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American Apartheid in the Walamt Valley: The Creation of Grand Ronde and the Struggle to Assimilate to a Segregated Society

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Introduction

Throughout its history the United States government professed the goal of assimilation of North America's indigenous peoples into American society. The view of Native Americans as inferior led to the formal demand that they assimilate to a settler-colonial society that habitually violated its own written laws regarding land acquisition.

Simultaneously, it compelled American officials to institute race-based legislation that specifically prohibited Native people from doing exactly that.

We can examine the mostly unratified treaties made with Western Oregon tribes and the Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs reports during the 1850s in order to understand White/Native relations; however, direct quotes from and reliable descriptions of Native and mixed-race people in these records are scarce. The work of anthropologists who worked with Native people throughout the Northwest during the late 1800s and early 20th century can help us fill in the gaps of the historical record. These documents were retrieved from several sources, including the "South West Oregon Research Project" (SWORP) at the University of Oregon,¹ "Kalapuya Texts"- a compendium of Tualatin translations transcribed by Melville Jacobs, and "My Life: the Autobiography of Louis Kenoyer"- a text dictated to several anthropologists in the 1920s, then to Jacobs in 1936, and later completed by Henry Zenk and Jedd Schrock.

The final document, "The Autobiography of Louis Kenoyer," in particular works as a key to many others. In it Kenoyer, whose birth name was Bahawadas, describes his childhood in Grand Ronde when it was a reservation. He creates a portrait of his father,

¹ For a look at Native scholars tracking down and reclaiming primary sources from archives all over the U.S., see David G. Lewis, "Natives in the Nation's Archives: The Southwest Oregon Research Project," *Journal of Western Archives* 6, no. 1 (2015): 4.

Peter Kinai, that illuminates the elder man's brief appearances in Indian reports and historical monographs. Even though he's describing life in Grand Ronde in the 1870s, his story includes a wealth of cultural and regional information that provides context for the events of the 50s and 60s.

The Kenoyers

Kamatc and Kiakuts²

Melville Jacobs' monograph, "Kalapuya Texts," provides invaluable documentation of the Kalapuyan language in multiple dialects, a variety of stories from their oral traditions, as well as anecdotes about the Native experience during colonization. The majority of the transcriptions were derived from his work with Grand Ronde resident John B. Hudson (Santiam). However, Jacobs also worked with a Tualatin informant- Louis Kenoyer. It is unclear if Louis' surname Kenoyer was a distinct name or simply an Americanization of his father's name, Kinai.

The Kenoyer family appears in many primary sources from this period beginning with the Tualatin brothers Kayakach and Kamach. Kamach's son Kinai, who eventually took the name Peter Kinai, worked as one of Gatschet's Tualatin language informants during his research in 1877, when he dictated several anecdotes about his father and uncle. It begins with the story of Kamach's father, a Tualatin headman, arranging his marriage to the daughter of a Clackamas headman.³ He is said to have paid 20 slaves

² These are the spellings used in Melville's *Kalapuya Texts* that I believe come closest to the Tualatin names, however, I will use Kamach and Kayakach for the remainder of the text as I believe these adjusted names are commonly used in later works because they lead to a more accurate pronunciation for English speakers.

³ Jacobs, *Kalapuya Texts*, University of Washington. *Publications in Anthropology*; v. 11. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1945), 160.

and 10 rifles to secure the match. An extravagant salmon feast for the bride's tribe followed. The transcript reads: "And now he was a very considerable headman among the Tualatins, his name was great, his name went (far) among the Tualatins."

There follow several stories about Kamach's older brother Kayakach, a popular headman said to have owned many slaves and horses. His wealth enabled him to establish kinship networks with other elite families through multiple marriages. Kayakach successfully defended his land against the claims of a White man named Donald McLeod, presumably in the 1840s. McLeod built houses on Kayakach's land despite repeated warnings to stop. One day Kayakach visited the offending structure and after telling McLeod that he was "very much lacking in hearing," proceeded to tear it down. McLeod promised him he would be "taken in irons" the next day for the offense. Kayakach awaited his hearing in a Hillsboro jail. The court found in his favor and warned McLeod against trespassing on Native land. However, Kayakach was ordered to pay 200 dollars, which he converted into four horses. It's unclear if this payment was made to McLeod or the court.⁴ Several years later Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs Joel Palmer met with Kayakach and several other Tualatin tyees in preparation for treaty-making to obtain the tribe's land and remove them to a reservation. Palmer explained that the Americans would provide the Tualatins cattle, horses, clothing, blankets and food. Further, they would fence their land, plough their fields, and set up an "iron house" (blacksmith) and a trading house. After 20 years, Palmer said these payments would cease and no one would watch over them. "That is how you will be (then) just like an American." Kayakach, along with a series of other Native leaders

⁴Ibid, 165.

among the Willamette Valley tribes agreed to these terms and signed treaties relinquishing their lands. Palmer had promised the Natives that they would eventually be “just like Americans,” but the road to this promise was one of segregation.⁵

In her monograph, “Living in the Great Circle,” Grand Ronde descendant June L. Olson verifies that Kayakach was among the five chiefs who accompanied Palmer to scout for the reservation’s location.⁶ The Grand Ronde Valley, near Dayton, just west of Salem, was chosen because they suspected the nearby mountains would make good hunting grounds and they found familiar staples such as camas and it’uba (wild rhubarb).⁷ It was initially meant to be a temporary reservation, while a larger one on the Oregon coast was prepared, but the events of the late 1850s led to both communities being legally established with contradictions to the treaties that ceded the tribes’ homelands to the U.S. Peter went on to tell that Kayakach died in 1864 at roughly 60 years of age.⁸

Kinai and Bahawadas

In Louis Kenoyer’s recounting of his childhood in Grand Ronde we are provided with a window into a world in transition. His family worked on a farm, but also hunted and

⁵Jacobs, *Kalapuya Texts*, 167.

