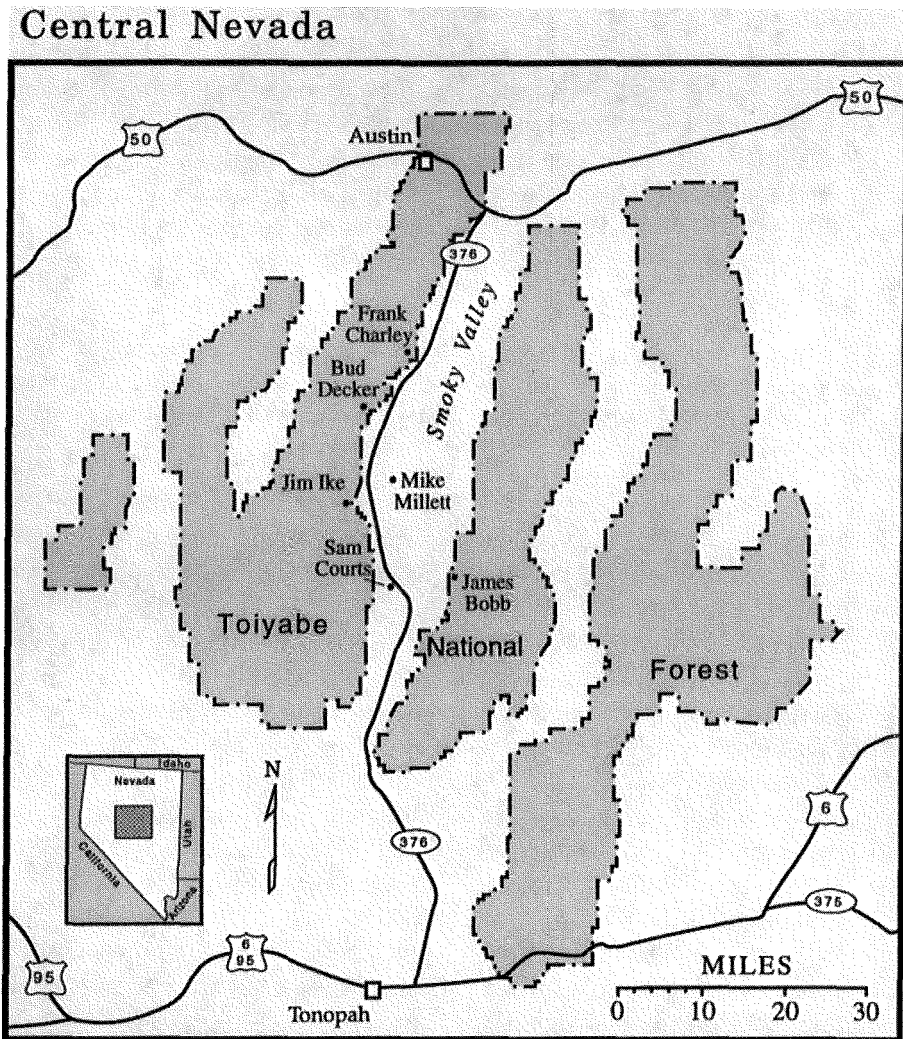
Steven J. Crum is a faculty member in the Department of Native American Studies at the University of California, Davis. A specialist in the history of Native Americans in higher education and also in the history of the Western Shoshones of the Great Basin, he has written a book on Western Shoshone history that will be published by the University of Utah Press in 1994.

Smoky Valley Shoshones' lifestyle in several ways. The Shoshones could no longer hunt in the newly created forest. Hunting deer and other animals in the mountains surrounding Smoky Valley had been part of their ancestral way of life. Some Shoshones later remarked that the "wild games [*sic*] were opened but now it is in the hands of the law and closed on us."⁴ Also, the Shoshones could no longer graze their horses in the forest unless they paid a grazing fee. Living at a low economic subsistence level, the Shoshones could not muster enough funds to pay the fees. Therefore forest officials killed Shoshone-owned horses. The Shoshones also commented on this action later by stating: "When the forest reserve came we were taxed for our horses[;] when we were not able to pay taxes in later times the reserve man came and killed all of our horses."⁵ Since they could no longer survive entirely on traditional hunting and gathering, the Shoshones adopted herding horses as a new economic mode of existence at the turn of the century. They captured, tamed, and branded wild horses and sold some for profit. They kept others as stock animals and grazed them in the foothills near Smoky Valley at the time the forest was created.⁶ Third, those Shoshone families who lived inside the boundaries of the new forest land were told that they could not remain there unless they provided proof of continuous and permanent occupancy predating the formation of the forest land in 1907. These Shoshones had established small homesteads and grew gardens for subsistence purposes. On occasion they sold their surplus to the whites. One Shoshone acquired the name "Rutabaga" after selling this root vegetable to the settlers in Belmont, Nevada. His son was called Rutabaga Bobb.⁷ Now they were told to leave.

The creation of the Toiyabe National Forest stunned the Shoshones in central



A view of the Smoky Valley. (Boak Collection, Nevada Historical Society)



The federal government created the Toiyabe National Forest in 1907. The Indian allotments were established in Smoky Valley from 1919 to the mid-1920s.

