

AMERICAN INDIANS AND YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



A Documentary Overview

By

**Peter Nabokov and Lawrence Loendorf
2000**

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A Documentary Overview

Submitted to the
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Denver, Colorado

Authored by
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2000

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PREFACE

It is with trepidation that any new researchers attempt to add to the voluminous scholarship associated with the history of Yellowstone National Park, or to position their findings under the high standards established by over a century's worth of chronicles from such superb historians as Hiram Martin Chittenden, Aubrey L. Haines, Paul Schullery and Lee H. Whittlesey. In so far as the human history of the region is concerned, hardly a trail in Yellowstone National Park would seem to have gone undocumented, a ranger station unrecorded, a bridge unmeasured, a placename unplumbed, or an unusual character even remotely connected with the place unprofiled. This goes equally for the natural history of this "crown jewel of the nation's park system." So it is with some hesitation that we suggest that a major dimension of the culture-and-nature history of our nation's first, largest and most famous natural reserve deserves a second look.

Many histories of Yellowstone National Park shuttle back and forth between topics associated with the historical or cultural aspects of the Park since its exploration and establishment in the late 19th century, and topics related to scientific features deriving from the Park's unique biological, geological and ecological attractions. One problem with the subject and themes of the "missing Indian chapters" of Park history, however, is that until the present day the subject of American Indians and Yellowstone seems to have fallen into the crack that lies between those two broad areas of inquiry - between Culture and Nature. The evolving place of American Indians in the long history of Yellowstone National Park turns out to have been underplayed over the years in part because of the Euro-American's ever-shifting notions and academic debates over how to categorize and characterize the Indians' role in the cultural history of North America in the first place. Over the years, the answer to the question of whether Indians were to be considered part of the "natural" or "cultural" history of the Park seems to have been answered by default, by the implications built into its representations of Indians rather than by any conscious or overt inquiry.

As for any native "historical" relationships to the Park, Indians have generally been confined to the dramatic incident when they engaged in warfare with the U.S. in the Park - the Nez Percé misadventures in 1877. While any "cultural" ties have more often than not been observed in the negative: Indians steered clear of the Park's heartland because of their fear of its geysers. Throughout a century and a half of scattered commentaries and uncoordinated representations on Indians and the Park, this confusion about whether Indians were to be considered more a part of "nature" or "history" or "culture" has underlain the mixed messages concerning the relationships between the Park and its Indians - with any finer tribal distinctions generally ignored in the process.

But this confusion about how to categorize Indians must have arisen from somewhere. Its roots sprang from the Park's mandate, which was, initially, to provide a prototype for natural preserves that would save "wilderness," preserving its monumental landscapes that the New World enjoyed as competition with the man-made monuments of Old Europe, and, somewhat later, protecting the wildlife from developers and poachers. Yet during roughly the same era as Yellowstone was being conceived, as historian Mark Spence has perceptively pointed out, another sort of preserve with a different agenda was being created for the American Indians who had lived in or moved through the

Park. Rather than a refuge for preserving biological species, the Indian reservation was devoted to transforming cultural species under the guiding evolutionary theory of the day: Indians needed to be "assimilated" into the broader culture, and to abandon their ties to "nature." In the late 19th century this was considered the only humane alternative to killing them off. The grander role of the Park in this broad context of western history was quite clear in the mind of Yellowstone National Park Superintendent General S.B.M. Young in 1907, when he supervised a report on the Park which stated explicitly:

Looking back a full century we find that the story of the Yellowstone Park is a sequential link in the chain of epochal events which commenced with the purchase by the United States of the then uncharted wilderness called the 'Louisiana Territory,' the subsequent expedition of Lewis and Clark, the discovery of gold, the conquest of the savages, and all the epic deeds which achieved at last the winning of the west [Raftery 1943:102].

From a contemporary perspective, the situation strikes us as a Gordian Knot of ironies, but one which remains tightly tied to this day. So long as Indians were seen as part of "nature," they proved to be the one species who were not allowed to stay in their natural habitat, because the part of them that belonged to "history" was a threat to the Euro-Americans who had risen sufficiently enough above their "natural" state to develop culture and keep it distinct from nature through the very invention of such preserves. But if Indians were to be considered part of "culture," then their claims to the region might compete with those of the Euro-Americans, which was unacceptable. At the same time, as scholars who began studying western Indian societies within this period started to write about the intricacies of and contrasts between different Indian "cultures", the ambivalence over how they were to be lumped together became more problematic. For early Park officials were government employees with a growing exposure to and appreciation for scholarship, at least in the budding field of "natural" science. It was in their self-interest, therefore, to admit that to some degree Indians were part of "culture" and hence ineligible for any claims to a "natural" refuge like birds or mammals. At the same time, any claims their "culture" might have made to the Yellowstone National Park region could threaten the government's insistence that this was a pristine natural wilderness. Hence it makes some sense why officials never felt provoked to explain or explore Hiram Chittenden's observations in 1895 that, "It is a singular fact in the history of Yellowstone National Park that no knowledge of that country seems to have been derived from the Indians....Their deep silence concerning it is therefore no less remarkable than mysterious" (Chittenden 1895:8,99). Appreciating the troublesome presence of Indians in Yellowstone National Park's history and ideology also helps to clarify why any cultural theories which did explain Indian absences from the Park region might have been looked upon favorably, why funding for surveying the possible extent and intensity of early Indian occupancy or uses of the Park and environs was never plentiful, and why no full time Park cultural or archaeological advisors were appointed until the 1990s.

One reason for this unwritten chapter is that it was not considered to the Park's best interests to acknowledge any Indian role in its culture history. As we shall see, early Yellowstone officials went

out of their way to get Indians to promise to stay away from the Park. And hence, as Yellowstone National Park ranger Merrill D. Beal has written:

These agreements were widely advertised, and in order to further neutralize any fear of Indian trouble a policy of minimizing past incidents was evolved. The recent invasions were represented as unprecedented, actually anomalous. Indians had never lived in Yellowstone, were infrequent visitors because they were afraid of the thermal activity! It was not a conspiracy against truth, just an adaptation of business psychology to a promising national resort [Beal 1949:91].

But the received wisdom and recycled scenarios regarding the official picture of the relationships between different American Indian peoples and Yellowstone National Park can also be attributed to what are now called "paradigm shifts" in the history of the social sciences and in the discipline of history as well. Add to these shifting angles of scholarly vision and interest the fact that public agencies, with meager resources and burgeoning clientele, are often a half-step behind new paradigms that trickle down from academia, and one can understand why our understanding of the roles played by Indians in the symbol-dense areas like our nation's Parks - and Yellowstone above all - might be a bit behind the times.

In the body of this document we will assay some of the more down-to-earth reasons for the dearth of both archaeological and ethnographic data on the Park. At the same time, we hope to offer sufficient evidence, teased from myriad sources, that the cause of conceptually, at least, reintroducing American Indians into the Park's representations of itself is a task that remains possible and worth the trouble. To this end we have made the best possible effort, within our temporal and funding constraints, to revivify and contextualize what native narratives we could find, to conduct a fresh sieving of archival materials, to root out oft-ignored field notes of earlier ethnographers. We make no pretense at having produced anything close to a complete composite of the ethnographic resources of Yellowstone National Park. Yet we caution future researchers or writers on Indians and the Park to hesitate before making definitive statements about the loss of this or that tradition. As the examples of the Kiowa mythic narrative in Chapter One and Plenty Coups' historical buffalo hunt in the Park in Chapter Three suggest, tattered oral tradition can reveal an unusually strong life-force and can crop up in the most unlikely places.

This report concludes with a section called Concerns and Recommendations which combines the comments and attitudes of our American Indian consultants regarding various aspects of Park policy with observations based on three summer seasons of field and library research. We sincerely want this section to help to ameliorate any preexisting problems or potential stumbling blocks that might arise between Indians groups and Park policies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To produce this report we have depended upon the graciousness, patience, experiences and scholarship of a great number of individuals and institutions. Here we would like to gratefully acknowledge the work of Park officials, other scholars, native advisors and consultants, and additional personnel without whom this compilation would not have been possible.

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Although we want this document to reflect the combined voices of many Indian spokespersons and consultants, living and past, we also wish to respect the anonymity of our contemporary American Indian consultants. For now let us just profoundly thank, on the East, DT and SC of the Kiowa tribe, and GB, AS and JMC among the Crow. For the north we are grateful to TT, CB, TI and LA among the Kootenai-Salish, and CCB of the Canadian Blackfeet, and, for the West, to GE, LV, JS, CN, DSC and JLV. For the South we thank MG, ZE, FT, MJG, SW, AC and HW.

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INTRODUCTION

The following overview of the role of American Indians in the region in and around Yellowstone National Park can only be considered as an interim contribution. On a trail already blazed by the likes of Åke Hultkrantz, Joel C. Janetski and Joseph Weixelman, our compilation of data about American Indians within and surrounding the Park strives to open up a new evaluation of existing literature, to probe into undiscovered or under-used sources of archived ethnographic or historical data, and to invite a fresh survey of contemporary Indian voices and viewpoints regarding the roles that various Indian peoples played in the human evolution of the landscape and region on which now sits Yellowstone National Park.

At the outset we should also state that since we are trying to reconstruct and interpret the life-patterns of Indian peoples who neighbored on and acted within Yellowstone National Park we must extend our territorial range to what has often been termed variously "the Yellowstone ecosystem," the "greater Yellowstone," or "the greater Yellowstone ecosystem." Just as one cannot understand the bureaucratic, military or environmental history of Yellowstone National Park proper without an appreciation of historical issues related to the western plains and the U.S. park system in general, even extending to political decisions made in Washington, D.C. that effected the Park, so we have not limited our inquiries or reconstructions to the precise boundaries of the Park. That the adjoining landscape was considered an inherent part of the Park ecosystem was recognized early on by the fact that Shoshone National Forest was initially known as "the Yellowstone Park Timberland Reserve." Hence we are generally adopting the characterization of the Yellowstone ecosystem offered by lawyer-environmentalist Charles F. Wilkinson:

...the most commonly accepted definition seems to be an area of about thirteen [now 18-20] million acres. It includes Yellowstone and Teton National Parks, three wildlife refuges, some BLM and private lands, part of the Wind River Indian Reservation, and, perhaps most importantly, seven national forests. The ecosystem, as defined in this manner, touches more than two dozen jurisdictions. It also encompasses all of the plateau, the mountain systems that splay out from the park, and the headwaters of all the streams that flow out in all directions [Wilkinson 1993:176].

Specific Goals of this Study

By no means do we pretend to submit a definitive history of Indians in and around the park, for reasons which will be clearly stated below. What we have tried to accomplish in this document is to narrate in compelling fashion the results of our ethnographic inquiry and our summary of published or archival data, as both pertain to:

- a) the archaeological cultures associated with Yellowstone National Park and its environs;

b) the so-called "Sheep Eater" culture who were the only recognized "permanent" Park inhabitants before and during the historic period;

c) the historic tribal groups whose territories overlapped onto or impinged upon the later Park boundaries on all four sides.

To meet these goals we have tried to extend currently existing summaries of Yellowstone's Indians by:

a) pursuing ethnographers' raw field notes and archived documents related to these historic tribes;

b) seeking out representatives of these same American Indian nations in an effort to incorporate contemporary Indian perspectives;

c) presenting these new or freshly-contextualized data in the form of full-bodied, descriptive narratives rather than laundry lists of resources.

Yellowstone National Park as Key Symbol

Discussion on practically any aspect of Yellowstone National Park can get you into trouble. This is because the Park has proven to be a lightning rod for a wide range of American opinions, beliefs, experiments, attitudes and desires concerning what is arguably humankind's oldest discourse: the practical, philosophical and spiritual dimensions of the relationship between culture and nature. As our nation's highest-visibility, open-air laboratory where that relationship is constantly being tested, contested, and redefined, what is a serious conversation anywhere else becomes a raging controversy in Yellowstone. This is also because the natural properties and cultural history of the Park are so unusual, resonant and symbolic that they lend themselves to multiple interpretations and incessant scrutiny. What is it about Yellowstone that makes it seem to focus and dramatize such a concentration of deep mythical or cosmic themes, American environmental values, and integrative concepts? What makes the Park such a compelling - one might say almost mandatory - destination of pilgrimage for the American family? What is the unique compound of characteristics which make Yellowstone National Park - like The Alamo, Grand Canyon, the Vietnam Memorial or Yosemite - one of our country's key symbols?

Geographically, the lifeblood of the Yellowstone Plateau is the great river which gathers from streams pouring off the Two Ocean Plateau south of the Park to pool into the largest high altitude lake in North America before it presses on to the north. There is also a symbolic importance to the centrality of this spot on the Continental Divide, for the Two Ocean Pass Lake is the knot which binds together the continent: one of its outlets, Atlantic Creek flows into the Yellowstone and thence

eventually into the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean; the other outlet, Pacific Creek, eventually replenishes the Columbia and ultimately enters the Pacific Ocean.

When it is frozen over, the 136 square miles of Yellowstone Lake forms the largest ice sheet in the continental United States. As for the Yellowstone River, it extends into the longest undammed stream in the lower 48 states, stretching for 671 miles, draining a 70,102 square-mile watershed and eventually traversing an expanse greater than all of New England. In the initial high-altitude portion of the Yellowstone River's three main sections, it completes over half of its 5,800-foot descent within its first 100 miles. Here is where one can view the great canyons which, in combination with the dramatic effusions of its thermal field, have made it one of the wonders of the world.

Geologically, both Indians and Anglos immediately recognized the wonders of the Yellowstone Plateau as an on-going spectacle of the powerful forces which first produced and still can reform the earth's topography. Initially, this has less to do with the natural beauty of its lakes, peaks or valleys than with the ten thousand thermal features which are concentrated within the confines of the Park, whose nearly nine hundred geysers contain over 60 percent of those on the planet. It is appropriate in a survey on Indian relations with and attitudes towards this unusual geological region to remind ourselves of this awe-inspiring power. We say this because Indians have often been charged with giving Yellowstone's thermal field a wide berth in their travels through the region, with dubbing it "taboo," "evil," a place of demonic forces. As observed by historian Robert H. Keller and Michael F. Turek, however, these claims about Indian attitudes towards Yellowstone would prove to be merely the first and most strident examples of "The widespread misconception that Indians feared national park areas and had not used the land..." (Keller and Turek 1998:24), and these authors point out how similar "myths" became attached to Mt. Rainier, the interior Olympic Peninsula, and the southwest's Zion National Park, among other public sites.

But as has been documented by earlier writers and will be underscored in this report, "awesome," "powerful," potentially "dangerous" and "sacred" may be more accurate descriptors for Indian attitudes towards the thermal turbulence within Yellowstone National Park. Aside from how such reactions were filtered through the Indians' religious belief systems, however, their feelings of amazement and caution are not that different from those of non-Indians. Just listen to the sentiments of former Yellowstone Chief Ranger Dan R. Sholly on winter's tour just west of Canyon Village:

Beneath where we were riding the earth's molten interior was only half a mile down. Yellowstone was born from volcanism and is still being shaped by its forces. About two million years ago, then one million years ago, then again six hundred thousand years ago, tremendously destructive volcanic eruptions occurred right where I was now freezing. The latest alone supposedly spewed out nearly 240 cubic miles of debris. The 28-by-47-mile caldera, or basin, which dominates much of the park's interior, was the result of the earth collapsing from so much lava...To think that just below my snowmobile was a bubble of molten terror as big as a small moon!" [Sholly and Newman 1991:43].

At Yellowstone the landscape never sits still. In 1959 one of the strongest tremors ever recorded in the United States, releasing the combined energy of 200 Hiroshima bombs, shook an area of some 550,000 square miles round the Park. For visitors from whatever cultural background origin, the experience of being in Yellowstone National Park comes as close as anywhere on earth to offering a direct, personal witness to the very process of creation itself.

Ecologically, just as Father Pierre-Jean De Smet contended in the mid-19th century that, "The Yellowstone country abounds in game; I do not believe that there is in all America a region better adapted to the chase" (Chittenden and Richardson, eds. 1969:243), so Aubrey L. Haines would concur nearly a century and a half later that Yellowstone National Park contains "a more representative sample of the primeval fauna of the American West than is now found anywhere else" (Haines 1996:xix). Whether scientific fact or popular impression, in the American imagination Yellowstone National Park is one place in the country where one also seems to bear personal witness to the full Ark of their country's faunal history, supposedly living naturally within their wilderness habitat, *in situ*, "as it was" before any humans - Indian or white - took control. Moreover this is the primeval image which has consciously been promulgated in picturesque landscape paintings, monuments, photographs and verbal portrayals of the region and its natural wonders.

As one might expect of the discourse that erupts around any key symbol, however, others contest this view of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem as a natural wilderness overflowing with all manner of fauna. Despite the reality that many of the animal species one does view grazing throughout the Park have had their behaviors modified and even partially domesticated by a hundred years of vacillating game-management practices, the older image of Yellowstone as the ultimate time-capsule game refuge has died hard. Although in other regions of America we are gradually realizing the degree to which human interaction, intentional and inadvertent, has effected the ecology, transforming such "pristine" locales into culturally constructed landscapes (Cronon 1995; Blackburn and Anderson 1993; Lewis 1973), in the past, at least, at Yellowstone the concept has been resisted because of the fierce symbolic hold the place still claims in American consciousness. Especially antagonistic to any notion of Yellowstone as some Garden of Eden has been Charles E. Kay, who has contended that "Historical records do not support the view that the Inter-mountain West once teemed with wildlife" (Kay 1995:121). In a series of papers, Kay has argued that many animal and plant species were actually in slim supply in the Yellowstone of pre-Anglo-American days. Furthermore, he suggests that "the idea that North America was a 'wilderness' untouched by the hand of man prior to 1492 is a myth created, in part, to justify appropriation of aboriginal lands and the genocide that befell native peoples" (Kay 1996:84). And historian William Cronon also links the myth of virgin wilderness with this reality of Indian evictions in the West which opened up lands for national parks:

The removal of Indians to create an 'uninhabited wilderness'...reminds us just how invented, just how constructed, the American wilderness really is. To return to my opening argument: there is nothing natural about the concept of wilderness. It is entirely a creation of the [non-Indian] culture that holds it dear, a product of the very history that it seems to deny [Cronon 1995:79].

But Kay's opinions have been vigorously challenged, point by point, by a number of scholars, such as Ken Cannon, Paul Schullery and Lee Whittlesey, who have criticized what they consider to be his misreadings of and lack of proper historical analysis procedures for properly examining primary sources related to observations of animal life, his reliance upon minuscule sample sizes for the animal populations assessed (Schullery and Whittlesey 1999b:20), and his dependence upon secondary sources for demographic estimates of early Native Americans in the region (Schullery and Whittlesey 1999a:16). Cannon takes particular issue with using mid to late 19th century accounts for reports of game numbers earlier on - even though more than 90% of observers "expressed belief that game was abundant" - because of the external impact upon animal populations that already must have occurred by then (Cannon 1992:1-158). In the entire debate over the time depth of particular interactions between humans and environments across the American West, Schullery sees a mixed blessing:

This discussion is valuable because it has compelled land managers and public-land users to recognize the important role played by humans in the pre-Columbian landscape. But it has also been used rather like a weapon in land-management debates. What began as an important corrective in our understanding of wild landscapes has become a blanket criticism of all wildland management. It is now apparently presumed that because Indians had many influences on many North American places, they had all those influences in all those places [Schullery 1997:314-315].

Ethnographically, this northwestern corner of present-day Wyoming is also especially complex and unique. For the Yellowstone Plateau is the convergence point for three out of North America's nine aboriginal culture areas. Whereas to Clark Wissler (see below), the first scholar to subdivide North America into these "culture areas," the Park area initially was viewed in 1914 as reflecting only the life-style of classic, horse-riding Plains Indian peoples (Wissler 1914:pl. 33), three years later Wissler refined his continental breakdown so that in addition to the Plains influence on the east, he had pushed the Plateau region, or the "Salmon Area," much closer to the Park region from the northwest, while he now saw the influence of the Great Basin peoples, his so-called "Wild Seeds" area, directly abutting the Park from the southwest (Wissler 1917:8).

Then, in a 1920 mapping of North American culture areas, the renowned anthropologist Alfred C. Kroeber budged the Plateau cultural influence even closer to the Park (Kroeber 1920:167), and three years later he placed the entire southwestern half of Park territory under western, or "Intermountain" influence, with only its northeastern corner more associated with the Plains lifestyle (Kroeber 1923:fig.41), becoming even more specific in 1939 with his labeling of this western influence as "Great Basin" (Kroeber 1939:map 6, 55). But in Julian Steward's classic geographical distribution of Shoshonean groups (1941), the Park was most clearly declared to sit on the general meeting place for the three cultural regions, with the converging Plateau, Plains and Great Basin influences coming together in this upper corner of present-day Wyoming.

Once one factors in the impact of rapid historical change in and around the Park area, the coming of horses, the advent of mining, the territorial adjustments of early Indian treaties, and of course the desire of early conservationists to stake out a natural preserve which might remain exempt from further development, the region of Yellowstone National Park is clearly revealed as a zone of extreme cultural complexity.

Historically, Yellowstone is the oldest and largest "natural" preserve in the United States, carved out of the high lava plateau in March 1, 1872 to protect its 3,348 square miles from poachers and developers and to launch the spirit of natural conservation across the country. As the nation's founding park, it came to occupy almost mythic status and appeal. As historian Richard White has written:

The [non-Indian] United States was a young nation lacking both an ancient history and a cultural tradition rich in art, architecture or literature. Americans looked to scenery as compensation for the cultural riches they lacked...It became a matter of national pride that the new country set apart areas such as the Yosemite Valley of California or the Yellowstone country of Wyoming as symbols of national greatness. These "earth monuments," proponents claimed, rivaled in grandeur the monuments of Europe's antiquity" [White 1991:410].

The possibility that regions such as Yellowstone and Yosemite might have already spawned ancient native histories, cultural traditions or literatures was rarely considered or discussed. And if any government personnel familiar with these landscapes and their histories harbored misgivings about this erasure of prior cultural impact they were drowned out by the strident denials and appeals to national identity which have continued to place Yellowstone in the public eye.

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This dense layering of multiple but contested significances has made Yellowstone National Park a patriotic symbol of the nation's paradisiacal origins, a lightning rod for the unending American debate between economic growth and environmental conservation, and a major mirror for self-reflection on how the country keeps reconstituting its cultural roots and public image. Whether the national discussion is about controlling animal demography, managing human-predator encounters, monitoring mining pollution, reintroducing endangered species, containing buffalo migrations, or now responding to the moral or legal claims of indigenous peoples, so many hot button issues related to the concept of "national parks" seem to find their most newsworthy storyline in the Yellowstone Plateau. To the cultural scholar this constant swirl of multi-sided positions generated by Yellowstone National Park is symptomatic of the fact that from its inception the place was more than the sum of its parts. As anthropologist Sherry Ortner has written, it is only through a nation's "public symbol

system" that members of a society "discover, rediscover, and transform their own culture, generation after generation" (Ortner 1979:94).