⁶ June L. Olson, *Living in the Great Circle: The Grand Ronde Indian Reservation, 1855-1905*. (Clackamas: A. Menard Publications, 2011), 19.

⁷ Reports of the utility of Grand Ronde’s land for agriculture vary depending on the source and time. Numerous Superintendent reports, especially early on, note frequent flooding and infertility in the soil. For more details on successful farming at Grand Ronde, see Tracy N. Leavelle, “We Will Make It Our Own Place: Agriculture and Adaptation at the Grand Ronde Reservation, 1856-1887.” *American Indian Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (1998): 433–56. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1184835>.

⁸Jacobs, “Kalapuya Texts.,” 171.

gathered regularly, as well as provided labor to Salem farmers. Louis describes several interactions between his father and the “Indian agent” that depicted him as a man who had largely assimilated to American culture (to the extent that he was allowed) yet maintained a great degree of authority among other Native people.⁹ Kinai appears in several Indian agent reports, as someone who proactively assimilated, while also refuting the idea that Native people were uncivilized in conversation with Indian agents and other authorities. When a group of Native leaders decided to have a “big time” for the Fourth of July, the Indian agent (unnamed) called upon Kinai to contribute funds for the event. He refused at first, citing his own necessities, at which point the agent insisted and referred to him as a “chief of the Tualitan people.” Kinai’s father and Uncle were Tualatin chiefs, but it is unclear if he was considered one. He did regularly lead large groups of workers on White farms and negotiate with the farmers.¹⁰ He also served on Grand Ronde’s Court of Indian Offenses, composed of Native officials, until the Indian Agency disbanded it.¹¹ Kinai eventually agreed to donate a cow to the festivities. Not only did the various tribes of Grand Ronde attend the big day, but White neighbors from the surrounding towns as well. They raced horses, gambled, and dined with their Native hosts. At dinner they sat at separate tables, served by Native women. Bahawadas recalled that some of the younger Native boys and girls who “knew those white peoples’ dance” danced together. This reminiscence suggests that assimilation

⁹ In 1867 a teacher wrote that some of the older Indians visited the school with an interest in learning to read. Among them a “Peter Caynier,” a sub-chief of the “Twalahy tribe.” J.B. Clark. “No 15- Annual report of J.B. Clark, teacher manual labor school, Grand Ronde Agency.” (Washington DC, Government Printing Office, 1867. 80-81. University of Washington- American Indians of the Pacific Northwest collection. Accessed 8/20/2021. <https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/lctext/id/420/rec/1>

¹⁰Kenoyer, *My Life*, 274.

¹¹ Olson, *Living in the Great Circle*, 50–52.

may have been actively facilitated by some White communities, however many other events, particularly economic ones, depict a very limited inclusion of Native people in the larger society. For example, in 1872 Indian agent P.B. Sinnott appropriated the profits from Grand Ronde's sawmill, claiming it was impractical for Indians to sell lumber on the open market as "it would necessarily involve disputes and great annoyances."¹² His decision was overturned by higher authorities, but the mill eventually fell into disrepair.

In his early childhood Bahawadas attended a day school run by the Indian agency. Such schools were routinely derided as ineffectual by Indian agents and teachers who claimed that what Native children learned at school was immediately lost upon returning to their homes and the bad influence of their elders. Boarding schools were routinely advocated for by the agents, and they would eventually be implemented.¹³ When Kinai told Bahawadas he would be going to such a school for the whole year, Bahawadas balked and refused to go. His father replied, "That's no way to talk. It is for your own benefit, when you become a grown man. I won't be in this world forever. You will grow to be a man. You will have to take care of your own heart."¹⁴

Bahawadas attended the Chemawa boarding school in Salem. He worked many jobs as an adult, including as a teacher in Grand Ronde. He also worked as a Tualatin language informant with numerous anthropologists. Despite his love of reading and

¹² Olson, *Living in the Great Circle*, 50.

¹³In his 1863 report JWP Huntington makes the oft repeated case that children attending day schools where they learn letters had little benefit as the students nightly returned to their homes and "retained the filthy habits and the loose morals of their parents." He advocated, as most agents did, for "manual labor" schools that exercised more control over students' dress, work, and diet. JWP Huntington, "No. 1 Report of J.W.P. Huntington, superintendent." (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1863. 48-55). University of Washington- American Indians of the Pacific Northwest collection. Accessed 8/20/2021. <https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/lctext/id/2230/rec/12>

¹⁴Kenoyer, *My Life*, 170.

proficiency in English, there was little use for literate Indians in the country that had been built over his homeland, and he mostly made his living from different kinds of manual labor. Bahawadas had several children, but they all died before reaching adulthood. He would eventually move to the Yakama reservation in southern Washington. He died there in 1936 of Influenza.¹⁵ This brief view of the Kenoyer family serves as an example of a particular band of Native Oregonians who sought to remake their kinship relations in the wake of the Willamette Valley's colonization during the 1850s.

The Kalapuyan World

The Kalapuyan peoples of Western Oregon were not an ethnic or political entity. Kalapuya was a language with at least three distinct regional dialects spoken by numerous tribes and bands: the Tualatins, Santiams, Yamels, Molallas, Yoncallas, and many others. The Kalapuyans, like the Chinook and Chinookans¹⁶ to the north, as well as the Rogue River tribes to the south, organized their societies around their villages. Charismatic tyees¹⁷ and headmen cultivated followings and organized coalitions through marriage with neighboring tribes, but did not necessarily lead indigenous nations or tribes as we think of them today. Chinookan and Kalapuyan societies boasted intricate systems of wealth and hierarchy that made tyees and other elite families responsible for mediating disputes and enforcing their communities' rights and borders. The Chinook

¹⁵ibid., 31–32.

¹⁶ The Chinook were a distinct tribe that spread their language and influence to others such as the Clackamas, the Cathlamet, etc., who are described as Chinookan to denote cultural and kinship ties.