Nevada. They now became fully aware that the federal government did not acknowledge their ownership of the land. Those families living inside the forest boundaries, along the foothills of Smoky Valley and other places, became classified as aliens with no land rights, even though their ancestors had lived on the land since time immemorial. Some Shoshones decided that, like the Anglo-American settlers, they must secure title to plots of land by filing the necessary paperwork. Thus, over a fifteen year period, from 1910 to the mid-1920s, dozens of Shoshone families throughout central Nevada, including those in Smoky Valley, filed for homesteads, both inside and near the Toiyabe National Forest.⁸

The process of applying for homesteads was a difficult one for the Shoshones.

They had to deal with three separate federal agencies: the General Land Office, the Forest Service, and the Office of Indian Affairs (today's BIA). The Shoshones had to convince these agencies that they had occupied their dwelling places on a more-or-less permanent basis up to the present. Even further, after filing for specific plots, they had to prove that they were worthy of land ownership by making improvements.⁹ During the application period, various Shoshones testified that they had lived at particular places for more than one generation. Bud Decker stated: "My maternal grandfather had land. We stayed there."¹⁰ Another Shoshone, James Bobb, stressed:

Prior to my living on the land, it was occupied and used by my Grandmother. When I came and took up residence on the land, she moved to Round Mountain. My Grandfather who is dead lived with my Grandmother on the land before Round Mountain was discovered [1866] . . . My Mother was born on the land.¹¹

The above federal agencies examined all the Shoshone applications for land. It rejected some because the applicants did not meet the criteria of having lived in particular places or having improved the land. But they had solid evidence that other Shoshones were entitled to land allotments. From 1919 to 1925, and even later in one instance, the government established fourteen allotments in central Nevada for Shoshone heads of household. Six were located in Smoky Valley. Two persons, Mike Millett and Sam Courts, acquired 160-acre allotments outside, but near the Toiyabe National Forest. The remaining four were much smaller allotments inside the forest: James Bobb (80 acres), Frank Charley (37 acres), Bud Decker (54 acres), and Jim Ike (70 acres).¹² These were created under the authority of the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887 which allowed some Indians to secure title to individual allotments on so-called public domain land. In all, the Shoshones of Smoky Valley acquired title to 561 acres, of which 241 were located inside the forest boundaries. This was a small figure compared to the 2.1 million acres of land the government set aside when it established the Toiyabe National Forest in central Nevada.

It appears that few if any Shoshones left Smoky Valley immediately after the formation of the Forest. However, life in general became more difficult. The Indians' hunting activities were now restricted. Some lost their stock horses because of the new grazing regulations. Most Shoshones had no legal title to land since they could not secure title to land allotments. Certainly, the creation of the Forest only worsened the Shoshones' already sparse economic existence. One Smoky Valley Shoshone, James X Darrough, summed up the hard times in the following words in 1917: "One thing I would like to know about livestock. If feller has ten horses on range and these Forestrys make us pay the grazing fee on it. They know well the Indians always having a hard time to get their money to live on it."¹³ In the end, some Shoshones left Smoky Valley for good in the 1920s as a result of forest policy.

The second factor that pressured some Shoshones into leaving was the decline

of the mining economy in central Nevada. During the boom various companies discovered and extracted deposits of silver and other mineral wealth near Round Mountain and Manhattan, two white communities on the east side of Smoky Valley. The Shoshones became a principal labor force in these mines. Of the workers employed by the Round Mountain Mining Company, 60 percent of them were Native American, mostly Shoshones of central Nevada with some Paiutes from western Nevada. The company paid the Indians five or six dollars per day.¹⁴

The Shoshones turned to wage labor in increasing numbers because of the need for food and other basic necessities. It must be remembered that they could no longer hunt wild game on forest land. Additionally, they had to pay a fee to hunt elsewhere in central Nevada when the state amended its hunting and fishing laws in 1909. The amendments specified that all non-citizens of the United States had to pay \$25 annually to secure hunting and fishing licenses. Although the 1909 law never mentioned the natives in Nevada, it affected them directly, for nearly all were not U.S. citizens at this time (Indians in general did not become citizens until 1924). Thus, the Indians, including those in Smoky Valley, had to purchase their hunting licenses.¹⁵ Clearly wage labor as miners was essential for many to subsist.

The Shoshones also found new kinds of employment associated with the mining boom. Some carried the U.S. mail from Tybo to Reveille in central Nevada. Others sold native piñon wood to the white settlers. A few became mining prospectors by filing for their own mining claims.¹⁶ These new sources of income made it possible for the Shoshones to remain in Smoky Valley.

Unfortunately, central Nevada experienced the boom-bust cycle commonly associated with mining. From 1920 to the mid-1930s the mining industry declined.¹⁷ Most mining companies shut down, part of the white population moved elsewhere, and jobs withered away. A large number of the Shoshone population was left jobless in the 1920s. The fact that their native economy had already been disrupted compounded their plight. The Shoshones responded to their worsened economic situation in one of three ways: some left Smoky Valley temporarily to seek jobs elsewhere; a few others moved away permanently; but most remained and turned to the limited jobs available on the white-owned ranches in the valley.