Furthermore, the convergence of unusual factors listed above constitute Yellowstone National Park as what Ortner calls a "Key Symbol," by which she means, "...we say such a symbol is 'key' to the system insofar as it extensively and systematically formulates relationships - parallels, isomorphisms, complementarities, and so forth - between a wide range of diverse cultural elements" (Ortner 1979:97). This is to say that Yellowstone National Park seems to occupy a central or key site in American consciousness where the on-going relationship between culture and nature is being worked out in uniquely American terms, and a place where the nation redefines itself in the process. Inevitably this report contributes to the complexity of this process by restoring to that discourse information about a host of American Indian cultures which interacted in practical and spiritual terms with the region.

Legislative Background to this Study

One overriding objective of this overview is to produce a document which offers managers of public lands a better understanding of the ethnographic resources under their control or on adjacent lands affected by their decisions, and to facilitate communications with American Indian groups who enjoyed any cultural or historical affiliations with that region. Of the successive pieces of legislation which have articulated the responsibilities between federal land management agencies and their role in ethnographic resource management over the last twenty years, certainly the most significant is the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA), PL 95-341, of 1978.

This groundbreaking government initiative underscored the rights of Indian "access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites." Whenever management activities might threaten to limit religious practices, restrict access to important ethnographic resources, alter sacred sites, or affect Indian burials, AIRFA stipulates the need for consultation with Indian tribes.

One year after passage of AIRFA another important law, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) PL 96-95, Section 4c, of 1979, sought to protect religious and cultural sites which were at least a half a century old. This legislation stipulated that before any permit was issued which might do "harm to, or destruction of, any religious or cultural sites,...the federal land manager shall notify any Indian tribe which may consider the site as having religious or cultural importance." This act was recently reinforced in the case of Indiana resident Arthur Gerber who was charged with looting archaeological sites that contained human burials. Gerber appealed on the grounds that ARPA did not apply to his offense. However, the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals held that ARPA was not limited to objects removed from Federal and Indian lands, but was a catch-all provision designed to back up state and local laws protecting archaeological resources.

The 1966 National Historic Preservation Act protects sites that are significant to local, state, or national prehistory, and includes clauses that protect history, culture, architecture and technology. In 1992, an amendment in Section 101(d) to the Act specifically states that sites of "traditional religious and cultural importance to Indian tribes or Native Hawaiian organizations may be determined eligible for inclusion on the National Register." Furthermore the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal land managers to identify and evaluate traditional cultural properties that could be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places before undertaking any action that might harm such sites. Standards and guidelines on archaeology and historic preservation were published by the Department of Interior, National Park Service (Federal Register 1983:Vol.48,No.190) and reinforced, in relationship to traditional cultural properties, by the National Register Bulletin 38 (Parker and King 1990), but as King (1993:60) points out neither Bulletin 38 nor the 1992 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act did anything to change the original act with regard to traditional cultural properties.

In Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 it states that before federal land managers expend "any Federal funds on [an] undertaking or prior to the issuance of any license, as the case may be, [they should] take into account the effect of the undertaking on any district, site, building, structure or object that is included in the National Register." Federal land managers need to inform the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation of any proposed actions that may affect eligible properties. As emphasized above, these properties include "ethnographic resources", "sacred sites" and "traditional cultural properties" and as such this legislation is commonly employed for protecting them (Sebastian 1993). Therefore, several different approaches are used to define the eligibility of sites, under the following criteria:

- a) a site can be eligible for an "important event" that transpired there;
- b) a site can be deemed significant because an "important person" was associated with the location;
- c) a site may be representative of a "type" of cultural or rare construction or location;
- d) a site may be considered to possess "cultural value" if its significance to American Indian beliefs or customs "has been ethnohistorically documented and if it can be clearly defined {Parker and King 1990:15-17}.

This list also means that locations or cultural features which play a major role in the mythology, cosmology or history of a Native American group are potentially eligible to the National Register. This includes sites "where Native American religious practitioners have historically gone, and are known or thought to go today, to perform ceremonial activities in accordance with traditional cultural rules of practice" (Parker and King 1990:1). Traditional cultural significance is meant to imply any location "where a community has traditionally carried out economic, artistic, or other cultural practices important in maintaining its historic identity" (Parker and King 1990:1).

Another important piece of legislation affecting Indian resources on public lands was the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1980 (NAGPRA), PL 101-106. This law oversees the correct handling of unmarked Indian graves and human skeletal remains and establishes a means for tribes to ask for the return of skeletal materials, grave goods, sacred objects and articles of cultural patrimony from federally funded curation facilities.

Some federal land managers feel overwhelmed with responsibility for traditional cultural properties and privately they express hope that Congress will change or remove their obligations to protect sacred sites. But reviewing the legislation above it is apparent the reverse is actually the norm and Congress actually strengthens the laws. In 1996, President Clinton followed the same lead with the issuance of Executive Order 13007. In Section 1 (a) it states:

each executive branch agency with statutory or administrative responsibility for the management of Federal lands shall, to the extent practicable, permitted by law, and not clearly inconsistent with essential agency functions, (1) accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners and (2) avoid adversely affecting the integrity of such sacred sites [Federal Register 61 (104):26771--May 29,1996].

Given this twenty-year body of laws, it is also no longer sufficient for a survey of "cultural resources" of a particular area to be limited to the surface remains of earlier inhabitants which archaeologically-trained specialists might peruse on the ground. Today a truly "cultural" survey has to go beyond even the updated definition of an "archaeological resource," as clarified and expanded upon in the uniform regulations of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, to wit:

any material remnants of past human life or activities..., [including] but not...limited to: pottery, basketry, bottles, weapons, weapon projectiles, tools, structures or portions of structures, pit houses, rock paintings, rock carvings, intaglios, graves, human skeletal [remains],or any portion or [piece] of any of the foregoing items...[provided] such item is at least 100 years of age [ARPA 1979; Section 69.3(a)].

Today "cultural" or "ethnographic" resources must have an expanded definition, as suggested as early as 1982 in the draft of a Bureau of Indian Affairs manual bulletin:

The term "cultural resources" may be broadly defined as the remains of human activity, both historic and prehistoric. Included within the term are: buildings and other structures, ruins, artifacts and other objects made by people, works of art, human remains, and sites and natural features that have been of importance in human events [Suagee 1982:16].

But Dean B. Suagee, one of the drafters of this definition, found even this excessively limiting, and sought to add aspects of what folklorists call "expressive culture" to the category:

The term 'cultural resources' might also be used to describe the 'intangible elements of our cultural heritage' such as language, myth, arts, skills, songs and dance. Such an expansion of the definition might well be appropriate because the application of cultural resources management to Indian concerns involves the preservation of living cultures" [Suagee 1982:16-17].

Due to the unusual multi-tribal responsibilities of this project, and the need for multiple research strategies in order to compensate for the long interrupted flow of data about Indians and the Park, we are adopting the more expanded definition of "cultural" or "ethnographic" resources. As we will elaborate in our final chapter, this overview of supporting legislation makes it abundantly clear that federal land managing agencies need to develop updated assessment and public interpretation programs for those cultural resources under their jurisdiction.

Interdisciplinary Research in Yellowstone National Park

The many different kinds of sources of data behind our diachronic investigation into the multiple Indian relationships with Yellowstone National Park have required us to adopt an interdisciplinary perspective. Blending field and archival research, our chapters have incorporated data, with differential emphases, which derives from work primarily within four disciplines, 1) Cultural Anthropology and Ethnography, 2) American History 3) North American Archaeology, and 4) Folklore.

First, our study has been Ethnographic in that we have reviewed the published literature and, wherever possible, tracked down the unpublished field notes produced by scholars who conducted fieldwork among the ten major tribes with cultural or historical associations to the Yellowstone Valley ecosystem.

Second, our study has been Ethnohistoric as well, since a great deal of our knowledge of Indian activities and beliefs related to the Park springs from documents generated by chroniclers with a greater interest in the historical rather than in the cultural implications of their material. This leaves to the latter-day ethnohistorians the task of combing through this material to weigh whatever it may contain regarding Indian life-ways and world-views.

Thirdly, this supposedly "ethnographic" study has by necessity trespassed into the precontact time-frame normally reserved to Archaeology. It must include such data since the full role, chronological depth and geographical knowledge of the Park by at least two of the major cultural groups covered by this report - the Shoshone and the Sheep Eaters - have highly presumptive linguistic and other affiliations with precontact populations who moved in and out of the region.

Finally, our study has also had to be Folkloristic, in that sifting through the wide and usually uncontextualized range of native narratives has required some basic knowledge of narrative

traditions, characteristic themes and motifs associated with Indian groups who have been linked to the Yellowstone region.

Let us briefly review the history of these four areas of data within the context of cultural documentation on Yellowstone National Park and environs.

Ethnography and Yellowstone National Park

None of the American ethnographers from America's so-called "Golden Age of Anthropology," roughly covering the 1890-1935 period, centered their research within the greater Yellowstone Plateau. Nor did any of these fieldworkers seize the opportunity to work with the Sheep Eaters before or after they were pressured to evacuate the new Park. During the Park's emergent years, when efforts intensified to discourage Indians from trespassing over the Park's new boundaries, no scholars staked out the plateau as a center for salvaging old travel routes or reconstructing Indian hunting, foraging or other cultural practices in the Yellowstone heartland.

However, a handful of earlier, pioneering scholars did collect ethnographic data from tribes in the wider neighborhood of the Plains, Plateau and Great Basin culture areas. Under government sponsorship, John Wesley Powell recorded aspects of cultural life from the Great Basin cousins of the Numic-speaking Shoshone, James Mooney worked with the Kiowa on their transformation from a northern to a southern Plains people, and James Teit collected folklore and other material among various Salishan peoples of the Plateau. But the self-consciously "scientific" recording of the social worlds of the region had to await the next, second generation of scholars who dispersed throughout the Plains around the turn of the century. Unlike most of their forbears, this was not a group of professionals in other walks of life - former military men, natural scientists or surveyors - who had been drawn to documenting Indian societies out of a sense of concern for their plight or because they admired their lifestyle.

Schooled by the founder-teachers of the emergent discipline of anthropology like Franz Boas and Livingston Farrand at Columbia University, and often closely allied with New York's Museum of Natural History, this new cadre of fieldworkers were united under the banner of "salvage ethnography" - the ambitious, urgent project of talking with Indian old timers about the days not so long before when their peoples freely observed their traditions, foraged for wild plants, hunted buffalo and raided each other, before such data was lost for good. As Margaret Mead and Ruth L. Bunzel characterized this generation of schooled fieldworkers such as Alfred Kroeber who worked among the Shoshone, Robert H. Lowie who worked among the Crow, and Clark Wissler who worked among the Blackfoot:

They were professional anthropologists, trained in methods of collecting and evaluating data. They were not interested in Indians qua Indians; their interests were much broader. They were concerned with varieties of man on earth, and Indians were one type of man. They sometimes spoke of the world of primitive men as their

"laboratory." However, they were not quite so detached as they pretended to be; each one of them would defend the special excellence of "his" tribe [Mead and Bunzel 1960:340].

As with any particular cohort, these scholars also shared their blindspots. While visiting the newly established reservations to seek old warriors who often were happy for the audience, they largely ignored women's lives, overlooked tensions over the impositions of the government's reservation regimen, disregarded the younger Indian generation as already unaware of their heritage, and failed to record the geographical knowledge of their native consultants. Indeed, they rarely credited the religious formulators and tribal historians of the peoples they visited with the ability to understand and articulate their own theories of tribal philosophy or religion. In these "informants", instead, they largely saw suppliers of facts which it was their responsibility to fit into the theories of the day. Their theoretical slant towards the pre-contact development of and interactions between these specific Indian societies was known as "historical particularism," as championed by the highly influential giant of American scientific anthropology, Franz Boas. This viewpoint held that for reconstructing the past of peoples without archived accounts and documents, comparisons must be drawn from neighboring regions where historical contact could be substantiated. But to make such careful comparisons some kind of logic, no matter how clumsy, had to be devised for characterizing such "areas" in the first place.

When Clark Wissler succeeded Franz Boas as curator of New York's Museum of Natural History in 1905 he also faced this dilemma: how to arrange the museum's exhibits in a way which did not follow the pre-Boasian theory that, as described in 19th century scholar Lewis Henry Morgan's famous phrase, all American Indian cultures has passed through an identical series of evolutionary steps "from savagery to civilization." Instead, Wissler came up with the notion of the "Culture Area," which argued that when specific Indian tribes lived near each other in a generally similar geographical zone and shared many more features with each other that were different from those in an adjoining geographical zone they could be said to constitute a particular "culture area."

For Indians of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem this way of subdividing Indian America meant that their expanse lay at the meeting point of three of the nine great culture areas into which Wissler had divided up the continent. These areas were the Great Basin, the Plateau and the Great Plains. Two additional concepts also sprang out of Wissler's concept of the "Culture Area." The first was the proposition that within each area was a "center" where the most characteristic people in that region (had) had best exhibited and epitomized the diagnostic features of that culture area. Although none of Wissler's era appreciated it at the time, there also appears to have been a localized, high-altitude adaptation to the micro-habitat of the Yellowstone highlands which stood sufficiently apart to be singled out on its own and to fit this role in so far as this unusual region was concerned - the Sheep Eaters. A second offshoot of the culture area concept was the "age-area" concept, which proposed that this cultural "center" would also be the generative center for the diagnostic traits of its culture area, and that like a stone dropping into water, they would be passed from hand to hand ever outward. This would also suggest that those traits which diffused the widest were probably the

region's oldest - which, for the Plains culture area, for instance, would mean such cultural features as a form of women's dress, Sun Dancing, or the use of medicine bundles.

With all the population losses and tribal consolidations and relocations of the late 19th century, testing these sorts of secondary propositions in the Plains, Plateau or Great Basin was difficult at best, although one of Boas' students named Leslie Spier made a noble effort in his comparative study of the Plains Indian Sun Dance. But in a small region like Yellowstone National Park, whose only full-time native inhabitants were being absorbed into the Wind River and Fort Hall communities at this time, and whose authorities were actively discouraging all other Indians from leaving their reservations and maintaining the Park as off-limits, such a study was never even considered. So whatever direct contributions our overview contains about the Yellowstone region from this crew of early scholars remains highly peripheral to their main focus, and consists of fragmentary asides about the Yellowstone gleaned from the margins of their published works and field notes. Furthermore, the Park was and is something of an anomalous cultural world in that as already stated, it lies at this juncture of those three great culture area traditions. So not surprisingly our following chapters will contain glimpses and samples of each of the Great Basin, Plateau and Shoshonean world-views and cultural traits.

Of this group of foundational fieldworkers probably Robert H. Lowie (1883-1957) was the most relevant to the present study, for he worked among the Northern Shoshone to the west of Yellowstone National Park, as well as among the Crow to the east. A student of both Boas and Kroeber, his efforts went into assembling data but not into advancing over-arching theories. This was particularly apparent with Lowie's long-term investment in the culture of the Crow Indians, whose southern division, the Mountain Crow, enjoyed considerable interaction with the Yellowstone National Park ecosystem. Thus his investigations offer much rich but uncoordinated data on the tribes who hunted or lived along the eastern, southern and western portions of the Park. Lowie's work also epitomized his era, which saw the possibilities for collecting linguistic and social data quickly vanishing before the onslaughts of assimilation and modern life. For that reason these mostly-male scholars concentrated on "memory culture" as it could be retrieved through interviews with old warriors who still retained knowledge of the pre-reservations days of the 19th century. Among other scholars of Lowie's general generation working under the same general guidelines and with western tribes historically associated with Yellowstone National Park were Clark Wissler among the Blackfeet, Alfred Kroeber among the Arapaho and Verne F. Ray in the Plateau.

Working among the Blackfeet and Flathead, the documentation by ethnographers John C. Ewers and Claude Schaeffer understandably lacked many references to Yellowstone National Park, reflecting the lessened familiarity of these Blackfeet, Salish and Kootenai peoples with the region. Aside from contributions by John C. Ewers to the record of long-distance travels of the Blackfeet (1955,1958), we were fortunate in obtaining from the Kootenai-Salish Culture Committee the field notes of Claude Schaeffer who elicited from Flathead elders a geographically-specific sense of their old trail system that led them southward. Yet the historical emphases of this next generation of scholars like Ewers, Schaeffer, and Robert F. and Yolanda Murphy working on settlement patterns of Northern Shoshones and Bannocks (Murphy and Murphy 1960) was a welcome turn from the

earlier synchronic studies. In this regard one must also cite the contributions of Swedish anthropologist Sven Liljebäck, who between 1940 and 1983 collected linguistic, religious and historical material almost exclusively among the Shoshone-Bannock of Idaho (Liljebäck 1972).

Often trained in sub-specialities of anthropology such as religion, folklore, or linguistics, the efforts of some of the same or ensuing generation turned closer to the Yellowstone region. They were distinguished by being driven less to produce "laundry list" salvage ethnographies than by a tendency to address specific "problems" or "issues." An important fieldworker whose work among the eastern Shoshone touched on many issues related to the Park's Indian history, for instance, was Demitri Boris Shimkin (1916-1992). A pupil of Robert Lowie, Shimkin's dissertation research on the Wind River reservation starting in 1937 led to highly-detailed publications devoted to the particular issues of ethnopsychology, ethnogeography, literary forms, and the Sun Dance (Shimkin 1939, 1947a, 1947b, 1947c, 1953). Going on to participate in the ethnographic field schools led by Warren d'Azevedo in the 1960s within the Great Basin native communities, Shimkin continued his forays into Shoshonean ethnography, studying social-cultural persistence among the Carson River people of Nevada (with Russell M. Reid (1970) and Shoshonean linguistics (1980).

In marked contrast to the ahistorical tendencies of much Golden Age fieldwork, scholars of this later period who studied tribes with historical relations to Yellowstone National Park turned to cultural expressions of social changes during the reservation period. For instance, Joseph G. Jorgenson looked at the inter-reservation network responsible for the resurgence of the Sun Dance within the Shoshonean world, interpreting this religious phenomenon as a modern "redemptive" movement (Jorgenson 1972). The Sun Dance continues to grow and change today on the Wind River, Fort Hall and Crow Indian reservations. Providing a tighter ethnographic focus on one portion of this Sun Dance network, Fred W. Voget was not intimidated by Lowie's voluminous groundwork on the Crow from retracing how their modern-day Sun Dance was borrowed in 1941 from the Wind River Shoshone, and how it still flourishes (Voget 1984). Meanwhile, Deward E. Walker turned from "traditional" religious expression to study the factionalizing consequences of native Christianity among Idaho's Nez Perce (Walker 1985), while Omer C. Stewart collated a lifetime's worth of data from Yellowstone Plateau-associated tribes in his capstone history of the revitalizing rituals of the pan-Indian Native American Church (Stewart 1987). But both Walker and Stewart would also devote their ethnographic and ethnohistorical expertise to other Park-linked tribes as well, with Stewart providing a useful unscrambling of conflicting assessments of Bannock territoriality (1970), and Walker arguing that with the horse the Shoshone-Bannock connection constituted a virtual confederation (Walker 1993a, 1993b).

As for casting a theoretical net over any ethnographic facts about Indians and Yellowstone, however, it is interesting that the scholar whose work most exclusively targeted the Park was neither an American nor a full anthropologist. In 1948 a young Swedish researcher trained in history of religions named Åke Hultkrantz began his field studies with a five-week sojourn among the Wind River Shoshone, and would return intermittently for short stays until 1958. Despite his scattered fieldwork, Hultkrantz' prodigious output, his masterful bibliographic range and his inclinations as an ethnohistorian and summarizer of existing literature make him the most prolific scholar where

Yellowstone National Park Indians are concerned (Hultkrantz 1956, 1958, 1961a, 1961b, 1968a, 1968b, 1974). At the same time, some of Hultkrantz' theoretical orientations may have inhibited fuller appreciation of the roles of Indians in the Yellowstone Basin region (1954, 1979). Until the still-unpublished study of graduate student Joseph Weixelman (1992), for instance, no one seriously challenged Hultkrantz' thesis about the "taboo" nature of Indian feelings about the Park's thermal field. Yet Hultkrantz must also be credited for recognizing that Sheep Eater descendants had not simply vanished, and he salvaged many of their traditions through interviews within the Sage Creek enclave of traditional Indians on the Wind River Reservation (summarized in Hultkrantz 1966-67, 1970b, 1981a).

Ethnohistory and Yellowstone National Park

Without necessarily broadcasting the fact, the work of numerous scholars and writers on Yellowstone National Park has inevitably been "ethnohistorical." This often misunderstood approach simply implies, in so far as scholarly goals related to Plains Indians have been described, nothing more complicated than the "intent to produce a cultural and/or historical study of an ethnic group as a whole (or a study of some aspect of that culture or history) either at a particular point in time or through a period of years that may extend into centuries" (Wedel and DeMallie 1980: 110). As to how this ethnohistorical approach is actually put into practice, the job of historicizing an ethnic group faces its greatest methodological challenge when that group is a preindustrial, small-scale society which transmits its cultural knowledge from generation to generation primarily through oral traditions rather than by written documents and records.

Thus the "ethnohistorical" approach entails a sort of cultural translation. First one must search through the archives and libraries of one cultural group, which in contexts such as that of Indian-white relations usually means the writings and records of the "dominant" society, in order to find glimpses of the pasts of other cultural groups. This also requires that in addition to the customary scrutiny and standards which regular historians apply to historical or archival materials in order to ascertain their validity, the ethnohistorian must be grounded in anthropological principles and the relevant ethnographic literature in order to evaluate the accuracy and social relevance of earlier observations, often made by amateurs, in order to interpret them within that other culture's contexts.

Taking an ethnohistorical approach to Indians and Yellowstone National Park has called for constantly shifting back and forth between the library and the field, striving to create more three-dimensional portraits of Indian societies "in time" by compiling and cross-checking archival and ethnographic data. Today this task has been raised to an even higher level of complexity, as scholars have come to realize that just because an ethnic group originates from a non-literate tradition does not mean it lacks its own sense of history or expressive modes for transmitting historical knowledge. To accurately identify and interpret the numerous non-Western ways of "doing history" entails the skills of a type of researcher whom Raymond Fogelson has dubbed, only half jokingly, as a "ethno-ethnohistorian" (Fogelson 1974). By this awkward term Fogelson means a scholar whose knowledge of the communicative traditions of particular non-Western, non-literate societies is sufficiently deep

to allow them to detect not only when and what that society is remembering of its collective historical experience, but equally important, why it chooses to remember certain things in particular ways. Since for any culture, it is the choice of what constitutes a historical occurrence which illuminates its priorities and its identity, this deeper approach lets us better appreciate the native point of view. Relating this to Yellowstone National Park material, anthropologist Sven Liljeblad found the way that Shoshones blended the cultural and historical aspects of their past "truly astounding," and he provided the following example:

There was, for instance, the old man who described quite accurately and in great detail the complicated manufacture of a sinew-backed bow, and who in the next minute declared that the flint arrowheads picked up by people in the vicinity were made by nynymbi, the dwarf who dwells in the mountains. There were those who remembered and could name all camping places along the trail - four hundred miles in length - to the buffalo-hunting grounds in Montana, but who were unable to give even an approximate date for the cessation of these expeditions, even though it occurred in his own lifetime [Liljeblad 1971:7].