¹⁷ Tyee is a Chinook word meaning chief. Pronunciations vary between “tī” and “tī-ee.”

dominated trade due in large part to their coastal homeland. The Kalapuyans relied more heavily on hunting deer and elk, and gathered a variety of roots and plants, most famously camas. They resided between the Chinook to the west and the eastern cultures beyond the Cascade Mountains. These eastern peoples, such as the Cayuse and the Nez Perce, built their societies around trade and conflict with other horse-based tribes further east. They had regular contact with Western Oregon tribes, but the Cascades range served as a definite border between two cultures made up of distinct kinship networks, allowing for occasional overlap.

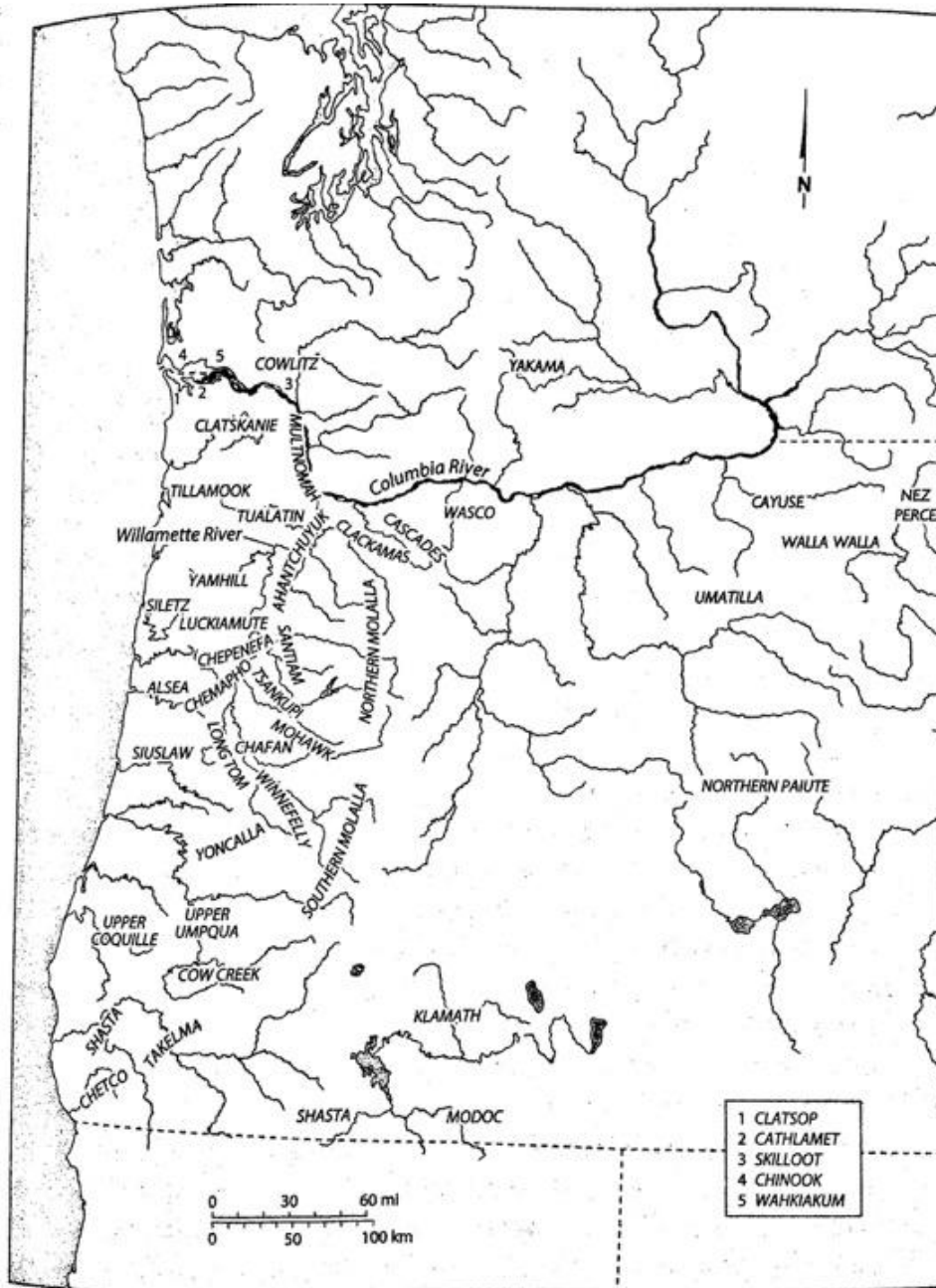


Fig. 1 Major Native American Groups in Oregon and Southern Washington.

From 1824 to 1846 the Oregon Country was administered under a “joint occupation” by the British Empire and the Republic of the United States.¹⁸ Fort Vancouver, at the confluence of the Columbia and the Willamette Rivers, was the headquarters of the Hudson’s Bay Company, the prevailing White authority in the region. Settlement was not a priority for the HBC; their aim was profit. Fur traders known as Snake Brigades fanned out from this beachhead to explore the far west that would become Washington, Oregon, and Idaho for decades, but would not establish more than small trading posts and forts beyond the Willamette Valley. Their main tactic for reifying Britain’s claim on the region was the creation of fur deserts through over-trapping in order to discourage American traders from expanding into the far west.

French Canadian voyageurs had camped seasonally in the Willamette Valley for more than 15 years by the 1820s, but their year-round occupation began between 1828-1830.¹⁹ A number of these traders retired from the HBC and established credit accounts with the head of Fort Vancouver, Dr. John McLouglin, in order to start their farms. They settled near the territory of the Ahantchuyuk, a Kalapuyan tribe. Most were married to indigenous women from the Kalapuyan and Chinook regions, thus securing some manner of legitimate access to the territory. However, polygamy was common and the level of consent of some of these wives varied. These Native women generally took European names and used the name of their tribe as a surname. For example, some of

¹⁸ The U.S.’s most famous claim to the region was the 1803 Corps of Discovery Expedition led by William Clark and Meriwether Lewis in 1803. They spent a winter near Astoria in the homelands of the Clatsop in 1805. For details on the joint occupation, see Gray Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee, US Empire and the Transformation of an Indigenous World, 1792-1859*. (Univ of North Carolina Press, 2010). also Melinda Jetté, *At the Hearth of the Crossed Races. A French-Indian Community in Nineteenth-Century Oregon, 1812-1859* (Oregon State University Press, 2015).