In the second half of the 1920s, at least nine young men temporarily left Smoky Valley at different times and secured employment in Death Valley, California, some 140 miles to the south. Along with other Indians and a larger number of whites, they helped build the well-known Scotty's Castle, constructed between 1926 and 1931. Some built fences using concrete poles, whereas others worked as carpenters. All the Indian employees created their own camp separate from the whites. They lived in tents and some brought their families with them. Besides those Shoshones from Smoky Valley, the camps included some from Beatty, Nevada and Death Valley itself. In addition, some

Paiutes came from Lone Pine, California. The Smoky Valley Shoshones and others left Scotty's Castle around March of each year and returned home when the temperature became too hot.¹⁸

Some Shoshone families permanently left Smoky Valley in 1926 and moved to the Walker River Reservation in western Nevada. The government established this reservation for the Northern Paiutes in the mid-nineteenth century, located 180 road miles away from Smoky Valley. Some Shoshones moved there at the invitation of BIA superintendent Ray Parrett. In 1925 the area of central Nevada had fallen under his jurisdiction, and he became fully aware of the Shoshones' economic plight. Parrett therefore invited them to move to Walker River where life might become easier. Forty-nine Shoshones accepted his invitation. Twelve came from Smoky Valley, including Bud Decker, James Darrough, and Rutabaga Bobb. Decker and Darrough secured title to small, 20-acre allotments. Yet, life did not become better at Walker River because the Paiutes already occupied much of the land. In 1932 the Shoshones formed an organization, drafted a petition, and asked for land, cattle, and farm implements so they could become self-sufficient.¹⁹

Most Shoshones, however, did not leave Smoky Valley at this time. When the BIA took a census of the Shoshone population in central Nevada in 1932, it identified sixty-nine individuals living in Smoky Valley and another fifty-two living in the white community of Round Mountain. Many Shoshones had found jobs on the white-owned ranches in the late 1920s and early '30s. The men worked as cowboys and ranchhands, and the women as housemaids and gar-



The Indian Agency building on the Walker River Reservation at Schurz. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

deners. Others continued to hold onto mining and related jobs that were gradually disappearing.²⁰

Despite the fact that times had become difficult, the Smoky Valley Shoshones continued to practice their native ways. They still held the traditional round dances and hand games. These two activities were part of an annual gathering held in late August at Blue Springs near Millett, Nevada in Smoky Valley. The gathering became labeled the "fandango" which is a Spanish word for celebration or festivity. As their ancestors had done, the Shoshones held the fandango for two significant reasons: to thank the creator for bringing forth native foods, including the pine nuts, and "for the purpose of gathering to have a good time among themselves."²¹ The Indians placed their tents in a circle with a pole in the middle of the arena where they held their traditional round dances. Joe Gilbert, Jim Farrington, and other noted singers of central Nevada sang the traditional songs from dusk to dawn for five nights. In the early years of this century, the Smoky Valley Shoshones added new American activities to the fandango, including card games, horse races, and even baseball games played between all-Shoshone teams of the larger region.²²

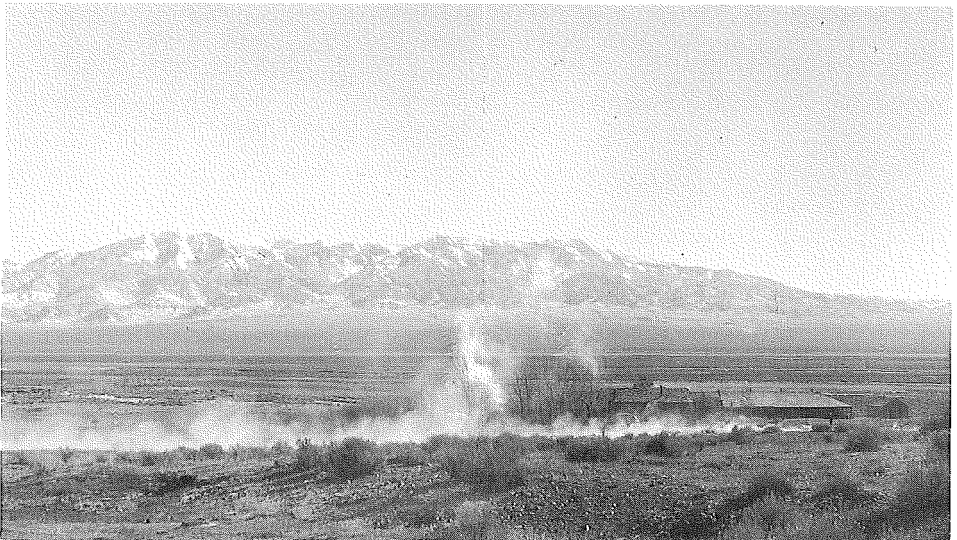


A stick game played during a fandango on the Duck Valley Reservation at Owyhee in the 1940s. (Velma Truett photo, Nevada Historical Society)

The Smoky Valley Shoshones also remained active in native politics in the late 1920s and early 1930s. In November 1931, some of them traveled over the mountains to Austin for a Shoshone political meeting. They chose Alex Gilbert of Austin as the new chief of central Nevada. They also selected six subchiefs including three from Smoky Valley: Mike Millett, Oscar Mike, and John Sunday.²³ These Shoshones had been practicing hereditary leadership for decades in recognition of the noted nineteenth-century leader, Chief Tutuwa of Reese River. When Tutuwa died in 1897 he was succeeded by his son Tom Tutuwa. When Tom died in 1918 he was replaced by his nephew Joe Gilbert, the father of Alex Gilbert. Joe had been chosen as the chief some years earlier, in 1919, when the Shoshones held their annual fandango at Blue Springs in Smoky Valley.²⁴