But it took awhile for American anthropologists to interweave any of these historical perspectives, from either Anglo or Indian points-of-view, into their tribal profiles. As William Fenton has written regarding most of the early 20th century ethnographers working on ethnic groups associated with Yellowstone National Park, "The men on [Clark] Wissler's team proceeded as if historical sources were not available to them, and treated Plains culture in flat perspective" (Fenton 1952:329). Although Robert Lowie, one of "Wissler's team" who would produce over 2,000 printed pages on one of Yellowstone's former users - the Crows - himself confessed that early fur trappers and Indian traders caught data he had missed, in his own work Lowie actually ignored all but the most easily accessible archival documents and primary sources which mentioned the tribe. Lending a tremendous boost to ethnohistorical studies of Indian groups connected to Yellowstone National Park and elsewhere however, was the passage by the U.S. Congress, in 1946, of the Indian Claims Commission Act.

The aim of this legislation was to provide a standardized procedure for processing the accumulating grievances of Indian groups over past inequities, such as the inadequate territorial surveys and unfair cost assessments which were part of the treaty-making process. By 1951 about 850 claims had been filed with the Commission, and were either dismissed, decided in favor of tribes, or proceeded to trial, and the Act was extended to handle a flood of new claims. Each of these cases, however, called for fresh research, for the careful preparation of expert testimony, and for the submission of comprehensive formal reports. Because they concerned such subjects as "how rights to property and power were determined within a group and the question of how Indians originally used the land," a host of anthropologists, historians and other scholars were hired to write tribal summaries with information on political structure, kinship and property inheritance rights, range of food-gathering activities and attempted to assess and reconcile the widest range of primary sources (Hort 1974:10). Now descriptions rendered by the Lewis and Clark expedition, for instance, which

encountered the Northern Shoshone in 1805 and described their subsistence practices, dress style and territorial and political organization, could add to fuller reconstruction of aboriginal life (Biddle 1962:221-263). The Claims Commission reports dealing with Park-related groups included the Crow (Plummer 1974), the Shoshones (Malouf and Hultkrantz 1974) and the Nez Perce (Chalfant and Ray 1974).

Soon academia formally recognized this wave of government-funded research by using the term Ethnohistory more freely and, in 1952, launching a major journal by that name. This journal revealed scholars asking such questions as whether mixing history and culture was anything new. According to folklorist Richard Dorson, "The function of ethnohistory so conceived is to provide a documentary history of the concealed and official inarticulate ethnic groups in American history" (Dorson 1961c:17), and Dorson broadened its subject matter to include traditions which may have questionable basis in historical fact but which exposed the attitudes of disenfranchised peoples. For historian Wilcomb Washburn a less political definition was preferred, in which the task of ethnohistory was, "original research in the documentary history of the culture and movements of primitive peoples, and related problems of broader scope," and Washburn explained that "It may be that the historian is too conscious of historical change, the ethnologist too little. It may also be true that the historian is too little aware of the social organization of the peoples he studies...Both could profit from greater factual knowledge of the past, and it is in this area that the ethnohistorian, from whatever discipline he may come, is expanding our horizons" (Washburn 1961:31, 40-41). Finally, as we discovered when contextualizing the work of Hultkrantz and others on Yellowstone National Park-connected tribes, anthropologist Nancy O. Lurie warns us that "even yesterday's ethnography sometimes becomes today's historical document requiring special assessments and tests of validity" (Lurie 1961:89).

But it took awhile for Yellowstone National Park scholars to take Indians society seriously and to try the ethnohistorical mode. Virtually ignored by Chittenden (1895), neither were Beal (1949) nor Haines (1996) equipped or much interested in teasing out those socio-cultural realities that lurked behind the Indian observations of Lewis and Clark, Osborne Russell or the records left by military surveyors. After dispensing with Indians in the obligatory early chapters of their books they quickly turned to ecological and administrative developments in Park history, with a digression for the seemingly aberrant and sensational Nez Perce intrusion of 1877. Not until the work of Åke Hultkrantz, beginning in the 1950s (1957, 1961b), was there a serious attempt to blend social, historical and religious data on the Park's Indians, and then he only featured the Shoshoneans and privileged their attitudes towards the geyser field. Aside from the noble efforts of Hultkrantz and the amateur historian David Dominick (1964) to reconstruct Sheep Eater culture-history, it is surprising that no scholars have turned over the Park material until the recent spadework by University of California historian Mark Spence, for whom Yellowstone is one of three object lessons in a dissertation (1996a) about national parks (Yosemite, Glacier and Yellowstone) and American Indians.

Archaeology and Yellowstone National Park

The most immediate distinction of archaeological research in Yellowstone National Park is the unusual time-depth of archaeological awareness here, which is attributable to the antiquarian curiosities of the Park's second superintendent of Yellowstone, Philetus Norris. As early as 1875, Norris (1880a) was collecting Indian artifacts and describing archaeological sites in the region along the Yellowstone River in Montana between Fort Ellis and the Park, and throughout his administration Norris continued to catalog the area's old Indian sites and record its artifacts (Norris 1877; 1879; 1880b; 1881a; 1881b).

During the latter quarter of the nineteenth century Norris's appreciation for archaeology was shared by members of early scientific expeditions in the west. Captain William A. Jones, for example, exploring for the United States Army Corps of Engineers, visited Yellowstone National Park in the summer of 1873. In his travels across Wyoming, Jones (1875) also collected Indian artifacts and reported the significance of Indian remains. It was Jones who reported the favored use of the old stone scraping tools or "teshoas" among the Shoshone women for processing hides and the significance of Yellowstone National Park obsidian in the manufacture of artifacts.

Exploring the headwaters of the Jefferson River in Montana within a few miles of Yellowstone National Park, J. W. Brower, a Minnesota surveyor who sought his fame through searching for the utmost sources of rivers, found an archaeological site where he collected obsidian knives and spear points. In his journal, he pondered the makers of these ancient tools and contemplated that one day we would find evidence for evolving humans, perhaps the oldest in the World, on the North American continent:

The endeavors of ethnologic students...utterly fail to determine any correct identification of the original stocks whence the Indian nations of America came, and the best evidence comes from the Indians themselves -- "Spontaneous Man, who sprang from the bosom of the earth."

The land of America has existed for a much greater time than 500,000 centuries, originally producing plant and animal life...Who can truthfully assert that all nations of men sprang from one original parentage, or that the Indians of America did not proceed from the soil of the Western Hemisphere? If America has the oldest land, why not the oldest race of men [Brower 1897:131]?

Although we have yet to find any evidence for human evolution in the western hemisphere prior to modern *Homo sapiens*, Brower's reflections remind us how strongly these early scientists were influenced by the writings and theories of Charles Darwin, E. B. Tylor, and L. H. Morgan. While the treatises of Darwin were directed toward biological evolution, Tylor and Morgan focused on culture change in a paradigm known as "unilineal evolution", a theoretical scheme in which all human cultures were thought to progress through the same stages of Savagery to Barbarism to Civilization, with common features of material culture such as tools and housetypes associated with each stage. In his orders to the construction crews who were building Yellowstone's first roadways Norris

alludes to his awareness of this theory and its categorical distinctions between "civilized" and earlier peoples:

As all civilized nations are now actively pushing explorations and researches for evidences of prehistoric peoples, careful scrutiny is required of all material handled in excavations and all arrow, spear, or lance heads, stone axes, and knives, or other weapons, utensils or ornaments; in short, all such objects of interest are to be regularly retained and turned over daily to the officer in charge of each party for transmittal to the National Museum in Washington [Norris 1881b:7].

This official alert to his staff brought Norris numerous artifacts which he carefully packed and shipped to the Smithsonian Institution. They included hundreds of projectile points and other stone cutting and scraping tools, partial and complete steatite pots, an atlatl weight, and a stone plummet. In the Fifth Annual Report for his tenure as superintendent, Norris (1881b) described some of these artifacts together with accurate pen and ink illustrations.

In a visit to the Smithsonian Institution in August 1996, Loendorf found the artifacts sent by Norris as well as many more. Using the information on the artifact donor cards it is possible to learn some information regarding the origin of the artifacts. For example, Arnold Hague found a steatite pot and other chipped stone artifacts while he was doing geological research in the mountains along the eastern border of the Park and delivered them to the Smithsonian for safe-keeping. When W. Hallett Philips studied Park administration at Yellowstone in 1885 some of his time must have gone into hunting for Indian artifacts because several dozen stone tools at the Smithsonian list him as donor. In 1908 S.V. Proudfit, an assistant commissioner for the U.S. Land Department who was in Yellowstone surveying boundaries, added more than a hundred Yellowstone National Park artifacts to the Smithsonian collections, many from materials gathered by Edward Fish, an assistant superintendent in the Park.

Throughout this early antiquarian period, Obsidian Cliff was the best known site in the Park, in part because the first road through the Park passed underneath the Cliff. But curiously enough, most of the artifacts donated to the Smithsonian came from other site locations in the Park which probably reflects the prevailing interest in Obsidian Cliff as a geological phenomena rather than an archaeological site.

Over the first half of the twentieth century artifact collecting seems to have remained a sidelight for Yellowstone National Park employees, as Merrill Beal writes:

Experienced rangers who have reported these finds [Indian artifacts] to the author include David deL Condon, Lee L. Coleman, John W. Jay, John Bauman, Rudolf L. Grimm, Wayne Replogle, Lowell G. Biddulph, George Marler, and William Sanborn [Beal 1949:87].

Their artifacts were usually donated to the Mammoth Visitor Center museum for curation, and at least two of these individuals wrote about archaeological sites in the Park. David Condon (1948) described an Indian burial which turned up during construction of a pipeline near Fishing Bridge while Wayne Replogle (1956) produced an important monograph on the Bannock Trails through Yellowstone National Park.

Although there were occasional visits to the Park by trained archaeologists who reported their discoveries on site forms and produced one published account (Shippee 1947), it was Carling Malouf of the University of Montana who directed the first funded research in 1958 (Malouf 1965). Archaeologists working with Malouf located and evaluated well-known sites like the Lava Creek wickiups and locations subject to high visitor use such as the Fishing Bridge area (Hoffman 1958). At Malouf's request Dee Taylor of the University of Montana took over the direction of the survey in 1959; two years later his field supervisor, Jacob Hoffman, compiled their findings for a master of arts thesis. More than ninety years after the Park was founded, their two-year survey was summarized by Taylor et al. (1964) in what would become the first professional study on the prehistory of Yellowstone National Park.

Taylor followed a culture-historical paradigm which described and placed the recovered artifacts within a temporal and spatial framework. Even though many locations were not visited by his crews, 78 of the 195 sites reported through the research had previously been identified by Replogle during his reconstruction of the Bannock Trail System. An additional 53 sites were partially recorded by Park naturalists with surface collections placed in the Mammoth Visitor Center museum (Taylor et al. 1964). All in all, one hundred and eighty of the sites (92%) were surface scatters of chipped stone detritus with no other defining characteristics, seven (4%) exhibited tipi rings on their surface, four (2%) were areas where chipped stone had been quarried, two (1%) were wickiup sites, while the remainder consisted of a single game drive site and a site with ceramics and chipped stone debris on the surface. Their age ranged from the late Paleo-Indian Period, dating to some 8000 to 9000 years before the present, to the still-standing wickiup structures which were almost certainly constructed during the Historic Period. Yet how easily such sites could be overlooked was recently evoked by the veteran Yellowstone chronicler, Paul Schullery:

A few years ago I was scanning the hills above a meadow near Mammoth Hot Springs. I was looking for grizzly bears, but along a low slope on one side of a small drainage that emptied out into the meadow, two parallel rows of boulders caught my eye. Ranging in size from one to several feet across, the boulders ran downhill in lines so straight and perfect that there could be no doubt they were put there by humans. They had clearly been there a very long time, but nobody, not even the archeologists and historians I later asked, had noticed them. I took an archeologist to see them, just to confirm my suspicion, but the purpose of the boulder lines was pretty obvious to me. Crouching behind them, a hunter would have been well concealed from elk, deer, or bison as they descended through the narrow draw and out onto the meadow on their way to the nearest standing water.

I started spending time in that meadow in 1972, and I glassed those slopes countless times looking for bears, but it took me eighteen years to notice those rocks [Schullery 1997:6].

The early 1960's opened a new era to the archaeology of Yellowstone National Park, when the Chief Naturalist assigned Aubrey L. Haines the task of preparing base maps on archaeology and history which were required for the Park's master-plan. Frustrated because the University of Montana study was not yet available, and in the absence of any other site records, Haines launched his own research program. In one phase he planned to visit artifact collectors, take notes, photographs, and measurements for the important artifacts in their collections; in a second he envisioned survey in areas of the Park which had been overlooked by the University of Montana crews.

To begin with, Haines (1963, 1965) recorded artifacts that had been found by hunters, guides and seasonal employees in some extremely remote and high-altitude regions outside the northern boundary of the Park. A significant number of these artifacts were well-known "types" which archaeologists associated with Paleo-Indian societies dating back to from 7000 to 9000 years ago when the mountains still retained remnant of glaciers, while other stone tools were dated to the altithermal, a hot, dry climatic period that followed the last major glaciers. Aside from the fact that archaeologists were surprised there were any artifacts at all in the mountains above timberline, two hypotheses that are still debated today were derived from these findings. One was the idea that the high mountain peaks were free of glaciers and therefore could serve as routes for travel for Paleo-Indians; the other was the possibility that the hot and dry climate of post-glacial times served to create a "sanctuary or a retreat" in the cooler, moist mountain region.

While these discoveries were highly significant, it was the other phase of Haines' research, the archaeological survey, that would remain most meaningful in terms of the Yellowstone National Park's Indian history. For now Haines initiated the first research into the Park's past which was premised on a settlement-and-subsistence paradigm. As he envisioned it, this two-fold survey would explore areas not covered by the University of Montana including:

...the Upper Lamar River drainage (mountainous, difficult country of great significance, I believe, as a hunting area ...), and the Yankee Jim Canyon to Gardiner basin, which provided these peoples, and possibly earlier ones, with a wintering-ground of great importance. The two are interlocking parts of the puzzle [Haines memorandum 1962:1, Haines file, Yellowstone National Park Archives, Mammoth].

His proposed research hoped to locate any sites that represented the prehistoric seasonal use of the Park, using a theoretical stance known in America as "settlement archaeology". Speculating that the mountain tops served as summer habitat while the lower river courses were favored for winter use, Haines expected to find temporary campsites, projectile points and other hunting tools in the Upper Lamar drainage with more permanent habitation sites featuring fire remains associated with winter encampments likely in the Yankee Jim Canyon to Gardiner area.

Lacking support from the National Park Service, Haines enlisted members of the Billings Archaeological Society for a field crew and set out to undertake the survey of Miller Creek area in the Upper Lamar drainage. Although his expedition was not reach all of its proposed locations, they were successful in finding 34 sites (Haines 1961). When Haines and his assistants not only made surface collections but undertook a test excavation at a site near the mouth of Miller Creek the work drew the attention of Paul Beaubien, the Region Two archaeologist for the National Park Service. According to the Antiquities Act of 1906, the legality of collecting surface artifacts on federal lands was debatable. In practice, however, because the National Park Service issued Antiquities Permits, they were usually not required for government employees who collected surface artifacts in National Parks. In fact, as outlined in the following memorandum from Superintendent Lemuel Garrison to the maintenance employees, surface collecting was actually encouraged in Yellowstone National Park:

I wish all employees whose daily work is out-of-doors to aid in the recovery of Indian artifacts for future museum use. Employees finding arrow points, stone knives, scrapers, axes or mauls, or fragments of stone or pottery vessels, or other objects of Indian manufacture, within the Park, should send such items to the Museum Curator at Mammoth [Garrison, Feb. 16, 1962; Haines file Yellowstone National Park Archives, Mammoth].

But excavation was a different matter. All archaeologists were required to obtain Antiquities Permits and file a research plan before undertaking excavations on federal lands. Even though Haines had employed extremely careful techniques and produced a report on his findings, when he got wind of this work, Beaubien wrote:

Those representing the Billings Archeological Society have no academic training which would qualify them to conduct archeological excavations. I think any digging by them should be stopped to avoid criticism of the Service [Beaubien to Haines March 8, 1962; Haines file, Yellowstone National Park Archives, Mammoth].

Beaubien went on to suggest that archaeologists at the University of Montana might be available to assist in excavation projects. Unfortunately the distance between the University of Montana and Yellowstone National Park precluded week-end and other short-term expeditions, and the absence of trained archaeologists at other locations in Montana made it difficult to get any professional guidance. Haines continued to undertake archaeological projects outside the Park, and in November 1962 he reported on his findings from the important Rigler Bluffs site located along the Yellowstone River near the town of Corwin Springs, Montana (Haines 1966).

This enterprising research had an impact on future archaeology in Yellowstone National Park. As noted above, Haines' work was the first application of the "settlement pattern" approach in the area. It also caused the archaeological community to look seriously at prehistoric sites in high elevations. From now on it was impossible for regional archaeologists to ignore the abundance and significance of the Indian remains in Yellowstone National Park and the surrounding mountains.

Perhaps encouraged by Haines' success, two University of Montana graduate students shortly completed archaeological projects relevant to the Park. On the upper Yellowstone River George Arthur (1966) conducted an archaeological survey, and although his research was not directly within the Park, he recorded significant sites which Haines had earmarked as significant just to the south in the vicinity of Gardiner, Montana. At the same time Lewis Napton (1966) completed a complementary survey that included the upper reaches of the Gallatin River. In the process, Napton recorded and test excavated a wickiup site, 24YE301, on the western border of Yellowstone National Park. Both of the survey projects produced similar site types, within the same time range, as those reported from inside the Park and thereby verified a 9,000 to 10,000 year record of human use in the mountainous region of southern Montana.

Meanwhile a graduate student at the University of Calgary, Alberta, Larry Lahren, took a serious look at the Myers-Hindman well-stratified site near Livingston, Montana. His excavations turned up evidence for more than 9000 years of intermittent use, producing a chronological profile against which to compare other sites on the upper Yellowstone (Lahren 1971). Yet it was in the Shoshone River canyon, a few miles east of Yellowstone National Park, that Wilfred Husted of the Smithsonian Institution River Basin Surveys was excavating the most significant archaeological site to be found in the area. Named Mumny Cave for the presence of a mummified human burial in an upper cultural layer, the site contained extremely good stratigraphy with 36 separate cultural levels ranging in age from 9500 years ago until the Historic Period (Wedel, Husted and Moss 1968; Husted and Edgar 1978; McCracken et al. 1978). In addition to the large numbers of projectile points that provided chronological markers, the cave deposits had ample amounts of charcoal for radiocarbon dates. For the first time, the surface artifacts collected by Aubrey Haines and many others in the Yellowstone National Park region could be assigned ages with confidence.

A major role in the archaeological interest in high altitude Indian locations was played by George Frison of the University of Wyoming. Among his Yellowstone-linked discoveries was an open-air camp about 25 miles east of the Park known as the Dead Indian Creek site. Found in the Sunlight Basin, an intermontane region about 6500 feet in elevation that is surrounded by higher mountains of the Absaroka Range, the site contained a half-dozen mule deer skulls with the antlers still attached that were believed to be arranged in a ceremonial pattern (Frison 1978:270-271; 349-350). Other bones from large mammals represent bighorn sheep and elk while grinding slabs and manos for processing plants were also recovered. Although it was not recognized at first, Frison (1991:100) now believes that a feature on the site likely represents a pit house, similar to others which have been turned up over the past decade in nearby Wyoming basins. The Dead Indian Creek site was radiocarbon dated between 4200 and 4500 years before the present. The McKean-type projectile points which were found at the site are consistent with this date. Another fascinating characteristic about this location site is the estimation that, based on tooth eruption patterns in the mandibles, most of these deer were hunted between October and March. This strongly suggests that even though it is to be found in the mountains at a high elevation, the site's occupants lived there during the winter. Considering the evidence, the remains at the Dead Indian Creek site tell a remarkable story of a group of McKean-period hunters who lived and flourished in these mountains more than four thousand years ago on mule deer, elk and bighorn sheep. Furthermore they appear to have processed

collected seeds, possibly making flour to thicken soup or to bake a mealy, unleavened bread, and they survived through the winter at an elevation where temperatures can drop to life threatening lows.

Whether the initial discoveries of Aubrey L. Haines in the early 1960's prompted others to begin looking for sites in the region is debatable, because during this time archaeology was enjoying popularity as a profession and more trained archaeologists were on the lookout for sites. Nonetheless it must not be forgotten that it was Haines who first reported the large number of significant archaeological sites in the high mountains surrounding Yellowstone National Park. Curiously the actual sites on which he reported have not been re-visited or studied by subsequent scholars.

Throughout this period, serious non-academic archaeologists also conducted research in Yellowstone National Park and the adjacent region. Instead of making surface collections and test excavations, their projects were directed toward taking notes, making sketch maps and photographing sites. Stuart Conner and Kenneth Feyhl of Billings were leaders in these endeavors, recording a number of sites along the Bannock Trail which included one a significant location that featured a rectangular outline of stones thought to weigh down the hem of a wall-tent rather than a circular tipi. Furthermore they speculated that this tent may have been in use at the time the Bannock were undertaking their final, escape journey through the Park in 1878.

In addition Conner began photographic recording of the year-by-year deterioration at the Park's wickiup sites. He also documented the personal artifact collection of Vern Waples, a game warden who collected hundreds of projectile points together with their precise locations in the Beartooth Mountains to the northeast of the Park. And together with Waples, Haines, Feyhl, and Conner also collaborated in their personally-funded effort to identify more high mountain sites. The legacy left by Conner and his cohorts of duplicate sets of photographs, site reports, and memoranda culminated one of the most important archaeological data-salvage programs for the Yellowstone National Park region (Stuart N. Conner personal files and records).

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 dramatically changed the face of archaeology in the United States. After the 1966 Act, federal land managers were now required to locate and evaluate archaeological and historical sites that might be eligible for inclusion on a National Register of Historic Places. In order to perform these evaluations, it was necessary to first search the project areas for resources, and thus funding became available to perform the recording and evaluation of sites. As Yellowstone National Park came into compliance with the Act, the Midwest Archaeological Center (an archaeological support unit for National Parks located in the western States) carried out the mandated archaeological research. Some of the projects were completed by Midwest Center staff archaeologists while others were undertaken through contractual agreements (Lahren 1973; Reeve et al. 1980). Most notable among the latter, were projects under the direction of Gary Wright, State University of New York, Albany (SUNY-Albany). Wright also completed research in Grand Teton National Park, concentrating on settlement and subsistence problems. A significant component of the research, culminating in Stuart Reeve's doctoral dissertation at SUNY-Albany, included studies

of modern plants, native uses of plants, and pollen studies to reconstruct past vegetation communities (Reeve 1986).