¹⁹ Jetté, *At the Hearth of the Crossed Races*, 55.

the earliest Native women to settle in what came to be known as French Prairie were Marguerite Kalapuya, Catherine Chehalis, and Yiamust Clatsop. Increased settlement in the valley further depleted the game Native communities depended on and spread more plague among them, causing drastic mortality throughout the 1830s and 40s. It was known at the time as “fever and ague,” and modern scholars believe malaria to have been the primary agent. The Kalapuyans lost the majority of their population, resulting in desertion of entire villages. Many sought sanctuary at the missions or by forming new relationships with White settlers, particularly in French Prairie. Some sought work on farms or operating ferries on the rivers; others begged. Small bands still followed traditional subsistence rounds and burned portions of the valley as they were able.

Willamette was a francization of the Chinookan-Clackamas name Walamt. This was the name of a Clackamas village near Oregon City that apparently did not survive the years of fever and ague that wiped out so many Native villages. The little that is known about it is gleaned from anthropologists’ notebooks. The most likely agent responsible for its spread to the name of the falls, river, and valley that still bear its name are the French-Indian settlers who intermarried with Native women and colonized the lower valley. Similar French/Native feats of language turned Yamel into Yamhill.²⁰

²⁰ David G. Lewis is an Oregon anthropologist and Santiam descendent who provides access to much of his scholarship through his blog *Quartux*. For more information on the name Willamette, see, “Drucker’s Records of Clackamas Villages,” *Quartux: Journal of Critical Indigenous Anthropology*, June 7, 2018, Accessed May 3, 2021. <https://ndnhistoryresearch.com/2018/06/07/druckers-records-of-clackamas-villages/>; also Peter M. Bauer, “Willamette; the Valley of an 8,000 Year Old Culture,” last modified March 14, 2007. Accessed May 3, 2021. <https://www.petermichaelbauer.com/willamette-the-valley-of-an-8000-year-old-culture/>

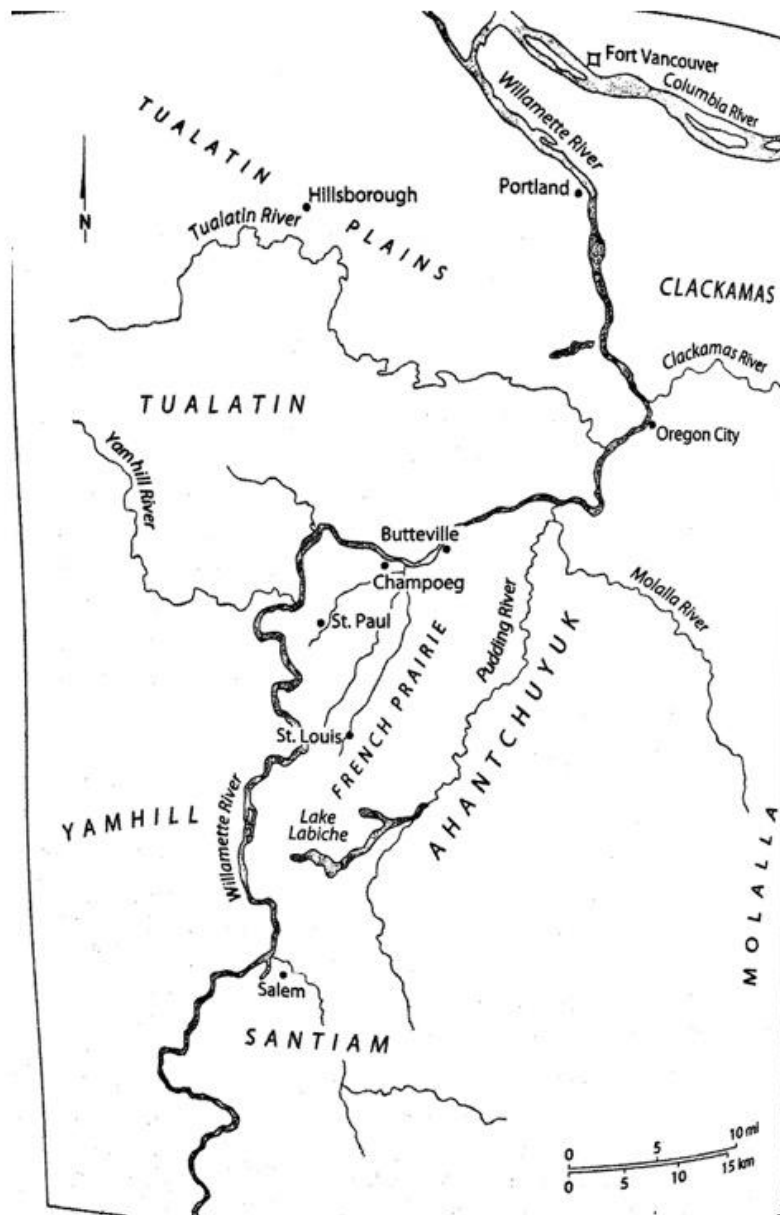


Fig. 2 Lower Willamette Valley and French Prairie, 1850s.