There was however a third major factor which finally induced most of the remaining Shoshones to leave their native valley. This was the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934. This congressional act was part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal for the Native Americans. It sought to improve the living conditions of the tribes across the country. The IRA had many provisions, including the following: It provided funds to purchase new reservation land for those who had never lived on reservations; it allowed the tribes to organize tribal governments with constitutions, by-laws, and tribal charters; and it created a revolving credit loan fund to allow the tribes to secure loans to purchase cattle and other essentials for economic self-sufficiency.²⁵

The first group of Western Shoshones of central Nevada to hear about the IRA were those who had earlier settled on the Walker River Reservation. They lis-



A view of the Farington Ranch in the Smoky Valley in the 1940s. (*Boak Collection, Nevada Historical Society*)

tened to BIA officials discuss the provisions of the act with the Walker River Paiutes in late 1934. The Shoshones became enthusiastic about the IRA and favored it for at least two reasons. First, they liked the land provision which could possibly bring into existence a new Shoshone reservation somewhere in central Nevada. It must be remembered that they never considered Walker River as their home, and they wanted to leave. To them, the IRA was a means to return to Shoshone country. Second, they favored the revolving loan fund provision which could help them purchase cattle and other essentials.²⁶

Inspired by the reorganization talks, the Shoshones at Walker River created a five member council called the Nye County Shoshone Committee (NCSC). They gave their organization this name because they had come from Nye County, which included the Reese River Valley, Smoky Valley, and Monitor Valley. Additionally, they wanted to return to this area and live on a new IRA reservation. The committee included three members native to Smoky Valley: James Darrrough, Bud Decker, and Willie Bobb.²⁷

Over the next two years the NCSC wrote letters to Senator Key Pittman of Nevada and officials of the BIA, asking for government support. The committee emphasized the depressed economy in central Nevada and that the only available jobs were temporary summer haying jobs with minimal pay. It therefore wanted the federal government to purchase land, cattle, horses, and tools for the Shoshones. On the subject of a location the committee favored a reservation in the Reese River Valley in central Nevada because this valley was considered to be the best land for cattle ranching. The members asserted that "we think it is the best cattle country," that "Reese River is picked by most of the Indians," and that "Reese River is going to be our Home Sweet Home."²⁸

The committee rejected other central Nevada locations considered less suitable for cattle. They vetoed Smoky Valley and wrote: "Smoky Valley is no good nothing but alkli [*sic*] country not cattle country . . . we are not going where we do not want to go where we can not make our living."²⁹ Of course, three of the five committee members ruled out their former native place because of the vivid memories of the economic decline of a decade earlier. They now viewed the Reese River Valley, over the mountain range west of Smoky Valley, as a better area for future economic existence. Unlike Smoky Valley, Reese River had a small river that flowed for much of the year along with some good range land.

BIA officials in Nevada responded to the NCSC. Since no funds were available under the IRA's land acquisition program in 1935, Superintendent Ray Parrett of Walker River turned to another New Deal agency, the Submarginal Land Program. The submarginal division sought to purchase ten to twelve thousand acres of reservation in Reese River. The objective was to create one large reservation which could be the future home for all the Shoshone native to central Nevada. However, because of limited funds, no land was purchased in 1935.³⁰

In October 1935 the region of central Nevada fell under a new BIA jurisdiction, the Carson Indian Agency headed by Superintendent Alida Bowler. She inher-

ited the efforts started by the NCSC, Superintendent Parrett, and the submarginal program. Bowler assumed that the NCSC was representative of all the Shoshones of central Nevada. Because the committee wanted land in Reese River, she assumed that the rest of the Shoshones still living in central Nevada also favored this proposition. To her, a centralized Indian community would make it possible for the BIA to provide adequate services for the Shoshones.³¹

Finally, in 1936, Congress appropriated funds for the IRA's land acquisition program, and the BIA channeled \$65,000 to acquire land in Reese River. But before any action was taken, the Shoshones still living in Smoky Valley opposed the plan for only one reservation in central Nevada. Danny Millett (Dan Mike) wrote to Bowler, stressing that the Shoshones of Smoky Valley wanted reservation land in their own ancestral area. They did not want to move to Reese River. He asked if Bowler could come to Smoky Valley and listen to Shoshone concerns.³²