After research in Grand Teton, Gary Wright, Susan Bender, and Stuart Reeve (1980) presented their thoughts on prehistoric adaptation to the mountain environment. Briefly, Wright and his colleagues suggested that areas like the shores of Jackson Lake served as base camps from which individuals or small groups set on expeditions to high elevations to gather plants, hunt animals and then return to the base camp on a short term basis. They recognized the significance of collecting and processing camas, an important root crop in the Yellowstone National Park region which ripens upslope as the snow melts on the mountainside. They also appreciated the significance of hunting Bighorn sheep, an essential big game animal for natives in the region, who also migrate to snow free areas, up and down the mountains, through their annual cycle. Furthermore, they contrasted this model with prehistoric southwest Asia where grasses were collected and wild sheep were hunted but eventually domesticated. They argued that the difference between southwest Asia and Yellowstone National Park is that in the latter, the hunters and gatherers lived in base camps within a short distance of their prey, whether it was camas or sheep. As a result they never experienced the need to "bring" the species home for domestication. In sum, the model has distinct implications for the understanding of domestication, an essential underpinning of sedentary villages.

In 1977, Gary Wright and his colleagues completed research at the Sheep Eater Bridge site (Reeve, Marceau and Wright 1980), a large campsite on the Gardner River in Yellowstone National Park. Obsidian hydration dates for projectile points indicated the site had repeated use from about 7000 years to 400 years before the present. The proximity of the site to resources for hunting, fishing, and plant collection suggested it may have been a base camp from which the expeditions went out to obtain these abundant resources.

In later research in Yellowstone National Park under the direction of Gary Wright, Ann Samuelson (1981) made extensive surface collections and completed test excavations at sites in the vicinity of West Thumb. Using the research for a master's thesis at SUNY-Albany, Samuelson concluded that the largest sites represented cultures from late Paleo-Indian times through the Historic period and the primary activities, based on the stone tool assemblages were hunting and fishing. Studying the flaking debris Samuelson learned that stone tools were re-shaped and sharpened more often than they were manufactured at the sites. A large number of specialized flake tools had notches along one margin and Samuelson suggests they may have been used in manufacturing fishing equipment. Furthermore she believes, based on circumstantial evidence, that the sites in the West Thumb area were occupied through the winter with the hot springs offering warmth and open areas for grazing animals. According to her model the spawning runs of cutthroat trout in the spring would have also served as an attraction to the area.

In the decade from 1985 to 1995 archaeologists from the Rocky Mountain Regional Office and the Midwest Archaeological Center continued to complete archaeological studies in Yellowstone National Park. Most of the projects were aimed toward finding and evaluating archaeological sites

associated with proposed construction projects, but after the 1988 forest fires, important sites were re-visited to assess the damage from the fires (Johnson and Lippincott 1989).

The survey and evaluation of the Obsidian Cliff site has been a long-term goal in Yellowstone National Park, and Leslie Davis has been involved with the study of obsidian for its potential in dating as well as source analysis for over 35 years (Davis et al. 1995). In recent years, Kenneth Cannon has worked with others to try to identify the multiple sources of obsidian in the Yellowstone National Park region. Cannon has also completed some blood residue studies, designed to identify the species of animal blood associated with the tool (Cannon 1995).

A few projects have been pursued at sites that are not within construction zones. Lamar Cave, along the Lamar River in the northern part of the Park, has been excavated to construct the former animals that lived in the area. Although the site does not contain evidence of human use, thousands of bones from fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals were recovered in stratified deposits dating through the last 1600 years (Hadly 1990). The findings of archaeologists have also been used to assess the prehistoric range of elk (Kay 1990) and wolves and related prey species (Cannon 1992) in Yellowstone National Park.

Of course, archaeological research has also been undertaken at historic sites in the Park. Sites were exposed in the 1988 fires and investigated to learn they contained the remains of the former military administration, Park concessionaires, Civilian Conservation Corps projects, road construction crews, and tourist camps. During the recent changes in the administrative structure of the National Park Service, the duty station of an NPS Intermountain Field office archaeologist (Ann M. Johnson) was changed to Yellowstone National Park, becoming the first archaeologist on the staff. Johnson continues to do archaeological projects motivated by construction but for the first time the administrative archaeologist is within the Park itself. Johnson can employ archaeologists under her direction or administer crews through contractual agreements.

The history of archaeology in Yellowstone National Park is nearly as old as the Park itself. Throughout this period, however, the pursuit of archaeological research has not been undertaken with the same vigor as other studies like those associated with animals or plants. As funding has become available in the past two decades, the research has been mostly confined to construction project zones. The most significant archaeological projects, completed outside the tourist areas, have been by avocational archaeologists. It is estimated that approximately 20,000 acres of the 1.5 million acres of Yellowstone National Park has been surveyed for sites and while more than 1000 sites have been recorded, fewer than 60 have been evaluated through test excavation. It is clear that there are still many significant sites to be discovered in Yellowstone National Park, leading to more sophisticated or altogether new interpretations of precontact Indian life in and around the region.

Folklore and Yellowstone National Park

Of all bodies of cultural data which might clearly reveal or indirectly reflect any American Indian connections to the greater Yellowstone River world, those connected with traditional oral narratives are the hardest to find and often prove most difficult to authenticate. The apparent dearth of such material has prompted Park Historian Lee H. Whittlesey to maintain that, "Other than for this story [the Northern Shoshone narrative of the Old Woman and the Basket of Fish described in Chapter Four], there is little reliable information or documentation on stories, myths or other folklore that may have been told by Indians about present Yellowstone National Park" (Whittlesey 1996:4).

One obstacle to assessing the meager amount of American Indian folklore purportedly connected to Yellowstone National Park is that one is often faced with the dilemma which folklorist Richard M. Dorson tried to articulate when distinguishing Folklore from what he called "fakelore." By this term Dorson meant material that turns up in trade-market compilations which have been so edited, rewritten or invented wholecloth as to become "pseudo-fairy tales of dubious value for the serious student" (Dorson 1983:463). When encountering popular publications of collected stories supposedly Indian in origin Dorson offered the following words of advice:

A couple of minutes handling the book of collected folklore can suffice to inform probing folklorists as to the general character of the goods they hold. Does the collection contain items of folklore as they were actually told, word for word, or are the tales or materials paraphrased? Are the tellers, singers, and carriers of the folklore - the informants - identified, and not just by names with some personal details? And a crucial point, do comparative notes accompany the folklore texts, either as an introductory headnote (preferably) or in an appendix? Are other essential elements of the scholarly apparatus present: tables of motifs and tale types; a classified bibliography, hopefully with descriptive critical comments; a full subject index with a breakdown of key entries; an informative introduction describing fieldwork methods? A few moments of thumbing through the pages will provide answers to these queries, and the folklorist can judge whether the book is a bona fide work worth serious attention, or one to be used cautiously, or to be disregarded [Dorson 1983:463].

The full range of Dorson's three types - a) bona fide, b) use cautiously, or c) disregard entirely - are to be found in the alleged Yellowstone-linked material evaluated during our ethnographic overview.

Various reasons can be proposed for the paucity of Indian oral narratives related to the Park. First, the material is out there but researchers have not been particularly interested in seeking it out from either the archives or from winning the trust of American Indians within native communities where it might be elicited. Second, the environmental setting of many traditional narrative genres, such as the classic "folktale," are rarely specific enough to pinpoint a locale. Third, the century and more of forced separation between Indians and the Park's habitat lessened the relevance and reinforcement necessary to keep such stories and traditions alive. Perhaps a closer look at the inner constitution of Indian narratives may help us separate authentic fictions from inauthentic facts.

While oral narratives may represent one of the most responsive of all culture forms to changing historical conditions, different types such as myth, folktale and legend display adaptability or conservativeness in different ways. First, we shall take the category of "Myths," which folklorist William Bascom has defined as "prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past" (Bascom 1984:9). The only clues that one has concerning the "authenticity" of such prose narratives, for the examples possibly linked to Yellowstone National Park in this project, for instance, are a) the degree to which they are prefaced or concluded with some hint that they are the product of a sequence of narrators, a tribal inheritance which may even have been ritualistically transferred from one storyteller to another within a particular family or social connection, and b) the degree to which one can find other authenticated narratives that either corroborate plot elements (such as characters, actions, place names or geographical features), or narrative themes, which reinforce specific functions of the narrative.

It is their satisfaction of these admittedly loose criteria which we try to address wherever we insert Indian folklore into this overview, which justified for instance, our placing the Kiowa "Heart of the World" narrative and such Crow mythic narratives as the origins of Mud Volcano and Dragon Mouth, into Chapter One. Their contrasting tribal renditions of the origins of certain thermal features struck us as sufficiently consonant with contextual data on these tribes' own senses of history and mythic events. On the other hand, the myth of world origins presented as told by "The present-day Indian inhabitants of the Yellowstone and Big Horn valleys, whose ancestors hunted bear, buffalo and elk in the Devil's Land now known as Yellowstone Park" in Louis Freeman's Down the Yellowstone seems completely at variance with any Indian theology or folklore of tribes in the region, and almost certainly invented by the author. It pits a spirit named Nog, the God of fire, against Lob, the god of rains and snows, in a contest over who will control this "most desirable section of Creation." In his wisdom the Great Spirit divides up its tenure into alternating, six moon intervals controlled by each of them. For millenia, the story goes, their back-and-forth fight has continued, creating in the process beautiful seasons around the year around (Freeman 1922: 1-3.) Clearly this faux narrative of ultimate origins fell into the category of myth, if a preposterous one. What presented us with a problem, however, was that some of our material, especially where Chapter Four was concerned, did not neatly fit into Bascom's generalized categories. As described below, the Plateau narratives that present Coyote's earth-creating deeds seemed as much legitimate folktales as they did legitimate myths.

Leaping over the second narrative form of "folklore" for the moment, the third narrative genre described by Bascom, the "legend," certainly displays a more direct and overt flexibility to historical change. According to Bascom, "Legends are prose narratives which, like myths, are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience, but which are set in a period considered less remote, when the world was much as it is today" (Bascom 1984:9). But again, if any Yellowstone National Park-linked "legendary" narratives are to be taken as issuing from any Indian's mouth, some corroborative or contextual evidence must lend them credibility. In the absence of internal evidence that they possess some formal characteristics of native story-telling practices, and with the lack of any contextual confirmation, it is difficult to assess their authenticity. When considering Yellowstone National

Park-connected Indian narratives this is crucial, because if it was not originally Indian-spoken there often may be a hidden agenda behind the storyline which can nonetheless lend valuable insights into non-Indian attitudes at the time.

For instance, one of the earliest questionable Indian legends relating to Yellowstone National Park is found in what is probably the Park's first guidebook, Harry J. Norton's 1883 Wonder-Land Illustrated; or, Horseback Rides through the Yellowstone National Park. On page 31 there is Norton's early reassurance for prospective visitors to the Park that, "Dangers from Indians there is none" (Norton 1873:31). Backing up his certitude of safety is his reference to a pervasive Indian belief that the thermal field is where the Indian's "Manitou displays his anger towards his red children." But then Norton serves up a second Yellowstone National Park-related piece of Indian lore:

There is another tradition current among the Sioux and Crows to this effect: Some years ago, the Sioux and Crows, then friendly to each other, were en route to the Upper Yellowstone and Madison Rivers, on a hunting expedition, and while encamped in the second canon of the Yellowstone, nearly opposite Emigrant Peak, they were hemmed in at both entrances by the Nez Percés, Bannocks, and Flatheads (then, as now, at war with the Sioux and the Crows), and the whole party massacred. For this reason these tribes never ascend the river above the canyon named for fear of meeting a similar fate [Norton 1873:31]

Aside from the fact that there is no corroboration in physical evidence nor in other Indian narratives from any of these tribes for this particular fight, nor any record of these blood enemies, the Sioux and Crow ever being friendly enough to join hunting forces, as will be seen in Chapter's One and Two, there is ethnographic evidence of continuous Crow knowledge of the Park, as well as the presence of long-used archaeological sites in the Yellowstone Canyon and Emigrant Peak region. One must suspect that this "legend" has been invented wholecloth or taken from another ethnographic context and distorted to support the positive, secure, non-Indian face which Yellowstone National Park, from its establishment well into the 20th century, has sought to present to potential clientele.

A second example of a highly suspicious "legendary" Indian narrative connected to Yellowstone National Park which we could not justify including in Chapter One also features Crow Indians. It is entitled "A Yellowstone Tragedy," and was published in the 1896 by the anthologist Charles M. Skinner with no attribution (Skinner 1896:204-206). It appears drawn from an apparently invented article headlined "A Thrilling Event on the Yellowstone" written by Charles Sunderlee in the Helena Herald newspaper for May 18, 1870, which was later picked up uncritically by the otherwise able folklorist, Ella E. Clark and entitled "Defiance at Yellowstone Falls" for her collection Indian Legends from the Northern Rockies (Clark 1966:323-24), and which Aubrey L. Haines justifiably describes as "a gross falsification presented in the romantic manner best termed a Hiawatha treatment" (Haines 1996:339).

Accompanied by an early photograph of Yellowstone Falls, the Skinner rendition opens with the statement that while "the Indians" feared the "hissing and thundering" spirits of the geyser basin, they regarded the mountains at the head of the river as "the crest of the world" from which they could see the landscape where their deceased still lived on in happiness. It takes a bit of time before we learn the tribal identity of these natives, but eventually we are told that "They loved this land in which their fathers had hunted," it goes on, "and when they were driven back from the settlements the Crows took refuge in what is now Yellowstone Park." But with white soldiers in hot pursuit "intent on avenging acts the red men had committed while suffering under the sting of tyranny and wrong," only a fugitive remnant of the Crow manage to gather at the end of Yellowstone's Grand Canyon. Just below the upper falls they hastily build a raft, and in a final suicide run, they plunge down the canyon. The soldiers suspend fire and watch "with something like dread" as the Indian "death-chant" is drowned out by the roar of the waters.

Apart from the fact that Crows were well-known for their friendship with whites, there are no substantiating Crow narratives in any of the scholarly or tribal compilations for this collective withdrawal by any portion of the tribe into the Yellowstone, nor any tribal prototypes for mass suicide, although tales of individual warriors engaging in displays of courageous self-annihilation do occur. One must conclude that the story is either a total invention or a misappropriation of another tribal story, set within or reframed inside of the Park. However, the narrative still remains a revealing reflection of some segment of non-Indian attitudes or wishful fantasies about Indians and Yellowstone National Park at the end of the 19th century. It vividly dramatizes one version of the "Vanishing Indian" theme to be addressed in our last chapter, and hence deserves consideration as part of the full cultural history of the Park, although without further comparative or contextual data it is useless as a reflection of Indian historical connections to the region.

A third, seemingly spurious, Yellowstone National Park "legend" seems generally to follow the prescription for such fakelore which W.E. Webb defined, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, over a century ago:

As no remarkable spot in Indian land should ever be brought before the public without an accompanying legend, I shall present one...To make tourists fully appreciate a high bluff or picturesquely dangerous spot, it is absolutely essential that some fond lovers should have jumped down it, hand-in-hand, in sight of the cruel parents, who struggle up the incline, only to be rewarded by the heart-rending finale [Webb 1874:308-401].

The narrative in question is titled "Over The Waterfall" and concerns a Bannock Indian named Arropine, who supposedly became Jim Bridger's scout into the Yellowstone. Buried within an early western botanical guidebook, Farm Friends and Spring Flowers (1913), the one of three authors charged with supplying Indian narratives, Elizabeth Cannon Porter, asks that we take seriously a romance between Arropine, captive to the Blackfeet, and Blue Feather, a beautiful Blackfeet maiden (An equally questionable Indian romance situated in the Park is that between Arquetta and Red Arrow, found in W. Allen's discredited book on the Sheep Eaters - Allen 1913:52-74). But Arropine

has a rival, the crafty and cunning Blackfeet warrior, Rain-in-the-Face. As the lovers plan to slip away, Arropine says to Blue Feather:

Beyond this lake lies a lake where fire and boiling water burst from the earth. Your people and mine believe that it is haunted by evil spirits so they never go there, but a miserable tribe called the Sheep Eaters hide there because they will not fight and they are less afraid of the spirits than they are of our warriors [Paul, Barnes and Porter 1913:70].

They find fish and cook them in the boiling hot springs. They see the geysers spout and Blue Feather is terrified by them. They watch the rose-colored steam above the lakes and notice the plentiful game. Against her lover's advice, Blue Feather drinks from a purplish spring and grows sick. They are intercepted by her people but, unlike the self-destruction motif of the previous piece of folklore, when they must face the test of canoeing over the falls they manage to survive. The story ends, "After resting a little, the two were permitted to take their departure for the Bannocks in the North. Arropine knew all about the Yellowstone, and later acted as a guide for Jim Bridger, when the white trapper went to explore the wonders of geyserland" (Paul, Barnes and Cannon 1913:72).

Nothing about the story rings true, of course, but contemporary Indians might take little consolation from the fact that apart from recycling the stereotype about native fear of the geysers, the narrative does not close with symbolic fatalism and death reminiscent of the "vanishing Indian" theme mentioned above. For it evokes another demeaning stereotypical role for Indian males found in frontier literature, that of the Uncas or the Tonto, the loyal "Indian Scout" who blithely guides the white man to America's natural wonders - in this case the Yellowstone National Park region, which the story reminds us they had no use for anyway - for the white newcomers to do with as they may.

Finally, a fourth, equally problematic "legend" relating Indians to the greater Yellowstone region and its mountain-dwelling Shoshoneans originates from the collection of reminiscences, Six Decades Back (1936), by the Idaho popular historian Charles S. Walgamott, who claimed to have heard it from a Bannock woman named "Indian Mary" whom he met in 1875 at Rock Creek in southern Idaho. Again we have the romantic central plot of an Indian love affair, this one between a lovely Bannock known as "The Beautiful One" and her suitor, the great hunter named "Plenty Meat." After her father gives her in marriage to another, her true love mourns in a sacred cave in Snake River Canyon. When the new bride rebuffs her unwelcome husband, she runs away to her first and only love. But the furious mate takes revenge by using magic to age her into an old crone. From their hideaway cave the lovers relish the beauties of the Sawtooth Mountains, then visit Shoshone Falls, and finally enter a canyon-like "Lover's Lane" where her beauty is restored. They encounter enemy Blackfeet, who pursue them only to come upon a miniature encampment, featuring small arrowheads made of black, red and white obsidian. As the Blackfeet approached a "land that was on fire and so greatly feared by the Indians" (Walgamott 1936:116), they are so in awe that they leave the couple alone. The two are commanded by the Great Spirit to climb a peak near the Big Wood River until they find a "lake where the fish are red" and there they will establish "a tribe to be known as the Indians of the Clouds."

Living in happy isolation for a long while, Indians with ponies and rifles enter their world. They are bad Indians, we are told, who fall under the benign influence of these Cloud Indians. To make their own bullets the Great Spirit shows them where to dig out lead, and where to mine silver to craft into ornaments. They still survive on mountain sheep, however, or Tukuarikus (Walgamott 1936:119). But then "the beautiful one" has an ominous vision of the coming of the "Pale-Face and the "Iron Horse." Finally, one of their group named "Bloody Hand," a member of those horse-bearers who had joined them, reverts to type and kills a prospector for his horse and belongings. With the demise of The Beautiful One, the story ends as the white-hating Bloody Hand takes charge.

As the story's conclusion informs us that these people are the Sheep Eaters, presumably of the dangerous Idaho strain who in four years will assault whites, in effect non-Indian readers now have a prophetic, native explanation for the strong ambivalence they may feel about Indians in general, as both Noble Redmen and Bloodthirsty Savages. So while this narrative may be useless for examination as a plausible reflection of Indian thought, it is priceless for its insights into Euro-American psychology about Indians. Although surely a projective fantasy, like other stories collated into folklore collections this specimen of Yellowstone National Park fakelore has been accepted uncritically as a valid "legend" of the Northwest (Salmonson 1995: 123-140). Yet some of its implications are patently clear: good Indians stay by themselves and stare at beautiful sunsets; bad Indians adopt white ways and want more of them. The good Indian is too pure to survive the modern world and obligingly becomes extinct in an age where history has replaced myth. But the bad Indian hangs around to compete with whites and bedevil history.

Some of the publications which purportedly tie together American Indian traditions and Yellowstone National Park also exemplify the fusion of the categories of myth, legend and folktale. But unfortunately they fail Dorson's prima facie conditions for separating folklore from fakelore. Either they appear to be outright fabrications, or they lack attribution and represent Indian narratives which were so rewritten that their cultural information and valid emotional associations are irrevocably distorted, and any links to native sources or preexisting folklore materials are impossible to reconstruct. It is ironic that the sole mention of Indians whatsoever in a day-by-day Yellowstone National Park tour script in the mid-1920s drew upon such questionable lore. Yet even this tall tale evoked a negative link between Indians and the Park, for as the tour moved through the Upper Geyser Basin, the script had the guide summarize some yarns told by the old scout Jim Bridger: "Another one accredited to Bridger is this: A portion of the park was cursed by an Indian chieftan so that everything was petrified, not only the trees and flowers, but also the birds and waterfalls. Even the sunshine was petrified" (Yellowstone National Park Archives, File N. 154.31, Lectures, Fiscal Year 1925,1926,1927). Other examples of Park-related "fakelore" are to be found in such collections as Mary Earle Hardy's Little Ta-Wish-Indian Legends from Geysersland (Chicago & New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1914) or LaVerne Fitzgerald's Black Feather: Trapper Jim's Fables of Sheepeater Indians in Yellowstone (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton, 1933), that was greatly borrowed from Dr. William A. Allen's discredited book on the Sheep Eaters. (Also dismissible for bearing any legitimate connection to history of Indians in the Park are such examples of popular culture as the song about Bannock chief, Pocatello, which is found in Dr. and Mrs. N.W. Christiansen's 1953

publication, A Trip Through Yellowstone Park: Interesting Events Portrayed in Music - whose lyrics are too insultingly stereotypical to bear repeating (Madsen 1986:121).

In many cases Bascom's second narrative genre, the "folktale," appears more susceptible to changing historical circumstances than myths. His definition of a folktale is "prose narratives which are regarded as fiction" (Bascom 1984:8). While specificity of place is rarely a strong element in this genre, their more everyday role in person-to-person oral exchanges often means that in times of conflict they can carry secret messages or subtexts that provide psychological reassurance to Indian listeners and underscore old Indian values. A good example from Yellowstone National Park-associated Indian tribes is the folktale which Robert Lowie collected from the Lemhi Shoshone at Fort Hall in 1909. While Lowie complained that when he asked about native lore concerning the visit of Lewis and Clark - after they had secured the invaluable services of their legendary Shoshone guide, Sacajawea, in North Dakota - he was told instead about a contest between Wolf (or Coyote) and Iron Man, known as the "father of the Whites" (Lowie 1909:251f). As he would write later, the experience made Lowie dismissive of the truth-value of Indian notions of history (Lowie 1917). But a deeper reading of this story shows the classic protagonist of most native folktale genres, the trickster Coyote, defending his Indian peoples against the not-so-overpowering white man.