This was the world that American Methodist missionaries entered in the late 1830s. Representatives of the Nez Perce had earlier traveled to St. Louis to meet with

William Clark, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs.²¹ Like many other western tribes, they desired a mission to be placed among them. The Methodists established several along the Columbia, but the holy men's gaze soon slid west to the Willamette Valley. In 1846, as the US went to war with Mexico, it resolved its joint occupation with the British Empire on its northern border. The Methodist missionaries and their allies soon prevailed on bringing US jurisdiction over their quasi-legal land claims. In 1848 the Oregon Territory was formed. American settlement cleaved to the Willamette River. Like their colonial ancestors, American western migrants found themselves in need of Native labor and so for a time the Willamette Valley tribes found it possible to participate in a symbiotic relationship with the "Bostons" (Americans) who came to replace the "King George's Men" (British) that had brought the traders to their homeland so many decades ago.

The Democracy in Oregon

Race was central to the early American vision for civilizing the valley. Samuel Thurston was a young Massachusetts lawyer who immigrated to Oregon in 1847. He allied himself with missionary leader Jason Lee and served as the first Territorial Delegate. His primary aim was to legitimize American land claims with the Donation Land Act.

Speaking in the House of Representatives, he explained his constituents' views on race and settlement, arguing for the phrase "American citizen" in establishing land claims.

Otherwise, he warned, the land law:

²¹ Theodore Stern, *Chiefs & Change in the Oregon Country*, (Corvallis, Oregon State University, 1996), 42.

would give land to every servant of the Hudson's Bay Company, including some hundreds of Canakers [Kanakas], or Sandwich Islanders, who are a race of men as black as your negroes of the South, and a race, too, that we do not desire to settle in Oregon... Our Legislature passed a law at its first session, excluding free negroes; that law I approve, the people there approve it... the Canakers and negroes, if allowed to come there, will commingle with our Indians, a mixed race will ensue, and the result will be wars and bloodshed in Oregon. The members of our Legislature foresaw this, and, like wise men as they were, they guarded against it.²²

The fear of non-White races instigating a monolithic Indian coalition aimed at exterminating the Americans was a recurring rationalization for the early racial exclusion laws of the provisional and territorial governments. Without the waves of Midwest American migrants that would come after 1850, the missionaries and their Methodist reinforcements were not able to wield genuine power in their new homeland.²³

The Donation Land Act passed in 1850 and stayed in effect for five years. It granted 320 acres to single white male settlers 18 years of age, and 640 to married couples, each spouse owning 320 acres in their own name. "American half-breed Indians" were eligible for land claims under the bill but Blacks, Hawaiians, and all other Indians were excluded. This legislation was far more instrumental in creating a homogenous White Northwest population than any of the formal racial exclusion laws of the Territorial or State government.²⁴

²²Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee*, 176.

²³The HBC's Chief Factor Dr. John McLoughlin was instrumental in resolving numerous early conflicts between Americans and Natives. For details on the Cockstock affair, see Kenneth Coleman, *Dangerous Subjects: James D. Saules and the Rise of Black Exclusion in Oregon* (Oregon State University Press, 2017), 100. For details on the kidnapping of Eliza Spaulding following the Whitman Massacre, see Wendi A. Lindquist, "Death and the Rise of the State: Criminal Courts, Indian Executions, and Early Pacific Northwest Governments." *American Review of Canadian Studies* 42, no. 2 (2012): 147.

²⁴Jetté, *At the Hearth of the Crossed Races*, 193.

The Willamette Valley's voters embraced the antebellum Democracy²⁵ in their new home. This wing of the Democratic party valued local sovereignty, grass-roots organization, and promoted Thomas Jefferson's ideal of the Yeoman farmer.²⁶ This culture permeated the Oregon and Washington Territories, but it would manifest in a particularly violent fashion in Southern Oregon, where tribes on both sides of the Oregon/California border were caught in the frenzy of the Gold Rush.

The Rogue River War would be better phrased as the Rogue River *Wars*. The battles and massacres that comprised them occurred between 1851-1856, but were not a single protracted conflict. Like many Indian wars, they were sporadic outbursts of raiding and mob violence that repeatedly led to larger scale battles between vigilante "volunteers" and Native people. For every incident there were at least two versions of what instigated an attack. And neither side was concerned with precision when they decided to retaliate.²⁷

In January of 1852 James Cluggage struck gold in Jackson Creek, spurring the creation of the town of Jacksonville and Jackson County. During the gold rush Jacksonville's population would outnumber both Portland and Oregon City. Men sped

²⁵ Early Democrats referred to their party as "the Democracy" in order to imply a program that was above politics and differentiate themselves from the Whig party that was popularly seen as contemptuous of the common people.

²⁶Johnson, *Founding the Far West: California, Oregon, and Nevada, 1840-1890* (University of California Press, 1992), 56–57.

²⁷ For details on the Rogue River Wars, see Charles Wilkinson, *The People are Dancing Again: The History of the Siletz Tribe of Western Oregon*. (University of Washington Press, 2012), and June L. Olson, *Living in the Great Circle*.

there from California and the Willamette Valley to pan for gold in the placers and they had no belief in the sovereignty of the Native people they encountered.²⁸

In the violence of 1853 over 100 people were killed, and at least 10 Indians were hanged.²⁹ This was also the year that Americans encountered the Shasta tyeec Tecumtum (Elk Killer), the warrior Oregonians would come to know as Tyee John. He featured prominently in the slew of battles that followed. The Native coalition eventually called for a truce. Territorial delegate and leader of the American forces Joseph Lane met with Tyee Apserkahar (Joe), Tyee Toquahear (Sam), Tyee Jim, Tyee Cholcultah (George), and Tyee Lympey to plan a treaty Council. On September 10, 1853 the Table Rock Treaty was signed. It granted all of the Rogue Valley officially to the United States and stipulated a temporary reservation for the tribes at Table Rock, until a permanent one was established. This would be the first treaty made with Northwest tribes ratified by the United States Congress. Anson Dart, the first Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs, negotiated 18 treaties with the various tribes of Northwestern Oregon. None were ratified. Instead, the government responded to the complaints of Oregonians who had demanded that the tribes be removed east of the Cascade mountains and Dart was forced to resign.³⁰

²⁸ Methodist circuit preacher James Rayner described Jacksonville as “a very wicked place” where “gambling saloons” outnumbered all other establishments. Walker, “Providence Will Take Care of Me... I Will Wear a Crown: Frontier Circuit Rider, James O. Rayner, and the Land Laws of Early Oregon.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 120, no. 3 (2019): 246–75, 266.