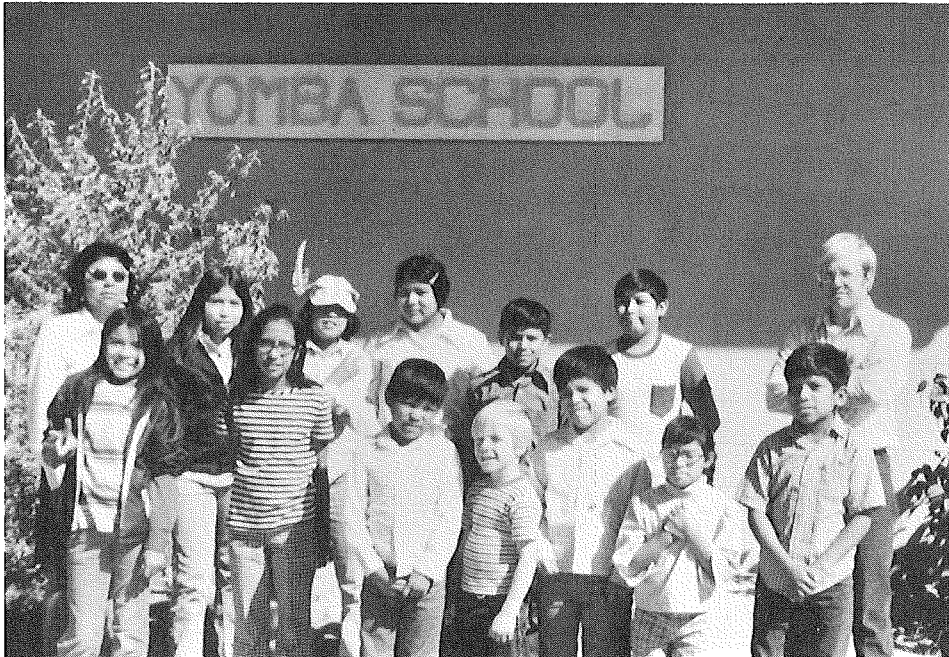
Bowler responded to Millett and told him that the government's plan to acquire land in the Reese River Valley was drawn up earlier before central Nevada fell under her jurisdiction. She pointed out that her agency was "led to believe" that the NCSC was the representative body of all Shoshones in Nye County, and that all the Shoshones of central Nevada wanted to move to Reese River. She supported Millett's idea of having a meeting with the Shoshones of Smoky Valley to discuss the subject of additional reservation land.³³

In September 1936 Superintendent Bowler held a meeting with thirty-four Shoshones at Blue Springs, the place where they held their annual fandango in Smoky Valley. These Shoshones were not familiar with the IRA, so Bowler explained the provisions of the act, including the land acquisition clause. Although the Shoshones favored the IRA, they stressed no desire to move to Reese River. Instead, they wanted the government to purchase for them two white-owned ranches in Smoky Valley. The minutes of the meeting reported that the "Smoky Valley Indians preferred to have land in that valley rather than move into Reese River Valley." Bowler then told them it would be better if they could organize in "larger groups," implying that they should move to Reese River and that a reservation should not be established in Smoky Valley. If the Shoshones merged into larger groups, she maintained, the government could provide them with services, including health care, educational benefits, and extension services. Finally, sensing that the Smoky Valley Shoshones would not move to Reese River, Bowler told them that a government agent would inspect the two ranches they desired as reservation land.³⁴

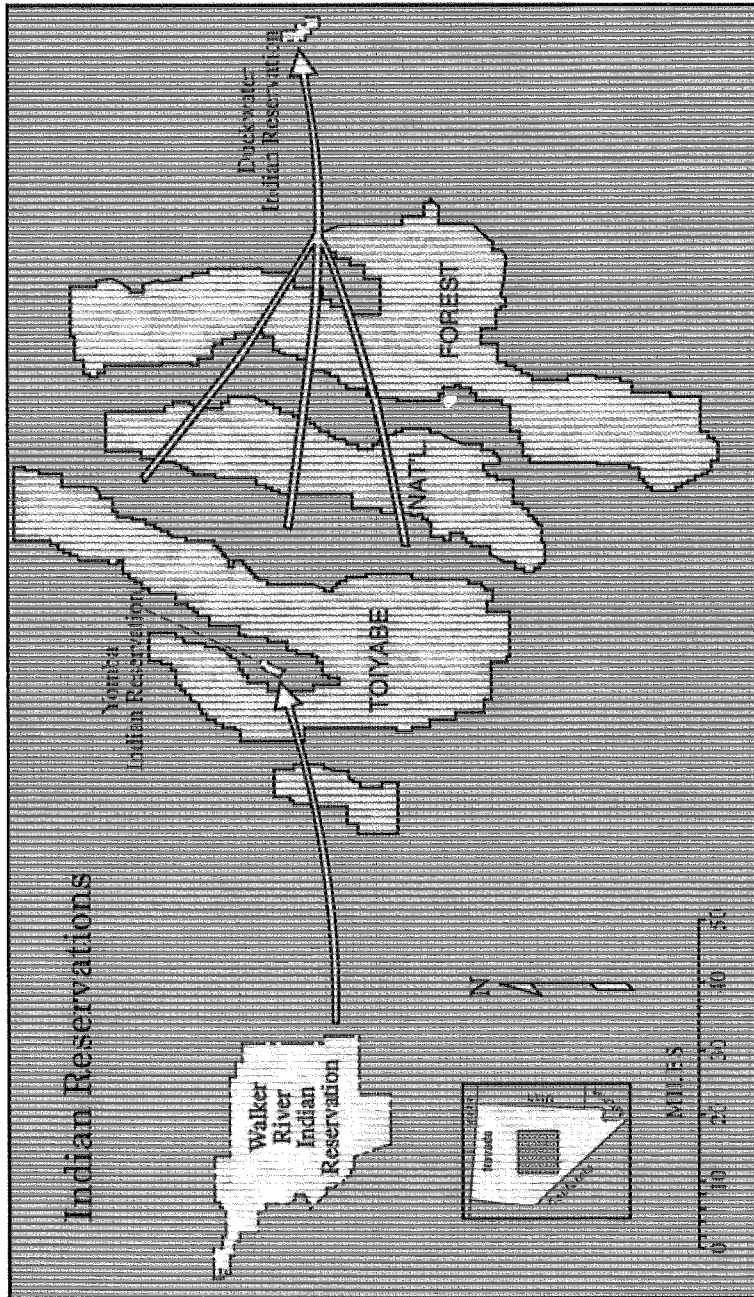
Later, Douglas Clark, a BIA land agent, inspected Smoky Valley and recommended that reservation land not be purchased. He gave several reasons why, including the following: There was too much alkaline soil in the valley which would reduce crop yield; the valley was unsuitable for cattle grazing because the foothills were too rugged and steep and lacked natural vegetation; there was