As we shall see in the genuine story-telling traditions reflected in Chapter Four, while Coyote in most of his multiple-personalities functions as a destabilizer of authority and an uncontrollably and hilariously anti-social being, in the folktales of the California, Great Basin and the Plateau culture areas in particular he is often traditionally manifested as what Coyote scholar William Bright characterizes the "bricoleur" (Bright 1993). By this term Bright refers to Coyote's role as a transformer of the world, who defeats a primordial race of monsters and renders the world safe for human occupancy while creating, through his beneficial deeds, the topographical features of the landscape as we know it today. Here Coyote is operating at a time when the earth is extremely volatile, a state-of-existence which Yellowstone National Park, more than any other location in the continent perhaps, exemplifies, and a fact which Indians, like any peoples who confront the place, would have processed through their native categories of conceptual thought.

But how are we to explain why we do not see more folktales referencing the Park's stupendous natural phenomena - virtually none appear in Shoshone coyote narratives in Robert Lowie's The Northern Shoshone (1909), Sarah Emelia Olden's Shoshone Folk Lore (1923), or Rupert Weeks' Pachee Goyo: History and Legends from the Shoshone (1981)? One answer may be that the still-volatile landscape which Yellowstone National Park exhibits to the awe of the world is testament to the fact that in this unique spot, at least, Coyote's task of earth transformation is not yet ready for tidy framing in a narrative memorial. Within the primordial turbulence of Yellowstone National Park, clearly Coyote still has his work cut out for him.

To obtain a culture-history of the American Indian's Yellowstone Plateau which is truly "in the round," to borrow the late Wilcomb Washburn's phrase for successful ethnohistory, we have

attempted to draw upon, cross-reference and combine the data yielded by each of these four sub-disciplines of the humanities and social sciences.

Conditions and Constraints of this Study

For a number of reasons already mentioned, this overview of the ethnographic resources of Yellowstone National Park has been an uphill struggle.

First among the obstacles has been the aforementioned issue of the inadequate archaeological data base from which to build up the ethnographic data and against which to compare it for detecting cultural continuities and disjunctures. Since the present overview was not funded to conduct any original archaeological research, our only recourse in this document has been to return to the scattered reports and professional papers related to the prehistoric cultures within or immediately around the park and, in as disciplined a manner as possible, attempt to provide a fresh montage of the most up-to-date data regarding the lifeways of these aboriginal inhabitants.

A second barrier to ethnographically accessing the American Indian record on the Park is the fact that after the late 1870s the abrogation of their interests in the Greater Yellowstone region (as elsewhere in the west) was Federal policy in general. Although Thomas Jefferson warned in 1812 that any Indians who refused to assimilate or abandon their lands "would relapse into barbarism and misery" whereupon the Euro-Americans would "be obliged to drive them with the beasts of the forests into the stony [Rocky] mountains" (Letter of Jefferson to John Adams, March 1812, in Foley 1900:422-3), little more than a half-century later Indians were about to lose even that mountain retreat. For as far as any traditional hunting, foraging, trading, raiding or other cultural activities were concerned, as this overview will specify in chapter after chapter, by the early 1880s Indians were effectively banned from entry into Yellowstone National Park or from the use of its faunal and floral resources. This time frame hovers on the far side of what scholars of preliterate traditions determine to be within oral history's reach, from seventy-five to one hundred and fifty years - and the ability of even that stretch of direct oral memory is closely related to a people's continuous access to the landscape with its toponymic and mnemonic abilities to trigger historical memories (Bahr 1994:2-6, drawing upon Vansina 1985). But as Bahr's work with Piman historical materials from southern Arizona also points out, we must never forget that in the minds of many native peoples "myth" can also carry important and demonstrably "valid" historical information, in terms of both hard facts and cultural concepts and practices.

Recovering American Indian memories on Yellowstone proves to be a difficult, time-consuming and sketchy process, requiring extreme patience, archival skills, and the ability to overcome a backlog of Euro-American and American Indian attitudes. As if summarizing both pervasive attitudes towards Indians while expressing the degree to which military policy towards them was common knowledge, a stage driver told Eliza and Annie Upham on their ride back from a tour around Mud Cauldron in Yellowstone National Park on Sept. 16, 1892, that the local natives were "no more to be trusted than a rattlesnake...were dirty and lazy," and he added in no uncertain terms that

"Indians are not allowed in the Park" (Buffalo Bill Historical Center Archives: "Eliza A. and S. Annie Uphams' Excursion with the Raymond Party to The Yellowstone National Park In September 1892," pp. 37-39).

For tribe after tribe, this suppression of traditional ties to their old Yellowstone hunting and traveling grounds precipitated a century-long period of broken connections. Rendering the Yellowstone National Park off base to Indians during that extended time period meant that any Indian traditions of practical use, narrative folklore or historical memories related to the Park area went unrenewed through the sort of periodic visitation and continued activities which Indians did manage to enjoy in less sensitive or less desirable areas. From generation to generation, without access to geographic reference points in and around the Park by which to anchor and remember them, the stories of Crows, Blackfeet, Flatheads, Bannock, Shoshones and quite likely other plains Indian groups related to mythic origins or legendary events, as well as detailed accounts of plant-foraging, game-hunting, medicine-acquisition, spiritual activities or war-raiding, were thinned out with disuse or forgotten entirely.

With traditional links between Indians and the Park effectively severed so early the data base derived from early anthropologists has also proven thin, the opportunity to recover contemporary ethnographic information is very rare, and our reconstruction has often been left to chasing shadows. It must also be stated quite frankly that this historical rupture between Indians and the Park has left a legacy of bad feelings. This has clouded our efforts to develop the bonds of mutual trust and collaborative interest that are critical for effective ethnographic fieldwork.

In the informational vacuum created by these years of Indian absence from Yellowstone, a fourth problem for researchers has been the amount of misguided conjecture and negative stereotype which have filled the void. From the point of view of scholarship, this situation is not unlike that which anthropologist Verne F. Ray described for his reconsideration of the cultural importance of northwestern Plateau Indians. By the late 1930s Ray had finally collected a decade's worth of field and library data so as to challenge the prevailing scholarly opinion largely established by Herbert Joseph Spinden, which held that this culture area of the Columbia plateau was only a transitional, impoverished patchwork of watered-down and borrowed traits from more influential, neighboring regions. In order to argue that "Plateau culture could hardly be more grossly misinterpreted" (Ray 1978:3), Ray finally compiled his landmark monograph to demonstrate how quite the reverse was true - but it took awhile.

Our overview of the "ethnographic resources" of Yellowstone National Park has developed much the same agenda. Due to misinterpretations about hunting and foraging "Digger" Indian groups which in no small measure were borrowed from derogatory characterizations of Native California and Nevada Shoshoneans and applied to the Park's original inhabitants, then further exacerbated by misinterpretations of ethnohistorical data regarding the attitudes of the Park's surrounding native groups towards its unique natural features, the story of the Indians' Yellowstone has remained largely misguided or untold. Any survey of the Park's ethnographic resources must therefore wrestle with the following pieces of received wisdom:

- 1) The Park was never more than thinly populated by Indians who had only marginal interest in its resources.
- 2) The only full-time residents of the Park were isolated bands of Sheep Eaters who were timid, impoverished and were culturally under-developed.
- 3) The horse-riding Plains Indians who lived around the Park shied away from its thermal areas because they were afraid of the geysers.
- 4) Once the Park was formally established and the Indian wars ceased in the late 1870s Indians had no further interest in the Park.

To their considerable credit the Park and its historians have over the years periodically questioned these propositions and shifted position on them from time to time. But too often, however, quite a different strategy seems to have been adopted, which has raised a fifth obstacle to any ethnographic overview. This strategy has been simply to drop Indians out of the Park equation altogether, to summarily ignore or excise their presence from the full records of Park annals, or to frontload a summary account of them in an obligatory opening chapter of their books before whisking ahead to the more "serious" administrative or environmental sides to the Yellowstone story which thereafter never need to mention Indians again.

This subtler omission or negation of the possible roles and ongoing interests of Indians in the Park seems a sanitized, modern counterpart to the earlier denial of their physical presence by official coercion. Yet in the long term it might be considered more effective, for its net effect has been "to disappear" the Indian story from the grand culture-history of Yellowstone. A review of Park documents from its inception to today reveals this exclusionary approach to the awkward fact that non-Euro-American human beings might have been living and altering this wilderness for a long time.

When governmental recognition of Indians first peaked in this century, during John Collier's "Indian New Deal" in the late 1930s, ethnographers were assigned to include Indians in their written summaries of Park history, such as Glacier National Park (Beals 1935). Yet the official guidebook to Yellowstone National Park not once mentioned Indians in its text, and even omitted them when Obsidian Cliff was mentioned, while its chronological timeline forefronted General O.O. Howard's heroic pursuit of a lone Nez Perce Indian, Chief Joseph, and the sole book it advertised on Indians which was available in the Park's bookstore was the certifiably bogus Trapper Jim's Fables of Sheepeater Indians in Yellowstone mentioned above (Fitzgerald 1933).

To be sure, it is unfair to apply today's standards for fair representation to yesteryear. But then what is one to make of the most recent semi-popular overview of Yellowstone National Park, The Spirit of Yellowstone: The Cultural Evolution of a National Park (Meyer 1996)? Written from a cultural geographer's point-of-view and published by an academic press, this recent work purports to focus "on Yellowstone's history as place, as a shared geographic and cultural reality, and its

powerful and persistent spirit of place" (Meyer 1996:114). Yet its text devotes only a single sentence to the role of Indians in that "cultural evolution" or in the diversity of human responses to Yellowstone's "spirit of place." Unable to ignore Joseph Wiexelman's persuasive 1992 graduate work which fought against the persistent idea that Indians were unanimously afraid of the geysers and hence steered clear of the Park, this isolated statement goes, "Recent scholarship indicates that Native Americans were the first to recognize the spirit of place unique to the Yellowstone region centuries before whites entered the surrounding areas" (Meyer 1996:32). Ignoring for the moment the fact that the finding of an Agate Basin point which was sourced to Yellowstone National Park and dated to about 10,000 years ago would mean that we should probably correct her "centuries" to "millennia (Cannon 1993:8)," Meyer's subsequent dismissal of Indians from the "cultural evolution" of the Park may not responsibly reflect current official reconsiderations of their role but is clearly indicative of and reinforces a large sector of public and even scholarly opinion. And this opinion is hardly enlightened or altered by the books, signage, lectures, museum exhibits or multi-media presentations which are presently available to the general public in or around the Park.

Correcting the Record: New Approaches

In this report we are attempting to deliver the best summary we can of "hard evidence" related to the roles of Indians in and around Yellowstone National Park. But under today's ethnological standards a comprehensive "cultural overview" demands more than that. First, we are taking seriously the "representations" of Indians whose lives have impacted on the history of Yellowstone National Park. Most especially will the reader notice this emphasis in Chapter 3, where we delineate the stereotypes which have attached themselves to the history of the Sheep Eaters, those one-time residents of the Yellowstone Plateau. Second, we are taking the liberty of occasionally providing circumstantial data where we have been unable to locate a mother lode of direct, hard information. Again the reader will most notice this approach in our chapter on the Sheep Eaters, where we have contextualized every scrap of information we could find about their material culture with information from adjacent native groups and sources.

Nor have we been content to recycle received wisdom and shopworn scenarios regarding the relationships between different American Indian peoples and Yellowstone National Park. We have tried to pay attention to the fact that previous writings and compilations of data were reflections of their particular times and agendas. At moments in this report we have been compelled to do more than take them at face value; we have tried to place older data within changing intellectual trends and show how they reflect what are now called "paradigm shifts" in the disciplines of the social sciences and history. To this new, multi-dimensional and self-reflexive way of contextualizing ethnographic facts we would add our special awareness that public agencies such as National Parks are often a half-step behind any new paradigms that issue from academic scholarship - probably more so in the social than in the physical sciences, however. In any case, this lag-time helps to explain why our understanding of the roles played by Indians in the concentrated, symbol-dense areas like our nation's parks is simply a more intensified version of our society's generally poor and stereotype-ridden

understanding of the complexities of American Indian cultures in general. In its modest way, this report strives to correct this understanding.

This also means that under contemporary standards of ethnographic practice, any "ethnographic overview" also requires us to reexamine the ethnographic facts that non-Indians have generated out of their preconceptions and intentions concerning the relationships between American Indians and Yellowstone National Park. To accomplish this we must revisit the historical contexts for various "representations" of tribal groups related to Yellowstone National Park, whether those representations be official Park communications, museum exhibits, public signage, pamphlets on Indians for the general public, videos for general consumption, memoirs by Park personnel, and so forth. Today any responsible cultural anthropologist or ethnographer must consider all of these "representations" as "ethnographic resources" which are equally relevant to the study of this topic as American Indian data. This self-scrutiny is necessary in order to clarify the political, economic or bureaucratic agendas which may have promoted these portrayals, and which influenced the further cultural representations they generated in turn. Modern anthropology has taught us that such conceptions, and the different modes of representation through which they have been perpetuated, are inextricably bound up with the ethnographic record. This is cultural anthropology's counterpart to what Gary A. Wright has argued concerning the efforts of archaeologists to understand Yellowstone high country prehistory: "...the first duty of an archaeologist is not (despite the dictum from introductory textbooks) to build a satisfactory absolute chronology for a stratigraphic sequence. Rather, it is to realize that the dates themselves are data that may be used for testing hypotheses..." (Wright 1982:158). The same must be said of the various forms of ethnographic data which are analogous to archaeology's "dates"; in both cases we must now recognize that the products of knowledge which themselves generate new knowledge must remain under our scrutiny, and therefore "are data" as well.

This revolution in contemporary ethnographic practice means we must always regard culture and our views of "it", in the words of the anthropological critic James Clifford, as "produced historically." Clifford goes on to emphasize that "Culture is contested, temporal and emergent. Representation and explanation - both by insiders and outsiders - is implicated in this emergence" (Clifford 1986:18-19). This is what the eminent anthropologist Paul Rabinow means by entitling his essay in the same groundbreaking volume where Clifford expressed his remarks: "Representations are social facts" (Rabinow 1986). And Rabinow winds up exhorting today's ethnographers to "...be attentive to our historical practice of projecting our cultural practices onto the other... We need to anthropologize the West: show how exotic its constitution of reality has been... show how their claims to truth are linked to social practices and have hence become effective forces in the social world" (Rabinow 1986:241). Reviewing Clifford's following clarion call for this promising new dimension of contemporary ethnography, it is hard to think of a better laboratory or new "dialogical" fieldsite than the past and present sets of relationships (and their representations) between American Indians and Yellowstone National Park:

"...how are the truths of cultural accounts evaluated? Who has the authority to separate science from art? realism from fantasy? knowledge from ideology? Of

course such separations will continue to be maintained, and redrawn; but their changing poetic and political grounds will be less easily ignored. In cultural studies at least, we can no longer know the whole truth, or even claim to approach it...But is there not a liberation, too, in recognizing that no one can write about others any longer as if they were discrete objects or texts? And may not the vision of a complex, problematic, partial ethnography lead, not to its abandonment, but to more subtle, concrete ways of writing and reading, to new conceptions of culture as interactive and historical" [Clifford 1986: 25, emphasis ours].

Bringing such a perspective to bear on a public facility like Yellowstone National Park, then, means that any representations of Indian-related information or symbols, through signage, oral interpretations, museum displays, news releases, publications, official interviews, public programs or formal events, become part of the ethnographic data base. For to recipients of such information their sense of "Indian" realities will have been conditioned by them and will, in turn, color their consequent transmissions in the form of books, lectures, field notes, videos, signs and even informal advice to others. It is this give-and-take between what used to be called "hard data" in the days of positivistic ethnography, and the discipline's growing awareness over the past twenty-five years that we only know facts through their representation (which itself is always culturally and historically determined), which must, to some degree, inform this report if it is to meet the standards of a up-to-date ethnographic overview.

Yellowstone's Indians in 1872

In the year of Yellowstone National Park's creation American Indian tribes of the Rocky Mountain West were in a state of tremendous upheaval, transformation and insecurity. Only one year earlier, the Indian Appropriation Act of March 3, 1871 (16 U.S. Stat. 544,566) had effectively reversed the government's Indian policy which had prevailed since the days of George Washington. Whereas the official status of Indians described variously as "distinct, independent, political communities" or "dependant nations" had acknowledged their semi-sovereign ability to sign treaties with the U.S. government, in this amendment which was tacked onto the 1871 Indian Appropriation Act the increasingly-criticized and begrudging acknowledgment of Indian autonomy was now considered in the words of Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis A. Walker in 1874, "a mere form to amuse and quiet savages, a half-compassionate, half-contemptuous humoring of unruly children" (in Prucha 1985:16).

It is also ironic that just as the federal government started protecting the nation's wildlife and scenic landscapes she was beginning to tighten her control over the region's native cultures who had survived on those animals and considered that country their own. The years that cluster around the birth of Yellowstone National Park were a major turning point for Indians in U.S. history, because now Indian nations shifted from the status of free-traveling, autonomous tribes to clusters of dependant, remnant natives who were sequestered on reservations administered by the Department of War. In addition, the year 1872 saw the government complete an about-face in its philosophy about how Indian reservations should be run. Until 1868 the War Department had been in charge of Indians, but with the ascent of Ulysses S. Grant to the presidency that year he instituted a policy of pacificy and assimilating Indians instead of making war on them which was popularly known as the "Peace Policy."

This approach saw the replacement of military officers as Indian agents by appointments from civilian, religious denominations. Beginning with the placing of men from the pacifist Society of Friends in control of reservations in Nebraska, Kansas and Indian Territory, this shift from military to civilian authority was made official when Congress, in 1870 (16 U.S. Stat. 62; 16 U.S. Stat. 319) officially forbade military men from filling such Indian agency posts. By 1872 candidates from a dozen religious groups were functioning as Indian agents for 63 of the nation's 75 reservation agencies. For tribes immediately associated with the greater Yellowstone ecosystem this meant that by 1872 the Methodists were assigned to place their men in charge of the Crow, Blackfeet and Fort Hall Indian agencies, an Episcopalian was running the Shoshone reservation south of the Park, the Flathead were allowed to retain their strong ties to the Catholic church while the Nez Perce were under the control of a Presbyterian.

For Indian peoples whose culture-histories linked them to the Yellowstone region, conditions on reservation and off-reservation life differed from place to place. But the new environmental, social and political realities taking shape by 1872 were momentous and disruptive for all these tribes. Aside from specifics to be described in the chapters to follow, these Crows, Shoshones, Bannocks, Flatheads and others were now facing the same grim realities: population decline due to disease, warfare and despair, disarray of established socio-political regimes and threat to the authority of traditional chiefs, loss of their once-reliable buffalo, swelling numbers of white ranchers, miners, railroad workers and settlers, greater opportunities for cross-cultural encounters or misunderstandings to flare into bloodshed, mounting pressures to yield their hunting grounds and familiar landscapes, and the destabilization of family unity by sending their children off to boarding schools and converting the parents to Christianity and farming.

In 1872 the quelling of rebellious Western tribes was only just beginning. A great body of Sioux tribes was momentarily flexing its muscles, having temporarily won back from the uncharacteristically conciliatory Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 their rights to the Powder River country. Within only two years George Armstrong Custer's exploratory expedition into the Black Hills would violate that document, however, and incite the last phase of the Great Sioux War. Meanwhile, this vigorous Sioux war machine was invading Crow country with such ferocity that in 1872 some of their white supporters believed the tribe to be on the verge of annihilation.

Not helping the tense atmosphere in the greater Yellowstone region was a widespread anti-Indian sentiment which spread from the muddy streets of Bannack, Virginia City and Deadwood in the west to the halls of Washington, D.C. in the east. During the 1868 debate over putting a stop to treaty-making with Indians, a congressman from Montana, James Michael Cavanaugh, voiced the hard line position:

I have never in my life seen a good Indian (and I have seen thousands) except when I have seen a dead Indian....I believe in the policy that exterminates the Indian, drives them outside the boundaries of civilization, because you cannot civilize them [Congressional Globe 1868:2638].

A view with slightly more leeway was offered in 1872 by Ferdinand V. Hayden, the earliest surveyor of Yellowstone National Park:

The present Indian policy, which doubtless looks forward to the localizing and settlement of these roving tribes, is ultimately connected with the agricultural development of the West. Unless they are localized and made to enter upon agricultural and pastoral pursuits they must ultimately be exterminated. There is no middle ground between these extremes...If extermination is the result of non-compliance, then compulsion is an act of mercy [Hayden 1872:263-264].

Besides the options of Indian compliance with assimilation, or resistance and extermination, was a third possibility. This was the likelihood that Indians would simply die off and disappear. Prevailing in the minds of sympathetic writers was the theory of the "Vanishing Indian," which held that their extinction as a race of people was inevitable due to the vicissitudes of land loss, warfare, alcoholism, and "the natural consequences of one race taking over another." The best that could be hoped for was to treat them humanely in their declining years.

This, then, was the tense climate in Western Indian country when Yellowstone National Park was born. As the following two decades unfolded, most of the tribes lost people and freedom until they were left with little more than sheer survival on their minds. A clandestine bolt on a hunting trip might see some Bannock horsemen breach the boundaries of the Park, but they were quickly hounded back to their reservations. Little wonder that over the generations Indians felt unwelcome there, and perhaps even blocked their memories and folklore concerning the place.