²⁹Wilkinson, *The People Are Dancing Again*, 85.

³⁰The Oregon Encyclopedia is a peer reviewed online resource hosted by the Oregon Historical Society. For a summary of the unratified treaties, see Lewis, “Willamette Valley Treaties.” *Oregon Encyclopedia*. Accessed August 6, 2021. https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/willamette_valley_treaties/
For a description of negotiations from the Natives’ perspectives, see Brook Colley, *Power in the Telling* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018), 33.

Joel Palmer traveled to Oregon from Indiana in 1845, becoming a fixture in local politics. He succeeded Dart as Superintendent in 1853 and immediately began scouting for a reservation in Western Oregon. He too would earn the ire of his fellow Americans for failing to exile the Indians to the high deserts of the eastern territory. Palmer had little choice on this issue. Tribe after tribe adamantly rejected the notion of leaving western Oregon. In order to avoid further violence Palmer recognized the necessity of founding a reservation near the Willamette Valley. His initial plan was to use Grand Ronde as one of many temporary sites until all of Western Oregon's tribes could be concentrated on a large coastal reservation from the Siltcoos River to Cape Lookout. Palmer divided Western Oregon into several districts where he could assign Indian agents to concentrate Native people on the lands of the government or trusted Americans and inventory adult men and boys over 12. No Native person was permitted to leave these encampments without written permission of the official. This was meant to keep them from joining the violence in the south, as well as to calm Oregonians hostile to the Natives in their midst.³¹ The tribes were given little or no notice of their removal. Military escorts simply directed them to gather what they could carry and began either an overland or riverboat trek to Dayton. There they were instructed to wait among the rows of tents for further orders. As fighting in the Rogue intensified, bands of refugees arrived at Grand Ronde, many starving and sick.³² While the land of the Siletz Reservation was being prepared, its legal foundation was manipulated through an executive order that

³¹Olson, *Living in the Great Circle*, 18.

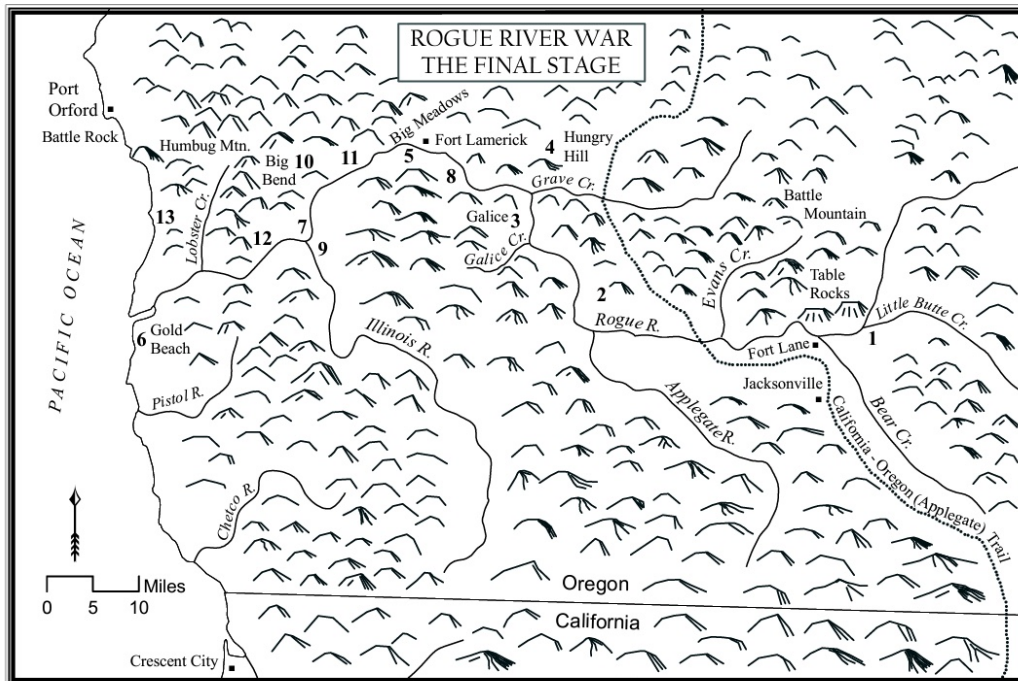
³²Ibid., 30.

drastically reduced its size and established Grand Ronde as a permanent reservation for a separate group of tribes.³³

The Tyees of the Southern tribes steadily surrendered in the following months as the force of the regular army was brought to bear against them. On July 2, 1856 Tecumtum surrendered at Reinhart Creek, north of Gold Beach. He and his band, the final combatants, would be made to walk to Yaquina Bay on the Siletz Reservation from Port Orford, even though traveling by steamship as preceding waves of refugees had, would have been easier and cheaper. Palmer and the military agreed that the 200-mile march was a fitting punishment for the war's fiercest Native leader. Records of this final "trail of tears" are sparse, but the oral traditions of the tribes remember that many died along the way, and their families were not permitted to bury them or waste the military's time mourning.³⁴

³³ For more details on the legal maneuvers that designed the Siletz Reservation in contradiction to its members' initial treaties, see Wilkinson, "The People are Dancing," 135-48, see also "Creating the Coast (Siletz) Reservation," Confederated Tribe of Siletz Indians, Accessed January 6, 2022, <https://www.ctsi.nsn.us/creating-the-coast-siletz-reservation/>

³⁴ Wilkinson, *The People Are Dancing Again*, 162.