undesirable plant growth in some places, such as the poisonous loco weed, harmful to cattle; a centralized reservation could not be created because the white-owned ranches considered for purchase were too far apart in the sixty-mile-long valley; the BIA could not afford the ranches because they were too expensive, one totalling \$59,000; and it would be unwise to purchase reservation land in Smoky Valley for only a handful of the larger number of Shoshones who lived in central Nevada, or Nye County. Clark listed only one advantage the valley had over the Reese River Valley. Its elevation was 1,200 feet lower than the Reese River Valley with a longer growing season. But Clark concluded his report by writing that "the purchase of land in Big Smoky Valley is not favored." Therefore, the BIA took no action, and no reservation was ever created in the valley.³⁵

In the end, the BIA created a new reservation in the Reese River Valley when it purchased two white-owned ranches in 1937. The following year sixteen Shoshone families moved to the new reservation which was named the Yomba Reservation (*yampa* [Yomba] is the Shoshone word for wild carrot, found in abundance in the valley). These families were chosen by the NCSC and Superintendent Bowler. Later, five other families moved to Reese River when the BIA purchased two more ranches in 1940 and 1941. The entire reservation totalled



School children on the Yomba Reservation in the Reese River Valley in the 1970s. (Nevada Historical Society)



Movement of Shoshones after the creation of the Yomba and Duckwater Indian Reservations in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

4,681 acres by the early 1940s with a population of twenty-one families or 107 individuals.³⁶

In examining the new Yomba Reservation population, the presence of former Smoky Valley Shoshones became readily apparent. Nearly all who had lived earlier at Walker River, members of the NCSC, moved to Yomba. They brought with them their families and friends. When the BIA conducted a census of the reservation in 1940, it identified twenty-four out of 107 individuals who were born in Smoky Valley. When the Yomba Reservation created its first tribal council under the IRA in 1940, four of the six members had been native to Smoky Valley: James Bobb, Willie Bobb, Wixon Charley, and Bud Decker. Of course, these Shoshones favored their new home because they wanted to secure reservation land and government funds. Having secured IRA revolving credit loan funds, they boosted their cattle herds from 300 to 1,554 between 1938 and 1944. They had also returned to ancestral Shoshone country in central Nevada. Their economic existence was at least better than the earlier days when they had lived in Smoky Valley.³⁷

The remaining number of Smoky Valley Shoshones living in their native valley finally accepted the fact that the government would not create a reservation for them. However, because times were still hard in Smoky Valley, they now wanted reservation land and funds under the IRA. For this reason, they considered leaving their valley and moving elsewhere in central Nevada, if the government would purchase land for them. The first to suggest this idea were Brownie Sam and Wagon Johnnie, who worked as ranch hands on the Florio Ranch in the Duckwater Valley, some 80 miles east of Smoky Valley. In April 1937 their employer, Angelo Florio, lost all his sheep after a blizzard. Unable to pay enough on the mortgage of his ranch, he suggested to Sam and Johnnie that perhaps the government could purchase the ranch for the Indians. Immediately, the two became excited about the possibility of a new reservation in Duckwater since the valley had natural spring water and grazing land. Sam traveled throughout central Nevada generating enthusiasm for Duckwater. He gained the support of another Smoky Valley Shoshone, Raymond Graham, who was educated and spoke fluent English. These Shoshones then turned to Superintendent Alida Bowler of the Carson Agency.³⁸

In late April and May 1937 Bowler held two meetings with about fifty Shoshones, the majority coming from Smoky Valley, the rest from Duckwater and other places in central and east-central Nevada. In the first meeting they provided Bowler a list of nine white-owned ranches that could be purchased in the Duckwater Valley, including the Florio. She was in favor of their request but informed them the BIA would have to inspect the ranches before making any decision. In the second meeting Bowler encouraged the Shoshones to organize a committee to urge Nevada congressmen to pressure Congress into providing funds for the IRA land acquisition program. Following her suggestion, they

organized the "Committee of Southern Shoshone Indians of Nevada." It consisted of nine members with six from Smoky Valley: Willie Smith, Raymond Graham, Mike Millett, Henry Sam, Brownie Sam, and Wagon Johnnie. Over the next three years the committee wrote letters to federal offices, asking that the government provide funds for a new reservation in Duckwater.³⁹