Organization of this Study

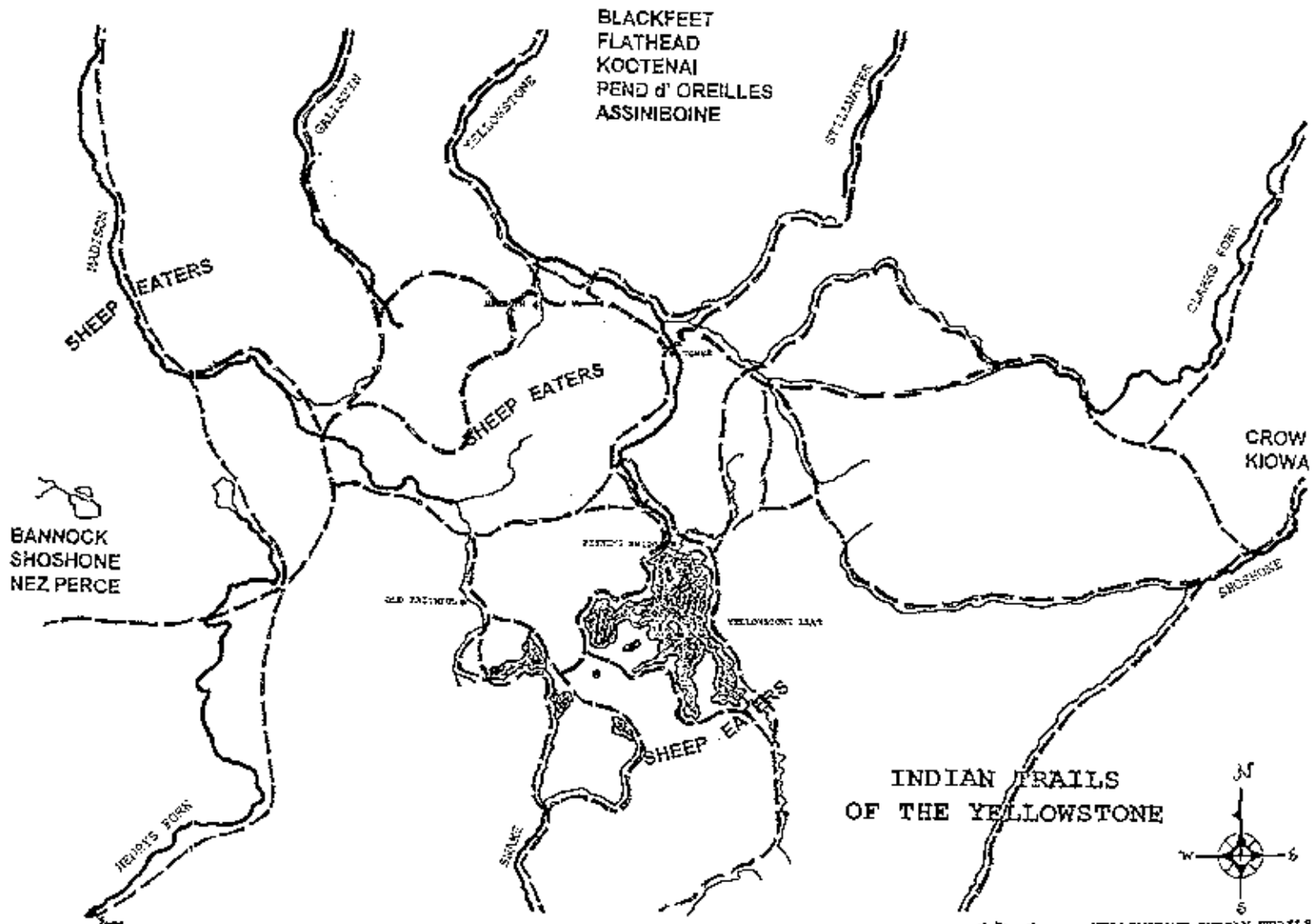
As an amalgamation of primary research materials, library citations and possible narrative approaches for adoption by interpretive programs in Yellowstone National Park, this document is avoiding a topical itemization of the sites, dates, topics and underlying themes related to our overarching subject of Indians and the Park. Instead, we attempt to inject some narrative dynamism into our document by considering the materials on this relationship from five major geographical

standpoints that more or less reflect historical experiences of the constituent Indian groups under study.

Hence we will move around the Park from the various directions. Starting with the East, in Chapter One we introduce the Crows, who claimed a sizeable eastern portion of the Park proper as their aboriginal territory. We also offer unusual data that suggests a possible Kiowa connection to the region, which is interesting given their close early historical friendship with the Crow. In Chapter Two we cover tribes such as the Blackfeet, Flathead and Kootenai who freely penetrated the Park for hunting or raiding or resource-collecting. For purposes of convenience we also concentrate our data on buffalo-and-elk hunting related to the Park in this chapter.

We have placed the Shoshonean people known as Sheep Eaters in Chapter Three, at the center of the document, because they are believed to be the only Indians who were full-time residents of highlands in the Park. Here we have benefitted immeasurably from the unpublished field notes of Åke Hultkrantz, who flew from Sweden to serve as temporary consultant for our project. The tribes in Chapter Four also share the habit of using the Park region as a shortcut to buffalo hunting grounds to the east. But they have a historical affinity as well, for warriors from the Bannocks, Northern Shoshones, Nez Percés and Snake River Sheep Eaters struck against white settlers and were forced to defend themselves against white soldiers until their deaths or surrenders.

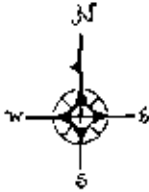
The last profile, in Chapter Five, focuses on only one tribe, the Eastern or Wind River Shoshone. Like the Crow, their connection to the Park is territorial - the bottom third of the Plateau apparently lay within their traditional territory. In the same fashion that we summarized information on hunting from other tribes in Chapter Two, here we compile our diverse tribal data on root-digging practices, notably the Carnas root. We also seize the opportunity in this chapter to present data from other tribes on the controversy over Indian attitudes towards and uses of the Park's thermal field. Our Concerns and Recommendations discusses a) unresolved issues concerning Park policy and Indians, and offers recommendations related to, b) its public conduct of the relationship between them both, together with thoughts about, c) improving its representations of the cultural and historical ties between various Indian peoples and Yellowstone National Park. The recommendations were submitted under a separate cover.



BLACKFEET
 FLATHEAD
 KOCTENAI
 PEND d' OREILLES
 ASSINIBOINE

BANNOCK
 SHOSHONE
 NEZ PERCE

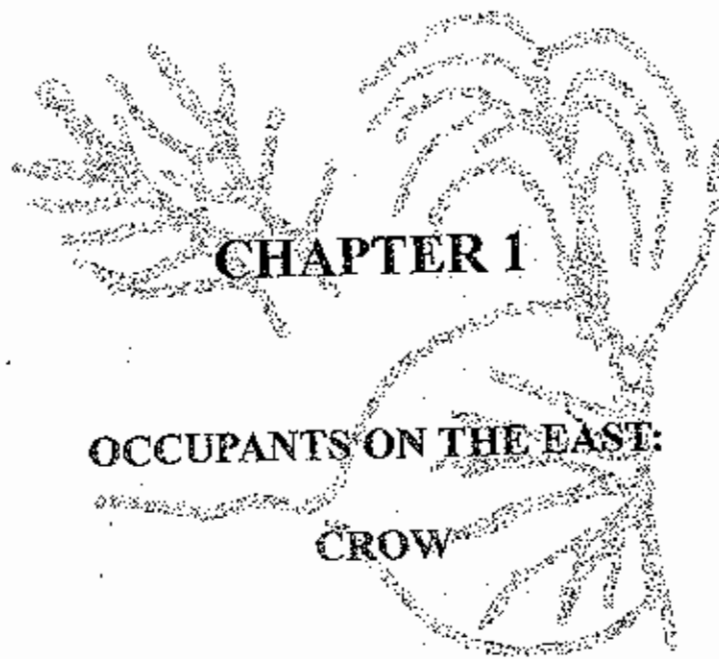
INDIAN TRAILS
 OF THE YELLOWSTONE



--- = YELLOWSTONE INDIAN TRAILS

ADAPTED FROM A MAP BY NUGGET L. BAINES
 (For notes on this map please see Appendix A)

WIND RIVER SHOSHONE



CHAPTER 1

OCCUPANTS ON THE EAST:

CROW



Figure 1.1: Crow Indians at opening ceremony for East Entrance to Yellowstone National Park, Spring, 1927. White Man Runs Him (Right) and Max Big Man (Photo courtesy of Montana Historical Society, Haynes Foundation Collection #H-27006, J. E. Haynes, Photographer).

This chapter introduces those American Indian peoples whose cultural and historical interests played out within and along the eastern portion of the greater Yellowstone plateau. Of these distinctive ethnic groups on the east, certainly the most notable in Yellowstone National Park history has been the modest-sized nation generally known as the Crow of today's south-central Montana and northeastern Wyoming. But the fortunes of other Indian peoples also touched upon the eastern and northeastern flanks of this mountainous region. Earliest would be the long sequence of little-known archaeological cultures whose activities left scraps of evidence such as can be found in the densely-compacted layers of Mumny Cave, just outside the Park's eastern entrance.

Of later encounters between historically known Indians and the eastern Yellowstone National Park region we have scattered evidence from early diarists and native oral (and pictorial) traditions. These nations include the Kiowa, Lakota and Cheyenne, who interacted with their neighboring tribes in both aggressive and amicable ways. Despite the fragmentary and inconclusive nature of this material, we should not exempt it from inclusion as we continue to assemble the bits and pieces that continue to surface each year and add to the slowly broadening story of Yellowstone's Indians. But the primary focus of this chapter will track the Crow as they used this landscape, virtually all of which, east of the Yellowstone River and down to the southern end of the Wind River basin, was recognized by the U.S. government until 1868 as a piece of their traditional domain.

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Through the "Tipi's Doorway" to the Yellowstone Plateau

Rising to a dark profile on the western rim of Bighorn Basin in northwestern Wyoming, the massive ranks of the Absaroka Mountains' front range face the dry basin and the rising sun. Looming above their green heights, dark clouds promise an interior of rushing streams, wooded draws and abundant wildlife. The semi-nomadic bands of Crow Indian kin units who seasonally traveled alongside and through these Absarokas were undiscouraged by the seeming impenetrability of this butress of the Yellowstone Plateau. At this point it may be also important to stress that when we use the term "semi-nomadic", we refer to Plains Indian tribal movements that were rarely aimless wanderings, as early stereotypes of western Indian life-ways were often characterized. These travellings were generally part of regular, seasonal circulations which coincided with repeated stopovers at remembered locations for reasons of obtaining food or other material resources when they were most plentiful, as well as providing opportunities for mobile bands to coalesce during key moments in the given tribe's social or ceremonial calendar.

We have little hard data about when, where and why the first Crow Indians ventured into the Yellowstone Plateau, which may have occurred as early as the 17th century. We do know that in the tribe's pre-reservation heyday, a rather brief period between roughly 1620 and 1860, that branch of the tribe known as the Mountain Crow occupied northern Wyoming and southern Montana, and hunted east as far as the Powder River and west over to Livingston, Montana. As for their brethren

who were known as the "Kicked In The Bellicies" group, they preferred to winter down along the Wind River basin of south central Wyoming, and summer on the eastern flanks of the Big Horn Mountains up and down both present-day Wyoming and Montana (McCleary 1997:3).

In the early 19th century we begin to gather enough documentary glimpses of Crow activity in the Yellowstone region to be able to reconstruct some semblance of their movements. And with a strong contingent of old Mountain Crow and Kicked in the Belly descendants still residing within the Pryor District of today's Crow Reservation - and its proximity to Yellowstone - it is no surprise that here one still can find the occasional individual with some knowledge of the North Fork of the Shoshone River region, the Absaroka Mountains, and the high country byways which once led Crows into the attractions of the Yellowstone.

Even today a few members of the old Mountain Crow division of the Crow tribe heading into the Yellowstone Plateau can recall stories and place-names that link the region to their cultural past. They can describe how their migratory forefathers of the early 19th century made the turn by the narrow gap that remains the home of their mythic Little People just south of present-day Pryor, Montana, then dragged their travois down the broadening valley through the Arrow mountains until they spilled out upon the flatlands. Soon they began to pass the immense, V-shaped river canyons which served as portals into the highlands of what would become Yellowstone National Park. Contemporary travelers on Wyoming's State Road 120 heading south towards Cody cannot miss these river canyons that lead into the Shoshone National Forest, the Clark's Fork Canyon perhaps most dramatic of them all. For contemporary Crow Indians driving on Alternate Route 14 towards the Yellowstone Plateau, a formation in the McCullough Peaks, near Belt, Montana, is still known for a famous Crow warrior called "A Bull Who Could Not Be Pushed Around," hence the site is referred to as "Push's Mountain" (Páatchish Awaxaawé). Both those roads soon bring you close to the major landmark and favorite Crow vision-questing spot near the present-day town of Cody - the "Heart Mountain" (Awaxaamnaasé). In older times, however, the Crows knew this promontory as "The Foretop's Father" (Ihkapiliilapxe) because a Crow man named Foretop once fasted up there. It is said that at one time two points jutted from the crest of Heart Mountain, but "an earthquake or something" destroyed the one on the west side, according to one Crow consultant (for pronunciation guide to Crow words see McCleary 1997:xxi-xxii).

The story behind this alternative place-name for Heart Mountain tells how this particular Crow vision-quester was instructed during his fast that he would live as long as the two points remained on the mountain. Thereafter The Foretop became renowned for his intense combats with Blackfeet, part of the Crow effort to push them back into Canada. But after he was killed up in the northland and his people returned home, they discovered that there had been a big landslide on one flank of Heart Mountain, leaving only the fan-like uplift that resembles the distinctive brushed-up forelock so associated throughout the plains with Crow identity that it is instantly recognizable on the native "ledger art" produced by many different tribes. After this his people commemorated that mountain as being the "medicine father" who had "adopted" The Foretop during his vision and helped him become such a successful warrior (GBT Interview, July 16, 1995).

Another important Crow historical site lies just to the west of Heart Mountain, the creek near Rattlesnake Mountain where the famous 19th century Crow chief named Blackfoot, or "Sits in the Middle of the Land," is said to have died in battle in 1877 and also to have been enshrouded atop a traditional burial scaffold. A little farther up from the Red Hills (Shichiishe) is the location known to whites as Sunlight Basin. According to the Crow, however, this was called "Yellow Crane's Land" (Apitshiilishisawe), named for one of their chiefs who regularly led his band there to hunt elk, deer, bighorns and even buffalo in the wintertime. South of present-day Cody is Carter Mountain, what Crows call the "White Bear Mountain" for the grizzly variety, or the "Bear With White on the Tips of the Fur" (daxpicheeiiáakeechiate). Facing directly west from Cody one cannot miss the great canyon of the Shoshone River, or "Stinking Water River" to the Crows (Aashiiliche). But in the Crow imagination this avenue into the Yellowstone Plateau was also likened to the east-facing side of one of their buffalo-hide lodges, hence their old name for Shoshone Pass (between Cedar and Rattlesnake mountains), "Like a Tipi's Doorway" (Bililiche), which seems much like the analogy that struck Jedediah S. Smith in the autumn of 1829, when he described this location as the "back door to the country divines preach about" (quoted in Bearss 1970:71).

Passing in the shadow of Cedar Mountain (Awaxammaalahkape) and through this narrow "doorway" one shortly encounters today's Buffalo Bill Reservoir, about 37 miles east of Yellowstone National Park. Looking down into the gorge's turbulent waters, a Crow consultant pointed to a rim "just below the Dam there" overlooking the rapids where the most courageous Crow fasters sought supernatural powers from the dangerous "beings in the water" (Binmuummaakoolé). Before the creation of the reservoir, according to our consultant, this flat along the Stinking Water was where "the Sheep Haters used to camp," referring in this case, interestingly enough, not to the Shoshoneans but to a branch of the Crow tribe known as "Those Who Eat Bighorn Sheep" (Iisaxpúatduushe).

That these well-watered terraces at the juncture of today's North and South Forks of the Shoshone River were popular with early Crows seems to be corroborated by statements from early Indians and whites alike. Said the great Crow Chief Sits In The Middle of the Land in 1873, "On Sheep Mountain [just southwest of the reservoir] white men come; they are my friends; they marry Crow women, they have children with them; the men talk Crow. When we come from hunting we get off at their doors, and they give us something to eat" (House Executive Document No. 89, 43rd Congress, 1st Session, p. 28). Further evidence of the Crow sense that this area was "the Indian's side of the Yellowstone" is found in comments by one "Mea-de-sesh, which, in American, means Two-bellied Woman," (known elsewhere as simply Two Belly -) to a man identified only as Allen in a letter to the Bozeman Avant Courier newspaper (June 19, 1879, p. A2). "My people are hungry," Two Belly complained. "They want to go to the Muscleshell to get buffalo to eat. White men drive cattle from Sheep Mountain through the center of my reservation. I do not want it done. They drive all the game out of the country. If they cross the Yellowstone up Sheep Mountain I want them driven back." And on September 6, 1808, George Drouillard, a fur trader, hunter and interpreter for the Lewis and Clark expedition, drew a map for William Clark and offered some verbal notes which Clark scribbled down. At the convergence of these forks of the Shoshone, or "Stinking" River, said Drouillard, "Ap-sha-roo-kee band of Crow Indian winter here where there is an abundance of dry

grass on which their horses live during the winter...amount to 280 lodges of dressed leather or 2,240" (Skarsten 1966:265).



Figure 1.2. Crow consultant GBT, pointing to Shoshone River gorge, site of supernatural beings, 1995.

Our major Crow consultant's maternal grandfather, Comes Up Red (*Alikusshihishish*), had been born near here, at the "Place of Chiefs" (*Amimacheeitchic* - near present-day Meeteetse, Wyoming, and the origin of its name today). A member of the Crow sub-group known as the "Outer Edge People" (*Ammitaaashé*), Comes Up Red was quite familiar with this reservoir area and showed it to his grandson, who recalled:

I think there was a trading post on the south side right about where that mountain comes right by the river there. There was an old cabin that was still standing. See those two peaks over there, just below that there was an old cabin right at the edge of the lake. It is probably in the lake now. It was standing in 1948, when my grandfather said that a man named Farthest Up The River had his camp there...There was always a trader here, ever since the early 1800s...my grandfather said that the white people first came into this area right here. They [his grandfather's people, the political band known as "When you Shoot an Arrow at a Buffalo and You Hit a Rib and it Ricochets Off" (Shiiptache)] knew more about white people than the rest of the Crow tribe. So they learned to speak English and learned to adapt to the white man's ways quicker...They were always the translators when they negotiate for treaties...they first traded with the traders, and then the trappers. So they had more contact with the white people...They intermarried with the Shoshones and were real friendly with them, whereas the other bands didn't get along with the Shoshones...[They wintered at this spot because] there was hardly any snow on the ground in winter time because of the winds. There were a lot of elk and deer and bighorn sheep [GBT Interview July 16, 1995].

Past the Stinking Water gorge the North Fork of the Shoshone valley opens into the funnel that narrows just past present-day Wapiti, as the riverside roadway followed by ancient Indians and today's tourists alike climbs through pine forest. Driving through this region towards the Park our key Crow consultant recalled his family carrying on an entrepreneurial relationship with Anglo-Americans. As a boy, between the age of eight and thirteen he wore Indian regalia and danced for tourists outside Cody's Irma Hotel, many of them bound for Yellowstone National Park. Then, on their own recreational drives into the Park proper, his family often enjoyed a rest stop just outside the Park's eastern entrance:

...the Crows used to come to Pahaska Tcepce. The old owner way back in the '40s and '50s was real friendly with the Crows. They used to come and he would feed them for free. He had a big dining hall for his employees. If you came in there at lunchtime or in the evenings, they would feed you for free and then he would ask them to dance for the tourists. I don't know if they ever do that [any more]. That was way in the '50s. All of the people in Pryor used to know him...He even had an Indian name [GBT Interview July 16, 1995].

Once he was approaching the Park perimeter, this consultant noticed familiar places, as well as plants his family would gather on the way. However, when it comes to understanding how the mobile groups of Plains Indians like the Crows identified and utilized the natural resources they found on the Yellowstone Plateau it may be useful to make a slight distinction between those floral, faunal and geological resources which were an ostensible object of their movements, and any natural resources which they recognized en route and took advantage of along the way. At a spot where the road cuts between two angled ridges, for instance, our consultant remembered that his parents referred to this spot as "Buffalo Fence," or "Boundaries for a [old time] Buffalo Jump" (Binnaxché

Bishéc), which commemorated how the narrowing ridge lines resembled the drive lines that were demarcated by rock piles or dead-fall fencing into which Crows in the pre-horse days would drive buffalo, prior to crippling them over a sheer cliff or trapping them for easy shooting in a box canyon or makeshift corral. Recalling this old place-name also caused the consultant to recall an incident related by his father which took place deeper within the Park proper:

My grandfather told me one time they were chasing some Bannocks. I don't know what the reason was, but I guess they wanted to kill them...and the Bannock got into the Fire Hole River. They stayed there and they kept chasing them. When they finally came out, the horses feet were real soft from staying in that water. So that was kind of a trail that they used to hide their tracks. You could take that and get out of the mountains. They called Fire Hole River the "Long Opening in the Ground" (Hachkaawiushe)...like an entranceway to a cave [GBT Interview July 16, 1995].

As for the foraging for plants that took place en route from the east towards Yellowstone Lake, this consultant also pointed to the broomweed that was in flower at that season of our field trip, what the Crows call "What the Buffalo Won't Eat" (Bishécwaaushisee) [*Gutierrezia sarothrae*], whose dried leaves and flowers Crow people still store in jars in kitchen cabinets for brewing teas for any number of ailments, from sore muscles to help pregnant women have easier childbirth (McCleary 1995:2). Other plants which this consultant recalled collecting en route to and within the Park included horsemint (Bahpuushé) [*Monarda* species], which warriors who had counted coup on the warpath would make into crowns for wearing on their victorious parades through their home camps, the sweet grass which was used for incense (Bachúate) [*Savastana odorata*], and highly-prized forms of tree lichen, such as the compact "yellow plant" (Baaapáashile) [*Everina vulpina*], serving both as headache medicine and perfume, and the "black tree lichen," whose hair-like tufts were likened by Crows to a buffalo's beard [*Aletoria fremontii*]. Other northwest tribes, such as the Kutenai and Nez Perce, also prized this particular plant, for flavoring their boiled camas mush, and as a curative for upset stomach, indigestion and diarrhea (Hart 1976: 11).

But the Crow also collected minerals in the area. While our principal consultant described only generally how Crows in the East Yellowstone area "would also get tipi poles and arrowheads...and Bear Root," specifying a "certain place near the Firehole River [where they may have obtained] obsidian or chert or something like that," he was more specific when it came to "paint":

There is a bubbling, the Painted Pot, or something like that, that is what it is called...Anyway, it is here in the Yellowstone Park. It is dark brown when it is bubbling, when it is boiling and bubbling. If you get it out, as soon as it is dry it is pure white. That is what they used to refinish the white buckskin. When my mother was still alive that is where she got hers. We harvested certain things here. That is why they would come. It is easily accessible...we just used a coffee can, and then we would just dip it out. We had to ask permission to do that. They finally knew us, because we were there constantly [GBT Interview July 16, 1995].



Figure 1.3. Crow women picking berries, 1913. Location unknown. (Photo courtesy of Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives #79-8487)

This anecdote of gathering thermal residue for a whitening agent for hides echoes a fuller notation of such practices by the Wind River Shoshone. In the report of Captain William A. Jones of the Corps of Engineers, who followed the Shoshone River route into the Park in late summer, 1873, one reads:

The material employed [for paint] was usually an ochreous ore, and much of the earthy hematite from the Green Spring locality on Pelican Creek was collected and used for this purpose. The green, slimy cryptogamic vegetation from the same spot was also daubed in stripes and patches on the horses in some instances [Jones 1875:278].

And curious speculation about Yellowstone as an inspiration for Indian artistry comes from the writings of Joseph Dixon, chronicler of the "council" expeditions funded by Rodman Wanamaker between 1908-09. Intended to reconcile former warring tribes under the banner of American citizenship, the highly-publicized Wanamaker events blended the collecting of nostalgic memoirs by battle-scarred veterans of the Indian wars, solemn secular rites of inter-tribal peace and friendship, and posed photographs which evoked both the "noble savage" and Vanishing Indian images. Hypothetical and romantic as Dixon's following words sound, at least they represent a rare example of idealizing rather than demonizing the Indian's relationship to the Yellowstone thermal field, and therefore are worth recording as one type of Indian representation associated with the Park. At one point Dixon speculates that the Plains Indian's "colour scheme" might have originated:

...with the dazzling array of colours, beyond the genius of the proudest palette, to be found in the marvelous formations that surround the great geysers of the Yellowstone, colours more exquisitely beautiful than the supremest refinement of art. Every-whither down the cone-shaped mounds are tiny steam-heated rivulets interlacing each other, edged with gold and vermilion and turquoise and orange and opal. Indian trails have been found also interlacing each other all through this wonderland. Deep furrows in the grassy slopes of these ancient footprints are still plainly visible [Dixon 1925:22].