Major Events

- 1) Little Butte Creek Massacre (Oct. 8, 1855)
- 2) Indians attack settlements (Oct. 9, 1855)
- 3) Battle of Galice Creek (Oct. 17, 1855)
- 4) Battle of Hungry Hill (Oct. 31-Nov.1, 1855)
- 5) Battle of the Meadows (Nov. 26, 1855)
- 6) Indians burn Gold Beach (Feb. 22, 1856)
- 7) Troops burn main Mackanutuni village (March, 1856)
- 8) Troops attack Indians at Battle Bar (April 27, 1856)
- 9) Oak Flat council (May 20, 1856)
- 10) Battle of Big Bend (May 27-28, 1856)
- 11) Indians Come in to Big Bend for removal north (May 30 -June 15, 1856)
- 12) Troops attack Shasta Costa and Painted Rock Village (June 5-6, 1856)
- 13) Tye John surrenders (July 2, 1856)

Fig. 3 Rogue River War- The Final Stage

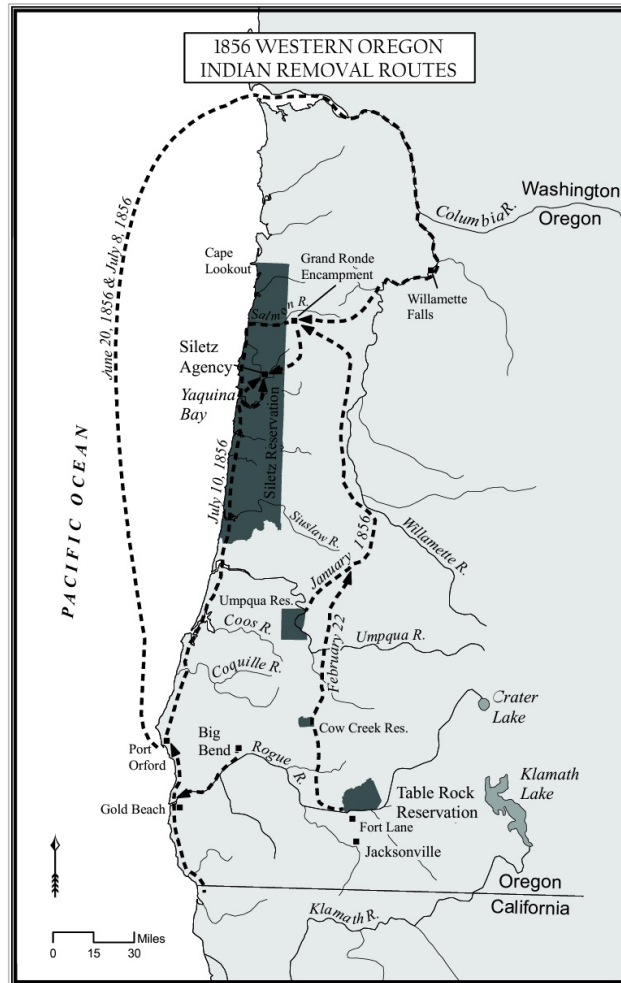


Fig. 4 1856 Western Oregon Indian Removal Routes.

Rebuilding in Grand Ronde and Siletz

In the winter of 1856, all the Western Oregon tribes that had been uprooted from their homelands were concentrated on Grand Ronde. By the time Tecumtum's march arrived, the Siletz Reservation was opened and the majority of Rogue River tribes were moved there to join them. The Superintendent reports describe a tense atmosphere on Grand Ronde between the northern tribes and those who were removed from the south. The

Kalapuyan, Chinook, and Molalla tribes had lived near White settlements for several decades. There were more Native people among these groups ready to adopt American-style agriculture. The people who were removed from the Rogue and the Coast were still reeling from the trauma of the wars and the culture shock of their rapid removal. Many looked on the Northern tribes' adoption of farming as taboo or unmanly and resisted following suit.³⁵

Special agent J. Ross Browne was dispatched to Grand Ronde and Siletz in 1857 to collect Native leader's testimony. At Grand Ronde Tye Toquahear (Sam) noted that his people were promised cattle, horses, and clothing, among other things when they were removed from Southern Oregon, yet had received none of them. He communicated their frustration with the situation and the Indian agents' assurances that it would all be resolved:

We believe "Uncle Sam" intends to cheat us. Sometimes we are told there is one Great Chief and sometimes another. One superintendent tells us one thing, and the Great Chief removes him. Who are we to believe? Who is your Great Chief, and who is to tell us the truth? We don't understand the way you act. With us we are born chiefs; once a chief we are a chief for life. But you are only common men, and we never know how long you will hold your authority, or how soon the Great Chief may degrade you, or how soon he may be turned out himself. We want to know the true head, that we may state our condition to him. Let him come here himself and see us. So many lies have been told that we think he never hears the truth, or he would not compel us to suffer as we do.³⁶

³⁵ U.S. Office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. No. 149 Report of John F. Miller, Agent for the Willamette Tribes." Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1857. 361-368. University of Washington- American Indians of the Pacific Northwest collection. Accessed 8/20/2021 <https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/lctext/id/76/rec/24>

³⁶ J. Ross Browne. "Letter to Secretary of the Interior, Transmitting, in compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 19th instant, the report of J. Ross Browne, special agent, on the subject of Indian affairs in the Territories of Oregon and Washington." H.R. Exec. Doc. No. 39, 35th Cong., 1st Sess. (1858). 27. University of Oklahoma- American Indian and Alaska Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817-1899. Accessed 7/14/2021. <https://digitalcommons.law.ou.edu/indianserialset/7563/>

At Siletz, Tecumtum (Tyee John), Tyee Joshua, Tyee Cholcultah (George), and Tyee Lympy all spoke. They all expressed gratitude that the President was seeking their “talk” so that they could reveal that they had not been dealt with in good faith. They claimed that Palmer had promised them they would be able to return to reservations near Table Rock after a set term and complained that their people continued to suffer high mortality from being removed so far from their homelands. Browne’s response to the tyees displayed the paternalistic tone that would come to typify the Office of Indian Affairs in the following decades. He expressed sympathy for their plight, but reaffirmed that their only option for survival was to be segregated from Americans at Siletz:³⁷ He told them the President was unable to stop “all these white people from overrunning their country,” and therefore instructed his government to pay them for their lands “and furnish them with a place to live in, where they could be kept apart from the whites, and protected against the hostilities of bad men.”