Because of limited funds, the BIA purchased only two ranches in 1940 and incorporated them as the Duckwater Reservation. Later, with the purchase of a third ranch, the entire reservation totalled 3,642 acres. The Committee and the Carson Agency selected the twenty families to move to Duckwater. Of the above number, twelve families came from Smoky Valley: Wagon Johnnie, Charlie Mike, Raymond Graham, Louie Sam, Danny Millett, Weaver Millett, Willie Smith, Oliver Ike, Frank Sam, Brownie Sam, Henry Sam, and Gene Boots. As in Reese River, the Smoky Valley presence became highly visible on the new Duckwater Reservation. When the reservation organized its first IRA tribal government in 1941, four of the five council members were former residents of Smoky Valley: Wagon Johnnie, Raymond Graham, Brownie Sam, and Johnnie Charles. With the use of IRA credit funds, the Shoshones at Duckwater acquired a cattle herd of 375 by 1944.⁴⁰

In the end, it was the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934 that pulled nearly all the remaining Shoshones out of Smoky Valley. There were several reasons why they favored the move to Duckwater. The overall economy did not improve in Smoky Valley, except for temporary mining activity after the mid-1930s. However, unpredictable mining jobs were not enough to keep them in the valley. Second, they knew the federal government would not help them if they remained in Smoky Valley. Third, they were fully aware the BIA strongly favored the idea of reservation land in Duckwater. Fourth, by moving to Duckwater and accepting the IRA, their economic being might be improved. As events unfolded, they did receive IRA funds to purchase cattle at their new home. Fifth, they had never lived on a reservation before the passage of the IRA. By becoming reservation Indians, they could at least receive more attention from the BIA. It must be emphasized that the Shoshones of central Nevada were largely ignored by the government in the pre-IRA period. Lastly, their new home in Duckwater was still inside Shoshone country, and only eighty miles from Smoky Valley. Therefore, the decision to move was not a difficult one.

Thus by the early 1940s, Smoky Valley became almost void of its former native Shoshone population. Only a handful, perhaps fewer than ten, remained there after World War II. On occasion, some Shoshones returned to visit the home of their ancestors. One of these persons is Bernice Rogers of Austin who visits the valley regularly, since her current home is just over the mountain range. In the closing decade of this century, the former Big Smoky Valley Shoshones can be found in a number of places in Nevada, including the Duckwater Reservation, the Yomba Reservation, the Elko Colony, the Battle Mountain Colony, and the Fallon Reservation. Even though they no longer live in their native valley, they



School facilities on the Duckwater Reservation in the 1940s. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

have not forgotten their native roots. As a case in point, when the Shoshones settled on the Yomba Reservation in the late 1930s and early 1940s, they brought with them the round dances and handgames (fandango) which had been an important part of their lives earlier at Blue Springs in Smoky Valley.⁴¹

NOTES

¹Levi Gheen to H. A. Morrow, 15 April 1873, Letters Received (LR), Office of Indian Affairs (OIA), (Roll 540, F 955-957), Record Group (RG) 75, National Archives (NA); James E. Jenkins to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (CIA), 1 May 1922, Carson Agency, RG 75, NA-Pacific-Sierra Branch (PSB), San Bruno, CA.

²Harold K. Steen, *The U.S. Forest Service: A History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 84, 99; Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 407, 409; William D. Rowley, *U.S. Forest Service Grazing and Rangelands: A History* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1985).

³John Milton Cooper, Jr., *Pivotal Decades: The United States, 1900-1920* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 111.

⁴Nye County Shoshone Committee (NCSC) to Pittman, 18 February 1935, Box 73, Key Pittman Papers (KPP), Library of Congress (LC), Washington, D.C.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶"Indian Prosperity," *Elko Independent*, 7 September 1900, 2; Dave Clifford to Key Pittman, 18 February 1935, Box 73, KPP, LC.

⁷Interview with Marie (Bobb) Allison, 5 September 1991, Fallon, Nevada.

⁸William Gomma to C. H. Asbury, 3 December 1911, Sam Courts file, Box 30, Reno Agency, RG 75, NA-PSB; C. H. Asbury to Jim Ike, 17 June 1912, Jim Ike file, Box 31, Reno Agency, RG 75, NA-PSB.

⁹L. A. Dorrington to L. F. Clar, 23 March 1918, Carson Land Office file, Box 28, Reno Agency, RG 75, NA-PSB.

¹⁰Interview with Bud Decker, 24 August 1982, Battle Mountain, Nevada.

¹¹Statement by James Bobb, 6 October 1926, Central Classified Files (CCF), 56927-25-Carson-313, RG 75, NA.

¹²This information was extracted from various documents on Indian land allotments filed in the Realty Division, Western Nevada Agency, BIA, Carson City, Nevada.

¹³James X. Darrough to Pittman, 2 April 1917, Box 65, KPP, LC.

¹⁴Lorenzo Creel to Dorrington, 8 July 1921, Box 288, Carson Agency, RG 75, NA-PSB.

¹⁵*Statutes of the State of Nevada, 1909* (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1909), 38-40.

¹⁶NCSC to Pittman, 18 February 1935, Box 73, KPP, LC.

¹⁷Martha H. Bowers, Hans Muessig, *History of Central Nevada: An Overview of the Battle Mountain District* (Reno: Bureau of Land Management, May 1982), 35-37.

¹⁸Maribeth Hamby interview with Danny Millett, 10 April 1988, Duckwater, Nevada; Beth Sennett-Graham, *Basketry: A Clue to Panamint Shoshone Culture in the Early 20th Century* (unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Nevada, Reno, 1989), 182-192; Richard E. Lingenfelter, *Death Valley and the Amargosa: A Land of Illusion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 448, 463-464.