To help us imagine how the Crow parties followed their old trails into the Yellowstone mountains, we might call up the memoir of early Crow reservation homesteader, Frank Tschirgi, who watched the tribe's extended families load up for their summer treks into the nearby high country. (This description also resonates with the standing stockpile of used tipi poles which one can still see today in a grove just north of the Soda Butte Creek road in the Park's Lamar Valley):

They used to move from their reservation or winter range in long caravans. I have seen these caravans a mile long. Upon arriving at the foot of the mountains they would unpack and discard their tepee poles. They packed their equipment on the backs of ponies and climbed the mountain trails on horseback. The discarded poles left at the foot of the trail accumulated from year to year, and although they were discolored by smoke, they were used by the early settlers for various purposes, such as roofing and corral material [Tschirgi 1904:31].

Background on the Crow

Who were these plains Indians named Crows and how did they come to know and claim the territory that fell into the region of today's Yellowstone National Park? An offshoot of older horticultural ethnic groups who had lived along the Middle Missouri in present-day North Dakota, the most recently-proposed scenario for Crow ethnogenesis in the west has these native pioneers striking out from the region of present-day North Dakota in two waves, about 125 years apart.

First to venture west were the so-called Mountain Crow around A.D. 1550, to be followed about a hundred and twenty-five years later by the River Crow. It was the combination, then, of these Siouan-speaking divisions and their constituent bands and cross-cutting clans, which, say non-Indian scholars, produced the tribe whom the French first encountered in the 1740s and named the "beaux hommes" (handsome men), or the "gens de corbeaux," from a mistranslation of one of their own self identifications, "children of the large-beaked bird" (*Apsáalooke*) (summarized in Voget 1984:3-10; Hoxie 1995: 36-42). This would have been shortly after the Crow had acquired horses.

But that is the non-Indian's story. Among the Crow themselves one hears a more complicated set of explanations for how they become a discrete ethnic group on the plains. One of the most common accounts tells of a wandering tribe who eventually came under the leadership of two brothers, No Intestines and Red Scout. In one variant, when they both vision-quested together at Devil's Lake, North Dakota, No Intestines was instructed by his vision to search for the seeds of the sacred tobacco, while Red Scout was told to settle his followers along the Missouri River and grow corn (McCleary 1997:16-18). As No Intestines led his people on their wanderings for the promised seeds, the migrants experienced all the corners and climates of the great plains. Some versions of the story include possible early knowledge of the Yellowstone National Park area, for it is said that after finding the area around Alberta, Canada too cold, they headed south, passed the Great Salt Lake, and then headed to the east before swinging back north into Montana, "passing through the place 'where there is fire,' perhaps Yellowstone National Park or a fiery coal pit" (Voget 1984:7), which another respected historian of the Crow calls "land-of-the-burning-ground" (Bradley 1991:42) or "Land of Vapors" (*Awe Púawishe*).

Finally, at Cloud Peak, the highest crest in the Big Horns, which the Crow call the "Extended Mountain" (*Awaxaawakússawishe*) and which they consider the center of the world, the fourth of No Intestines' visions told him that he would notice the sacred tobacco seeds because they would be twinkling like stars. That was when the Crows "made their home in Montana and Wyoming, with the Big Horn Mountains as their heartland" (McCleary 1997:18).

Once in place, these newcomers began to develop their regional subdivisions, some of which probably reflected earlier, historical or social subgroups within the Crow tribal fold. Of the three social divisions which became more defined in the new landscape, the second-largest, the River Crow (*Binnéssiippeele*, or "Those Who Live Amongst The River Banks"), probably had the least cultural knowledge of or subsistence interest in the Yellowstone Plateau and its environs. While on occasion their fairly independent village groups or sub-bands might range along their southern boundary, the Yellowstone River, instead they were generally to be found farther north, all the way up to the Milk River (McCleary 1997:2).

Rather, it was members of the tribe's largest division, popularly known as the Mountain Crow, who would have considered - and on the western fringes of the reservation one still hears the claim - that side to present-day Yellowstone National Park as part of their aboriginal territory. Among some older Crow people themselves, these Mountain Crow are still referred to as *Ashalahó*, or "Where There Are Many Lodges." As for the Mountain Crow offshoot which coalesced as the tribe's

distinctive third group during the historical period, they are formally called "Home Away From The Center" (Ammitaalasshé), although a more common and colloquial designation is "Kicked In The Bellies" (Eelalapiio), a name which derives from an incident when the Crows first encountered horses and one member of this rather large band was kicked by a colt (McCleary 1997:2-3).

These three divisions, then, make up the Plains Indian ethnic group which the tribe self-describes more precisely in most formal settings as Apsáalooke (or "Children of the Large-Beaked Bird") a translation affirmed by most Crow scholars (Medicine Crow 1992:2; Hoxie 1989:122; Lowie 1956:3; Froy 1987:11) - all the while, however, often referring to themselves in private conversations among themselves as simply Bíiluukc, which means "Our Side" (McCleary 1996: 1-3).

There is some confusion regarding the origin of the Crow name that Lloyd (Mickey) Old Coyote clarifies:

...our tribal name in our language is Apsaalooka—of which there are at least sixteen different spellings. French trappers, hearing that we were children of a large-beaked bird, gave our tribe the nickname of Crow, something which we at first resented but in later years have accepted. In reality the large-beaked bird, now extinct, belonged to the raven family, a bird having a long split tail, although some white authors have mistakenly said that the bird was the sparrow hawk. (Underline not in the original. [Old Coyote and Smith 1993])

During the tribe's very earliest negotiations with the white man, Crow affinities for certain habitats would influence which leaders could speak authoritatively for which territorial claims (for a useful historical overview of Crow association with the Yellowstone Valley, see Heidenreich 1985). Hence it is not surprising that in regard to their interests along the eastern flank of Yellowstone National Park one would hear Mountain Crow spokespersons like the famous Sits In The Middle of the Land articulating the Crow ties to that particular landscape. In name if not in social reality, these divisional distinctions have continued through the 20th century, as outsiders learned when the Crow factions who were bitterly opposed over the sale of land rights for Yellowtail Dam on the Big Horn River in the 1960s became publically identified as Mountain and River Crows.

"Better Than A Book" - Earlier Natives of Yellowstone

Long before the eastern migrants who came to be known as the Crow favored the "doorway" outside of Cody as their avenue into the Yellowstone Plateau, older generations of native Americans felt at home in this valley that led in and out of Yellowstone National Park. We are somewhat familiar with these unnamed native occupants thanks to a remarkable episode in American archaeology which captured the world's imagination over thirty years ago.

In the winter of 1959-60 the newly-hired director of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, an art historian and writer named Harold McCracken, went to Washington for a talk with

the well-known Smithsonian Institution expert on Plains Indian prehistory, Waldo R. Wedel. Based on his excavations a decade before in the Cody vicinity, Wedel confided to McCracken that there was a good chance that promising Indian sites, with very old remains revealing permanent occupation at higher elevations, might be found deeper in the Absaroka range. Two years later, hopping rides on fire-fighting helicopters, McCracken cast his eye over the inaccessible high country west of Cody. With the help of a local trapper, hunter and amateur archaeologist and historian named Bob Edgar, the two men spotted a few old hunting grounds and campsites, including one dauntingly elevated elk pasture which they found to contain arrowheads that Edgar guessed probably dated to 5000 B.P. But it was actually using ground transportation and driving along the easily accessible U.S. Highway 20 only twelve miles from the Yellowstone National Park's East Entrance that enabled Edgar to make the discovery that would put the Absaroka Mountains on the map of America's prehistory.

In mid-July, 1962, Edgar pulled into the northerly road shoulder and then strolled about forty feet through brush to a natural rock shelter that overlooked the highway and the North Fork of the Shoshone River that raced alongside it. Offering natural protection for generations of white trappers, road crews and exploring kids of families visiting Yellowstone National Park, the cliff face protected a 40 X 80 foot patch of ground. Edgar found the dirt kicked up and the walls gouged with graffiti. To one side of the shelter, vandals had recently dug deeply enough to produce a heap of discarded dirt. No sooner had he hunkered down to drag his fingers through the pile than Edgar turned up a fragment of an arrow shaft, apparently sliced off by a shovel. Lashed to one end was a side-notched projectile point which had been chipped from agatized wood around a thousand years earlier.

With an excavating permit shortly in hand, McCracken and Edgar staked their scientific claim to the site. As they peeled back the floorings of the cave, in the third cultural layer down from the top they came upon a human foot, and soon they had exposed an entire individual, a male buried in

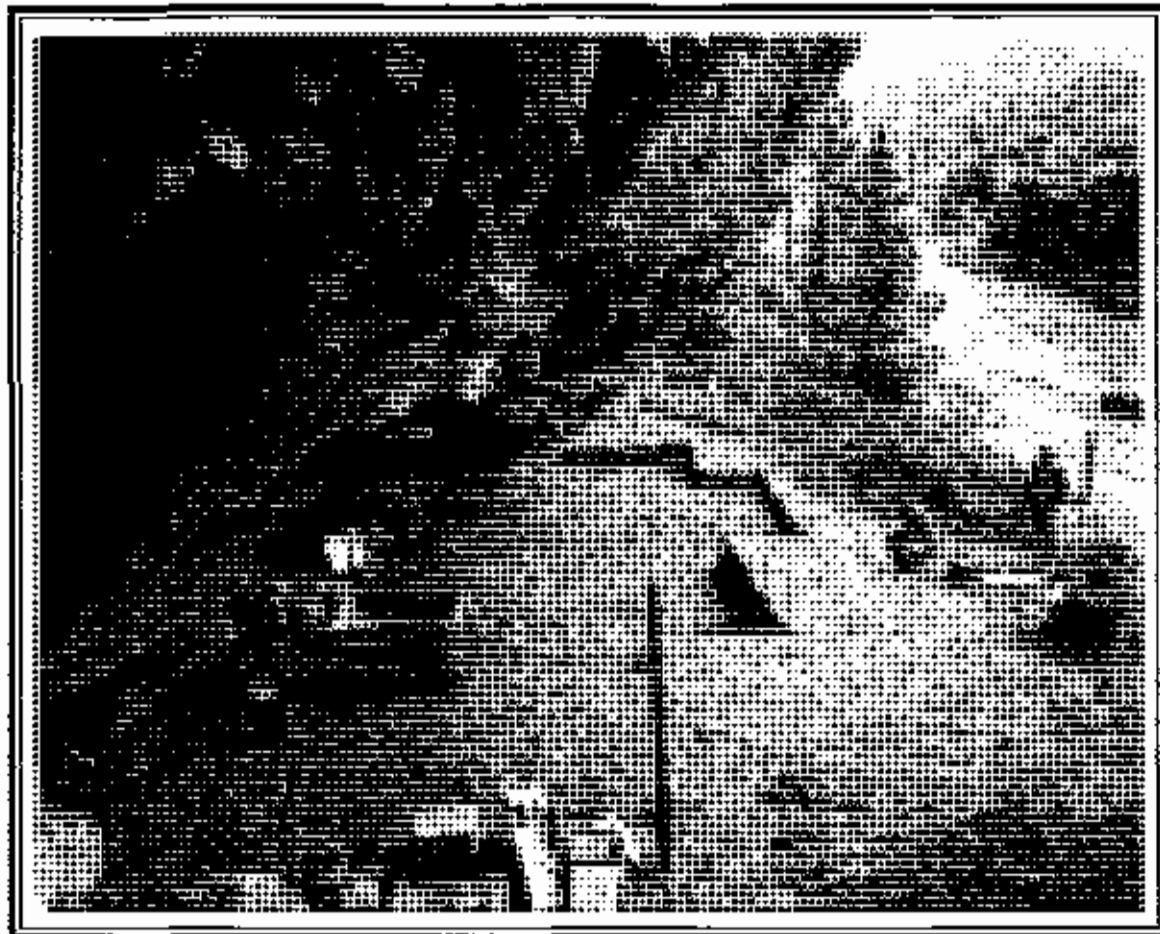


Figure 1.4. View of cave floor during the excavation MS 29 of CL#1-2-3, 1963 (Photo courtesy of Buffalo Bill Historical Center Library).

a knees-to-chest position who was wrapped in a garment made of mountain sheep skin. This organic material produced a carbon-14 date of about A.D. 724. While this discovery, which gave the site its popular name, was certainly spectacular, the greater importance of the rock shelter was only revealed over time.

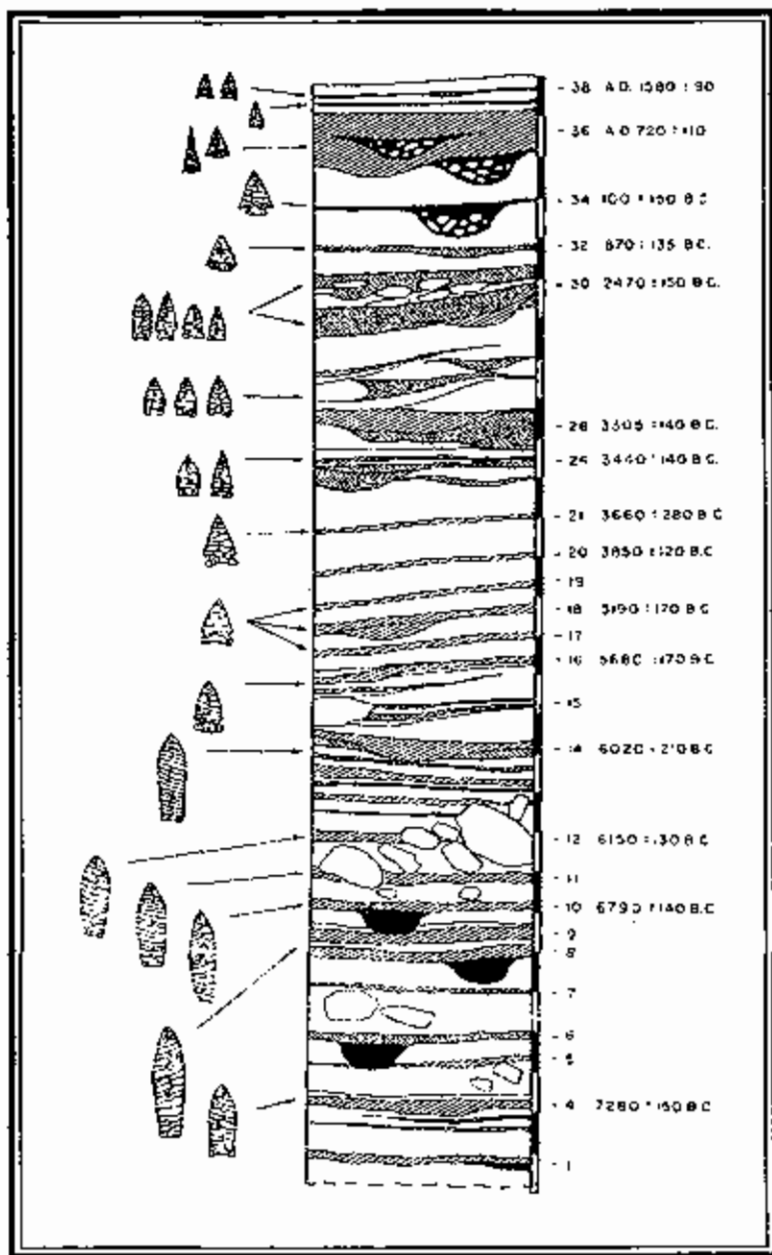


Figure 1.5. Profile of human occupation layers at Mummy Cave. Projectile points change from Paleo-Indian lanceolate forms at deepest layers up through side-notched and then stemmed forms (Courtesy of Buffalo Bill Historical Center Library).

During the winter of 1965, McCracken contacted the Smithsonian Institution to find an archaeologist to oversee the final excavation. Fortunately he found Wilfred Husted, an archaeologist seasoned by excavating caves in the nearby Bighorn Canyon region. As work progressed grid by grid and inch by inch, every portion of the entire floor fill of Mummy Cave was meticulously scraped up and sifted, with samples stored for future analysis. The crews moved ever downward through evidence of earlier river beds and ever older campsites with their fire hearths, plant and animal remains and associated human artifacts of stone and bone. Before their excavations ceased the archaeologists had penetrated 33 and a half feet into the ground. Their work had distinguished 38 culture layers and produced a chronology of 26 carbon-dated samples. They had established clearly that the most recent Indian builders of fire and cookers of meats had camped there around A.D. 1580, but that the oldest they had identified from Culture Layer No. 35 had used the shelter around 7280 B.C. This meant that throughout over nine thousand almost-continuous years the sun had warmed American Indians who slept, ate and socialized beneath the

protective west-facing ceiling of this large, natural room. When Bob Edgar reflects back on the experience of digging back through time, he says it was "better than a book."

Since the report on Mummy Cave was published in 1978 there have been attempts to revisit the large amounts of data collected in during the expedition [in much the same way that Nevada's remarkably parallel site, Spirit Cave, has recently undergone reanalysis, see Archaeology Magazine, September/October 1996]. Even though the original 24 layers or "lenses" of occupation identified by Bob Edgar and his crew were increased upon more refined analysis by Wilfred Husted, to 38 layers - and in the corrective process reversing McCracken's approach of counting from the top down to starting instead with the oldest bottom level upwards, as was approved U.S. government procedure established during the River Basin Surveys - it is the opinion of Susan Hughes that even this "might be a conservative estimate". Indeed, she points to the level 3 identified as representing a single occupational episode by both McCracken/Edgar and Husted as "actually a very thick layer composed of four or five thinner layers" (Hughes 1988:47).

In her 1988 and 1994 syntheses and updates on the Mummy Cave trove, Hughes reports on a host of refined observations and opens up new vistas for laboratory analysis. Recent work on the burial itself, for instance, suggested that it was a male between the ages of 35 and 40, who stood about 5 feet 5 inches tall, who had recently eaten cooked food, and who was probably buried in late spring. Furthermore, the placement of a ram sheep skull placed upside down near a line of stone slabs has been speculatively associated with a complex of hunting rituals found among other Rocky Mountain high altitude dwellers. The artifact assemblages also suggest varied cultural affiliations, with the majority of projectile point styles associated with long periods of sustained occupation in northwestern Wyoming, but also with the presence of materials such as steatite beads, harpoon tips, fishnet weights and composite cane arrows which are more commonly linked to the Great Basin traditions. As new approaches in "behavioral archaeology" tend to worry less about building iron-clad chronologies, and to look instead at how modern laboratory techniques such as pollen analysis can help us reconstruct the human activities at such occupation sites, the rich data from Mummy Cave will remain a "book" about the deep history of Native American cultures related to the Yellowstone Plateau which will be reread and rewritten.

Zones of Power: Crows in the Thermal Field

When a contemporary, traditionally-minded Crow arrives at the shores of Yellowstone Lake today, it is not uncommon for him to light a cigarette, puff four times, and to pray. In the 1930s and '40s, according to one of our consultants, a recreational drive into the Park would continue on to the geyser region, and this act of supplication would be repeated. When one asks about the older Crow reactions to the geysers, it is predictable that consultants today are well versed in the non-Indian argument that their forbears were terrified of the hot, spouting and noisy waters. Regarding this picture of Indians cowering in fright at the geysers as a stereotype which brands earlier Indians - and by extension, themselves - as superstitious or simple-minded, today's native peoples often deny that their ancestors harbored such feelings of terror. Despite the fact that the argument about Indian

abhorrence and avoidance of Yellowstone's geysers is distorted and one-dimensional, and that it has been strongly challenged by a Yellowstone Association - funded brief to the contrary prepared by Joseph Weixelman (1992) and to be summarized in Chapter 5, it remains to be clarified in this chapter just what were the complexities of Crow (and Kiowa) attitudes towards a cluster of environmental features that anybody might regard as highly unusual, obviously volatile, geologically-procreative and potentially dangerous.

After over a century of their being discouraged from maintaining an on-going relationship to the hunting grounds and the possibly religious areas of the Park, it is not surprising that our data on Crow attitudes towards and usage of its thermal features is thin. However some glimmers of such information can be teased from the literature, as well as from the memories of living Crows once their distrust is overcome about why an institution that once discouraged them from using the region would now want to learn about their traditions regarding it. The investigators of this report first ran across Crow attitudes towards the geyser region in the mid 1960s, from the memoirs of a River Crow named Two Leggings. When this old warrior described his youthful war parties to the Dutch-born ethnographer William Wildschut in the 1920s, he recalled one trip into the Yellowstone National Park area. Upon approaching one hot spring near Yellowstone Lake they guessed at first that the bubbling sounds and smokey emissions were issuing from an enemy camp. Instead, they were astonished to find the boiling waters, and Two Leggings added that his men "did not like the place" (Nabokov 1967: 20). Here we must also remember that being a member of the more easterly, River Crow division of the tribe, it is understandable why Two Leggings might not have been more familiar with the volcanic field.

About seventy years later, when Joseph Weixelman sought to test the thesis put forward by the Swedish historian of religions, Åke Hultkrantz, to the effect that most Indians were afraid of Yellowstone's geysers, he struggled to obtain additional Crow testimony. Unfortunately, according to the head of the Crow Cultural Commission at the time, John Pretty On Top, the 1989 airing of a segment on public television's Sesame Street program had featured the program's anthropomorphic creature, "Big Bird," visiting the Crow reservation. Many Crows were so insulted by the representation of their community on the show that they suspended communications with outside investigators. Nonetheless, Weixelman was able to chat with Pretty On Top, who claimed that the geysers and hot springs held little terror for the Crow; he even had heard of elders who recalled traditions of the region involving use of the hot waters, but this was not the time for further investigation.

When it came to recalling personal ties to the Yellowstone region, however, it was often common for 19th century Crows to think personally rather than generically, to consider this or that place through identification with specific individuals and specific experiences, rather than by covering an entire geographical region with some overarching characterization or generalization or even proprietary claims. Hence, to many Crows - Mountain Crows especially - with personal ties to the generations of their late 19th century ancestors, when contemplating the entire Yellowstone National Park region and its unique landscape the name of one deceased Crow often sprang to mind. This man was known as The Fringe, and the stories of his powers arouse awe and respect to this day.

This was the case when the author Frank Bird Linderman asked Plenty Coups, himself a Mountain Crow leader, "Who was then the most powerful Wise One in your own time?" Almost immediately Plenty Coups thought of The Fringe, and he told Linderman the story of his famous fast on an island in the middle of the healing "medicine water" near the Wind River (Hutchaaashe). The Fringe had reached the island "by walking a pole which two friends helped him place from the shore" and then climbed a nearby hilltop to make his fasting bed. His friends noticed that on the third day of his vision-quest he had disappeared, and that on the fourth he suddenly showed up back on the shore. During that interval The Fringe had visited the home of a spirit who had given him a very special, water-connected medicine. Through this experience he received the special powers to heal wounds and thereby to possess many horses in payment from his patients, powers from the supernatural Otter and White Bear who had appeared to him. Thereafter, Plenty Coups told Linderman, "...when we passed the Medicine Water, we each dropped in a bead, or something else very pretty, so that the [dream] Father of The Fringe, and his Woman, might have them" (Linderman 1962:299-307).