A thorough reading of the Oregon Superintendent of Indians Reports reveals a pattern of underfunding over many decades. Indian agents made repeated appeals for funds to employ farmers, blacksmiths, teachers, and other professionals in the interest of “civilizing” the Native people under their charge. When rational explanations were not enough, agents often cited the terms of various treaties that specifically called for such professionals, along with the materials to supply them.³⁸ Agents reported regularly on

³⁷Browne, “Letter to Secretary of the Interior,” 44.

³⁸Upon taking over the Grand Ronde Agency, Amos Harvey cited the need for myriad repairs of buildings, farms, equipment, as well as drainage to make a large portion of the land arable, Amos Harvey, “No. 12- Report of Amos Harvey, Agent at Grand Ronde Agency.” (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1864). University of Washington- American Indians of the Pacific Northwest collection. Accessed 8/20/2021.
<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/lctext/id/285/rec/18>

the number of Indians at large in the Territory and on their efforts to track them down and remove them to reservations. Grand Ronde residents were repeatedly lauded for their adoption of agriculture. There were some mentions of their experience with it prior to removal, but more often credit was attributed to the reservation system.

In 1871 U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Felix Brunot visited a number of Northwest Reservations. In a council meeting at Grand Ronde he praised the progress of its residents and assured them of the good will of the President. He also took the opportunity to warn them against drinking, gambling, and continuing the use of Native doctors. He then invited the assembled men to speak so he could take their words back to Washington. Peter Kinai was the first to speak, addressing the council in English. He noted that the White men's clothes Brunot had complimented them on were bought with their own money. He told the commissioner that they received no blankets from the government, and needed some for the poor among them. Grand Ronde needed harness, teams, and a grist mill in order for its residents to prosper like White men. About gambling, he asserted that they did not teach their children such habits, and ought not do it themselves. Kinai explained that he and others got off to the side of the road, "where no good men see us," to gamble, noting that "so it is with the white man when he does what he knows is wrong." Several men spoke after him, informing Brunot that many of the treaty promises had not been fulfilled, and that they needed the means to support the elderly and poor among them who were not able to work or farm. Brunot,

like most Indian agents, claimed to understand and sympathize with the Natives' grievances, but was also dismissive in his response that it would all be worked out.³⁹

Indian agents' characterizations of Native people could be quite ambivalent. They were employed to segregate, police, and assimilate Indians. We might note the inherent brutality in such a program, however it likely seemed much more humane to Americans and Natives at a time when calls for the extermination of Indians throughout the Americas was commonplace and rationalized in a variety of ways that would be unthinkable a mere 50 years later. Indian agents had strong motivations to highlight the success of their endeavors and the humanity of Native people, but they were not immune to the prejudices of their society. Their reports are replete with references to "savages" and "squaws," and laments over the "superstitious" and "distrustful" Indian character, and claims that Native people who did not conform to reservation life were "indolent," "haughty," and "degraded."⁴⁰

Indian agents repeatedly wrote to their superiors advocating, at times demanding, that the government ratify treaties their Native charges had signed prior to removal or to negotiate new ones, as the unfinished diplomacy frequently placed them in a situation where they were forced to incarcerate them and bar them from their

³⁹ Felix R. Brunot, "Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, for the Year 1871," Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1871. 116-125. University of Washington- American Indians of the Pacific Northwest collection. Accessed 8/20/2021. <https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/lctext/id/460/rec/4>

⁴⁰ This was especially true of the Southern tribes, many of whom arrived malnourished and sick as war refugees. Miller, "No. 149 Report of John F. Miller, 361-368.

homelands, despite the fact that the unratified condition of the treaties meant that the land ceded in them was, by the letter of the law, *unceded*.⁴¹

Conclusion

The Grand Ronde Reservation in Western Oregon became the home of a multitude of indigenous and mixed-race people from Southern Washington to Southern Oregon. Most of the Southern tribes were relocated to the nearby Siletz Reservation on the coast. Both sites were used to keep them away from White settlements where their movements could be policed by local and federal agents. Many Americans did not expect Native people to survive in the numbers they did. Countless sources from the late 1800s throughout the US featured different versions of the “vanishing race” narrative. Eventually, the United States government would have to devise ways to genuinely, if imperfectly, assimilate Native people in the 20th century.

Peter Kinai was a man caught in the hinge of transition. He could remember a time before White people outnumbered Natives, but was resigned to watch this world disappear and adapt to the unjust one that had taken its place. His son, Louis Kenoyer, was born in Grand Ronde. He would never really know the pre-reservation world,

⁴¹ Oregon Superintendent Alfred B. Meacham wrote to his superiors in 1871 demanding the Indian Department intervene on behalf of an Umpqua band that had recently been driven from their homes in that valley, but had never been treated with. A.B. Meacham, “No. 12 Annual report of A. B. Meacham, superintendent of Indian affairs.” (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1871). University of Washington- American Indians of the Pacific Northwest collection. Accessed 8/20/2021. <https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/lctext/id/478/rec/16>

Amos Harvey made detailed requests for funds and a blacksmith, Amos Harvey, “No. 14- Report on Indian Affairs, by the Acting Commissioner,” (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1867). University of Washington- American Indians of the Pacific Northwest collection. Accessed 8/20/2021. <https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/lctext/id/419/rec/22>

though he would be raised with its values and traditions in ways that the generations after him would rarely have the opportunity to. Both contributed to the survivance of their people, but only Bahawadas would live to see the system of apartheid fully dismantled. Unfortunately, its legacy would continue to limit the security and liberty of Native people.