¹⁹Statement by Ray Parrett, 1926, CCF, 6370-26-Walker River-053, RG 75, NA; Walker River Census (M 595, Roll 63I), RG 75, NA; *Survey of Conditions of the Indians in the United States*, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Indian Affairs, U.S. Senate, 72nd, 1st sess., Pt. 28, Nevada (WDC: Government Printing Office, 1934), 15147-15148.

²⁰"Scattered Indians-Nye County, Nevada" (1932), Carson Agency, RG 75, NA-PSB; Interview with Pansy (Owens) Weeks, 5 September 1991, Fallon, Nevada; Interview with Nelson Sam, 3 September 1991, Elko, Nevada; Interview with Marie (Bobb) Allison, 5 September 1991.

²¹"Indians hold 'high-jinks' at Millett," *Manhattan Mail*, 1 September 1909, 1, 4.

²²"Shoshone fandango was a howling success," *Reese River Reveille* (RRR), 23 August 1919, 1; "Indians having annual fandango," RRR, 4 September 1920, 1; Interviews with Pansy (Owens) Weeks, Nelson Sam, and Marie (Bobb) Allison; Maribeth Hamby interview with Danny Millett, 10 April 1988, Duckwater, Nevada.

²³"Gilbert declared hereditary chief of Shoshone Tribe," RRR, 5 December 1931, 1.

²⁴"Death of the Shoshone Chief," RRR, 21 April 1897, 3; "Shoshone fandango," RRR, 12 July 1919, 2; "Indians will have fandango," RRR, 31 July 1920; Julian H. Steward, *Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups* (WDC: GPO, 1938), (reprinted by the University of Utah Press, 1970), 108.

²⁵For more information regarding the IRA, see the following sources: Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1954* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977); Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934-35* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980); Elmer R. Rusco, "The Organization of the Te-Moak Bands of Western Shoshones," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 25 (Fall 1982): 175-196; Richard O. Clemmer, "Hopis, Western Shoshones and Southern Utes: Three Different Responses to the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 10 (1986): 15-40.

²⁶NCSC to Pittman, 15 December 1934, Box 73, KPP, LC.

²⁷*Ibid.* NCSC to Pittman, 18 February 1935, 19 May 1935, Box 73, KPP, LC; NCSC to Parrett, 23 August 1935, CCF, 39224-34-Walker River-310, RG 75, NA; NCSC to Alida Bowler, 11 July 1936, Boxes 131 & 132, Phoenix Area Office (PAO), RG 75, NA-Pacific Southwest Branch (PSWB), Laguna Niguel, CA.

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹NCSC to Parrett, 23 August 1935, CCF, 39224-34-Walker River-310, RG 75, NA.

³⁰William Zimmerman to James Scrugham, 27 August 1935; Stewart to Clifford, 7 September 1935; Zimmerman to Scrugham, 24 October 1935, CCF, 39224-34-Walker River-310, RG 75, NA; "Indian land buying ordered suspended," RRR, 5 October 1935, 4.

³¹"1936 Annual Report, Carson Agency," Carson Agency, BIA, RG 75, NA-PSB; Bowler to Zimmerman, 14 July 1937, CCF, 3199-37-Carson-310, Pt I, RG 75, NA; Bowler to CIA, 13 July 1936, Box 131, PAO, BIA, RG 75, NA-PSWB.

³²Bowler to NCSC, 21 August 1936, Box 131, PAO, BIA, RG 75, NA-PSWB.

³³Bowler to Mike, 21 August 1936, PAO, BIA, RG 75, NA-PSWB.

³⁴Minutes of the Smoky Valley meeting, 21 September 1936, Yomba Tribal Minutes, 1936, BIA, Western Nevada Agency.

³⁵Douglas Clark, "Proposed land acquisition in Big Smoky Valley, Nye County, Nevada, in connection with Reese River Project," October 1937, Box 131, PAO, BIA, RG 75, NA-PSWB.

³⁶Steven Crum, "The Western Shoshone of Nevada and the Indian New Deal" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Utah, 1983), 219-231; for an excellent history on the formation of the Yomba Reservation, see Elmer R. Rusco, "The Indian Reorganization Act in Nevada: Creation of the Yomba Reservation," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*, 13 (1991), 77-94.

³⁷*Ibid.*

³⁸Keith Honaker and others, *Duckwater Shoshone History*, (Duckwater: Duckwater Shoshone Tribe, 1986), 7-8; Interview with Brownie Sam, 28 August 1982, Elko, Nevada.

³⁹Minutes of the Tonopah meeting, 28 April 1937; Committee to Scrugham, 18 July 1937; Committee to Pittman, 18 July 1937; Committee to Scrugham, 5 November 1937, Boxes 126 & 127, PAO, BIA, RG 75, NA-PSWB.

⁴⁰Honaker, *et al.*, *Duckwater Shoshone History*, 10-11; Mary Lou Moyle interview with Danny and Lillian Millett, 12 May 1976, Tribal History Project, Intertribal Council of Nevada, Reno, Nevada; Crum, "Western Shoshone and the Indian New Deal," 236-242.

⁴¹"The big fandango at the Bowler Ranch," RRR, 14 August 1937, 6; "Big fandango at Yomba Reservation," RRR, 12 September 1942, 1.