From one of his key informants, Gray Bull, the anthropologist Robert Lowie obtained this individual's Crow name, Dap'ic (or, in current orthography, Daappish), which he also translated as "The Fringe." In addition, Lowie learned that he was reputedly the most renowned of the category of akúuwashdiive (currently akuuwashdiua), or "wound doctors" (Lowie 1922: 376-378). During this project we collected additional information about this healer, whose unique association with Yellowstone National Park will be mentioned shortly (GBT Interview, July 16, 1995). Our consultant claimed The Fringe was a Mountain Crow belonging to Long Horse's band, who was born about 1820 and derived his name from the long fringes that hang down from an old-time, rawhide headdress ornament. His death came in the 1860s, during a smallpox epidemic, when he refrained from using his curative powers to heal himself; our consultant speculated that this was because he did not want to live with a scarred and ugly face.

To obtain his powers from the "water beast," our consultant said that The Fringe was one of those courageous fasters who sought power at present-day Shoshone Dam. Although his vision creature did emerge at that time, it was not until a later fast at Thermopolis hot springs that he reappeared and told The Fringe, "you have shown me your fortitude, and your willingness to suffer, so I am going to give you my powers". According to this account, The Fringe would partially immerse his patients in the water so that an otter, his medicine helper and the only water-dwelling animal considered by Crows to be beneficial towards humans, could swim around and bite the wounds and heal them.

In one of his feats, The Fringe was even able to walk on water. In addition, he convened with the chief of all water beasts at an underwater lodge at the headwaters of the Missouri River, near Great Falls. Two other stories connected with The Fringe revealed his remarkable gifts for restoring injured warriors on the brink of death. According to our consultant, it was the preexisting fact of such powers which caused Crows to lend credence to what they heard from the first Catholic priests to arrive in their country: "...they told them about these things, and they could draw parallels about Fringe and what happened. Fringe was actually alive at that time. When they were told about Jesus walking on the water, they thought he was another great medicine man."

As with our project narrative, most written accounts have The Fringe's most famous fasting episode taking place at Thermopolis, and therefore only providing an analogous example of the greater complexity of Crow reactions to thermal areas within the Park. But at least one other story associated with The Fringe does place him squarely in the Park. This is a narrative which came to light when another old 19th century Crow warrior, actually a competitor of Two Leggings in the search for war honors, was interviewed about 1915 for photographer-author Edward S. Curtis' volume on the Crow, and their conversation turned to the subject of the Yellowstone geysers.

The Crow narrator for Curtis was Hunts To Die, a Mountain Crow who was born around 1838 and knew the northern perimeter of the park well, having fasted as a young man on Red Lodge Creek in the Beartooth range (Curtis 1909: 201). With the aid of a Carlisle-educated, mixed-blood Crow interpreter named Alexander Upshaw, Hunts-To-Die talked with the Curtis fieldworker, Fred Meyer, about the man he called simply, "Fringes." Although after Frederick Webb Hodge edited Curtis' original writings for his 20-volume work, The American Indian, this portion was not included in the published volume on the Crow, one copy of the original typescript which is found in the Seaver Center Library at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History included the following fragments regarding the Yellowstone National Park area:

The Great Geysers at Yellowstone are called Bide-Mahne or [Bimmaaxpéc, meaning "sacred" or "powerful" water]. Fringes fasted at this place for several days and nights. While fasting at this place the name "Water Old Man," Bide-issakku or [Bilisaahke], was given him. The Otter transformed as a medicine-man, and revealed the secrets of doctoring people who are wounded. The medicine otter would take its patient into this sacred water and the different little creatures would work wonders. He had a stuffed otter and would make the animal dive, and also the patient [L.A. County Museum/Seaver Center Library/CURTIS PAPERS/ Box 4B/Unlabeled Pile #1/Folder #14].

Next Hunts-To-Die provided some hints of the underlying system of Crow conceptual categories which are often elusive in early ethnographic writings on the tribe. In these references to the origins of Yellowstone Lake's water and shoreline driftwood we catch a suggestion of Crow causal thought:

The great Yellowstone [Lake] gets its water by waves. There is a little ridge and if the ridge wore away the whole country would be overflowed. The eagles built their nests on the mountains of these lakes. The feathers, breath feathers, would form as driftwood... [L.A. County Museum/Seaver Center Library/CURTIS PAPERS/ Box 4B/Unlabeled Pile #1/Folder #14].

Returning to the subject of the powerful medicine man, The-Fringes, Hunts-To-Die recalls the renown he achieved by virtue of the water-connected powers he had acquired at thermal sites like Thermopolis and Yellowstone:

...It was Water Old Man (Fringes) who gave such names among the Apsaroke [Apsáalooke] as Medicine Water, Otter Moves Always (meaning: lives forever), and Otter That Stays in the Water. He would doctor people by taking them to water. He used stuffed otter to do wonders. He claims there are different elements in the water which have life, and it is through them people get well when he doctored them...

The man [Fringes] came back to his people and by his wonderful power as a healer all people loved him and he was regarded a very sacred man. When a person is shot in battle and still has little breath in him he generally pulled through and got them well. He lived to be very old. Not only as medicine man, but was a very able warrior among his people. He died only a short time ago [L.A. County Museum/Seaver Center Library/CURTIS PAPERS/ Box 4B/Unlabeled Pile #1/Folder #14].

Finally, Hunts-To-Die offered a more generalized view of the Crow relationship to the Yellowstone geothermal basins. What is so fascinating about these comments is that we find the old warrior turning the old debate of just who was afraid of whom at the Yellowstone geysers on its head:

The Apsaroke [the Crow tribe] know the great geysers of the Yellowstone National Park. Only few go there to fast. All men who fasted there claimed to have seen many strange beings. They would expose themselves when no one was around. They [meaning the spirits] seemed to have no fear of the poor people who go there to fast...[emphases ours].

From this selection it appears that for Hunts-To-Die, at least, it was critical to emphasize the fact that it was the spirits that lived here in Yellowstone National Park - spirits who in his mind are clearly perceived as benevolent and helpful rather than malevolent and dangerous - whose potential "fear" of human beings was at issue, rather than the reverse. But this "fear" was allayed when the Crow supplicants rendered themselves as "poor," needy vision questers who momentarily divested themselves of clothing and cultural identity in order to be receptive to their "adoption," as the Crows generally conceived of it, by potential supernatural guardians. According to Hunts-To-Die, that appears to have been when these "strange beings" that inhabit the geysers felt comfortable about coming to their rescue, and when Crows were able to harness the inner powers of Yellowstone.

Crow History and the Yellowstone Plateau I - (1805-1871)

As with their feelings towards the Big Horn Mountain range, in the high country of the Yellowstone the Crow people found all the things they prized on earth. Today's Crows will illustrate the enduring role that mountains still play in their sense of identity by pointing to a highly symbolic event which can be witnessed each year during the final day of their Crow Fair, on the third weekend in August every year. During that afternoon's climactic "Parade Dance", a lengthy procession of traditionally-attired Crows move in stately fashion around the powwow grounds at Crow Agency

along the Little Big Horn River. Stopping four times for elaborate giveaways to friends, relatives, clan relations and special guests, at each stop hundreds of Crows in full dance regalia turn their bodies in unison towards the direction of the closest range, the Big Horn Mountains to the south. With great seriousness they then lift their eagle-wing dance fans or raise their arms in a salute to the original source of all that is good to the mountains. Hence it is no surprise why the ethnographer Edward S. Curtis characterized them as "A powerful tribe of mountaineers" (Curtis 1909:xi).

In this historical review of Crow association with the Yellowstone ecosystem during the historical period documented by outsiders, an early suggestion comes from a journal entry for September 14th, 1805, by Francois Antoine Larocque when he was at the westernmost terminus of his grand tour of the northern plains in 1805. Camping on an island in the Yellowstone River only a few miles east of Billings, the French trader was told that "...in winter they [the Crows] were always to be found at a Park by the foot of the Mountain only a few miles from this or thereabouts. In the spring and fall they are upon this River and in summer upon the Tongue and Horses [Pryor Creek] River " (Larocque 1910:45).

One Crow teenager who observed Larocque's visit was named Sore Belly (Eelápuash); a quarter-century later this young man had matured into one of the tribe's leading chiefs. It was then that Sore Belly gave his following, oft-quoted overview of the tribe's environmental preferences. Even though he was a River Crow leader, it is Sore Belly's description of his people's affection for mountain country, such as they found on both sides of the Big Horn Basin, which is emphasized:

The Crow country is a good country [because] the Great Spirit has put it exactly in the right place. It has snowy mountains sunny plains... and all kinds of...good things for every season. When the summer heats scorch the prairies, you can draw up under the mountains, where the air is sweet and cool, the grass fresh, and the bright streams come tumbling out of the snow banks. There you can hunt the elk, the deer and the antelope when their skins are fit for dressing; there you will find plenty of white bears and mountain sheep [Bradley 1923: 306-307].

During these scantily-documented years one finds occasional sightings of Crows deep in the heart of Yellowstone. During the summer of 1830, for instance, there is an unconfirmed instance of some 15 Crow families visiting "wonderful boiling springs" at Mammoth in the company of a Frenchman named Louis Bleau (Whittlesey 1988: 94, after Sharman 1902). But a more definitive tie between the tribe and the Yellowstone country is found in the description of Crow territory written somewhat later by the Pennsylvania fur trader, Edwin Thompson Denig.

As one of many employees of the American Fur Co., whose posts ranged from Blackfeet country in the northern Rockies down to Ft. Union near the mouth of the Yellowstone, Denig interacted with Crow Indians, among other northern Plains native peoples, for nearly twenty years - from at least 1837 up to 1856 when he moved to Canada where he died in two years later. His detailed characterization of their aboriginal territory was:

...through the Rocky Mountains, along the heads of Powder River, Wind River, and Big Horn, on the south side of the Yellowstone, as far as Laramie's Fork on the River

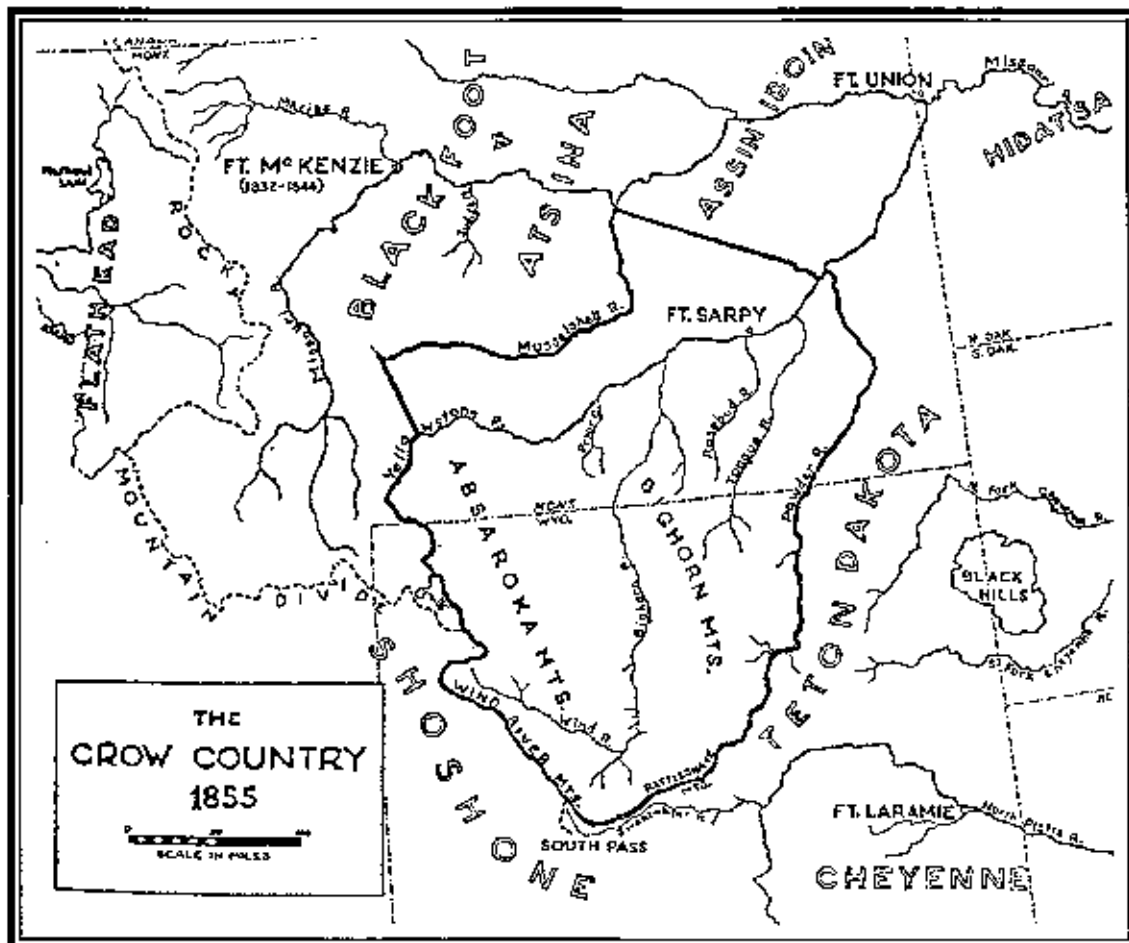


Figure 1.6. Map of Crow Indian Country, c. 1855 (from "Of The Crow Nation," by Edward Denig, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 151, Anthropological Papers No. 33, p. 21).

Platte. They also are frequently found on the west and north side of that river as far as the head of the Mussleshell River, and as low down as the mouth of the Yellowstone. That portion of their country lying east of the mountains is perhaps the best game country in the world....Some of the springs near the head of the Yellowstone are bituminous, sending forth a substance like tar, which is inflammable. Others are sulfurous, and one or two boiling. The water in the last is hot enough to cook meat well enough to fit it to be eaten. The Indians describe others to be of poisonous nature to animals, 'tho the same water is said not to affect the human species" [Denig 1961:139-141].

When it came to an even more precise picture of Crow territoriality, Denig described what sounds generally like the separate tribal divisions already delineated above. While one group headed by one "Big Robber" wintered around the head of the Powder River, "the largest band" led by a "Two Face" clung to the Wind River mountain region. A third group, under the rather loose control of "The Bear's Head" "travels along the Yellowstone from the mouth to its head." Denig also added that every summer the Crows enjoyed a major trade fair with the Snake and the Nez Perce "on the headwaters of the Yellowstone."

What lends credibility to Denig's delineation of Crow territory is that it generally echoes the description of their holdings that was codified, for the very first time, during the great Ft. Laramie peace council of 1851. Denig's own reputation as an expert on Crow Indian culture made him an influential advisor to Father Pierre Jean De Smet, and may have even influenced the priest when he attended, together with a contingent of Hidatsas, Arikaras and Assiniboines, that grandest of all Plains gatherings - although the Crows had actually arrived there before him in the company of another trader, Robert Meldrum. Since they had grown anxious about the Sioux breathing down their necks along their eastern boundary, and as there were no River Crows in attendance, during the Ft. Laramie discussions the tribe apparently accepted a more Mountain Crow slant on their geographical rights and hunting grounds.

In its final form the official definition of "Crow country" in the ratified 1851 Treaty entailed about 38 million acres which were bounded on the west by the Continental Divide - thereby according to U.S. law legally annexing virtually three-fourths of what in about twenty years was to become Yellowstone National Park. Its northern border was the western curve of the Musselshell River, plus a surveyor's line drawn from its mouth on the Missouri River straight to the mouth of the Powder River, where it pours into the Yellowstone. Then the Powder River also served as the primary eastern boundary, while farther down the Rattlesnake Hills of the Sweetwater Uplift at the bottom of the Wind River Basin lay the southern terminus of Crow domain.

At the time, according to Bearss, "The Crow were undoubtedly pleased with the treaty, because it confirmed them in possession of 'the best game country in the world.'" Today some Crows appear to feel much the same. During an interview three years ago with a high knowledgeable Crow elder, historian Mark Spence found the man:

...emphatic that the Crow still have hunting rights based on the 1851 treaty, which they have never given up. Sits in the Middle of the Land agreed that the United States could have that area for a price, but the price was never met. The Park area was very important thoroughfare for hunters coming to the Plains. But it was a two-way street. The Crow would go back the other way, meet with Shoshone for games, competition, hunting, socializing. While they were at their first two reservation agencies, Livingston and Absarokee, the Crow did a lot of hunting in the western portion of their reservation, in Beartooth, Meteetsee and Yellowstone. Bison, elk, deer were all hunted in the Yellowstone area. On a trip into Yellowstone 10 years earlier FS saw

lots of knife-sharpening marks for those hunters on their way down to get buffalo. [Here another family member allowed that he would like to "go in there and kill an elk to challenge those hunting laws," and that during the Yellowstone fires he took a buffalo skull from the Park in defiance of the laws against it].

[In addition] Yellowstone and surrounding were very important fasting areas. Its an obvious place for this because the mountains are so high. He could see fasting beds on some of the ridges. Very important spiritual place. At this Mrs. FS added that she had the same feeling and knelt down to pray in the Park because "the Maker looks down and he knows that some day we will be hunting there again" [Spence Interview, FS and family, July, 8, 1994, Wyola, Montana].

But despite lines drawn on crude maps, in the years following this first Ft. Laramie Treaty, other enemy tribes did not honor such imposed territorial divisions. The Teton Sioux only intensified their military pressure on Crow country and the white man's trading posts that served Indians in western Montana and Wyoming. The Blackfoot were of like mind, viewing the posts in Crow country as a prime target. Wrote Indian Agent Vaughan in 1854:

Scarcely a day passes but the Crow country is invested with more or less parties of Blackfeet, who murder indiscriminately any one that comes within their reach. At Fort Sarpy so great is the danger that no one ventures even a few yards from his own door without company and being well armed [Annual Report of Commissioners of Indian Affairs 1854:85].

Matters got so bad that finally, in 1855, the American Fur Company felt compelled to close their major outpost along the Yellowstone, Ft. Sarpy. Now the Crows were forced to travel many miles north from their homeland, to Fort Union along the upper Missouri in Assiniboine country, for the weapons, tools and ammunition which had been promised in the 1851 treaty and on which they had grown increasingly dependent. As the fur trade continued its decline over the late '50s and early '60s, the tribe's fortunes were rapidly falling at the same time that it was facing mounting Lakota aggression on the east, and additional pressure from the influx of gold prospectors and Oregon Trail adventurers from the south.

Yet during these years Crows apparently kept moving freely through Yellowstone high country, and even staging the occasional raid on outsiders they were upset to find there. On his second trip into the Park area in 1864, a prospector named John C. Davis first "saw plenty of Indian signs" and then claimed that a "section of [the] party was attacked by a hostile band of Crows, and a man named Harris was killed" (*Louisville (Ky.) Courier Journal*, April 18, 1884, p.12). If Davis' tribal designation was accurate, this would be highly uncharacteristic of the generally conciliatory tribe, and perhaps evidence of their desperate straits at the time.

To U.S. authorities, however, the Crow plight was but a minor ripple in the alarming instability into which the entire Plains had been thrown by the waves of incoming pioneers and miners, and by

the widespread Indian intransigence which this emigration had aroused. They felt that new methods of pacification, both on the battlefield and the treaty table, were clearly in order. When the tribe was pressured into attending a second major treaty conference at Ft. Laramie, in late 1867, their major spokesperson was the Mountain Crow leader, Blackfoot, or Awé Kúalawaachish, meaning "Sits In The Middle of the Land."

At six feet two with a muscular build, he was an imposing orator and a fierce defender of his people's aboriginal territory. Today the Crow remember him as their major "Chief of All Chiefs" during the diplomatically crucial decade of 1867-77 and Crows identify the geographical significance of his Indian name with their sense of a chosen people who found their promised land in the very center of the great plains (Bernardis 1986: 50-52). This feeling is deeply established in tribal consciousness, as evidenced when the chief's peer and second-in-command, Iron Bull (Uuwatchiilapish), also known as White On The Temple (Itchúua Chíash), who gave William Clark a version of the Crow creation story which climaxed with the Great Spirit leading the Crow to the Yellowstone river landscape, saying, "This is your country; the water is pure and cold, the grass is good. It is a fine country, and it is yours.' He then said 'I have made all this country round you. I have put you in the center..."(Clark 1885: 137-138). At about the same time Iron Bull was quoted as offering similar sentiments about the sacred establishment of Crow territory:

This is the earth the Great Spirit made [for] them. The Piegans he put them there, indicating a point in the line of the circle he made, then the Great Spirit made the Sioux, the Snakes [Shoshones]. Flat-heads and many others and located them all around the earth. The Great Spirit put us right in the middle of the earth, because we are the best people in the world [Father Prando to Cataldo, 26 September 1883, Gonzaga College Jesuit Archives, page 5 of translation from the Italian by Paul Gehl, Newberry Library, Chicago, courtesy of Dr. Frederick E. Hoxie, Director, McNickle Center for Indian History, Newberry Library, Chicago].

To lure the Crow to Ft. Laramie for the great council of 1868 the government sent them invitational bundles of tobacco. Although while en route to the meeting Sits In the Middle of the Land's group of delegates were attacked by Cheyenne, when they finally sat down to treaty-making business at Ft. Laramie they faced a more serious threat to their territory than they had ever encountered on the battlefield (Bradley 1991:94). Despite such convictions about their preeminent position in the Plains, in the concluding session of the drawn-out negotiations that stretched into the month of May, the Crows finally agreed to a radically shrunken reservation. Through this Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 the tribe lost all their lands in Wyoming plus all the acreage north of the Yellowstone River and east of the 107th meridian. Out of the 39,000,000 acres they had only 8 million acres left. Later Sits In The Middle of The Land would complain that he was shocked how much territory had been surrendered and complained that it was a "misstatement" of the verbal agreements they had made at Ft. Laramie. Were second-hand shirts, rusty kettles and poor quality stockings a fair trade for the loss to his Mountain Crows of the hulk of their old Yellowstone hunting grounds, he would ask. Now the great bend of the Yellowstone River itself served as the tribe's

northern perimeter - with the domain of their arch-enemies the Blackfeet located much too close for Crow comfort, directly on the river's opposite shore (Bradley 1991:96).

Still, at this time the Crows along with other Indians were not overly cowed by these new territorial constraints. When two hunters were killed on the Upper Lamar valley in 1868, no one was sure which tribe to blame. But when the Washburn Expedition entered the Park two years later, they had no hesitation in identifying the Indian band of twenty-five lodges which they tracked along the Bannock Trail to its ford at the narrows near Tower Falls as Crows, nor in associating the fifteen "wickey ups" a mile from Tower Junction with the "Crow" trails they had been pursuing across the Yellowstone Plateau. Contrary to other reassuring reports that Indians had been cleared out of Yellowstone's thick woods, the expedition also found "recent" camps, freshly used trails and "old Indian" lodges throughout the region. Obviously Indians felt free and able to travel in and out of the Yellowstone plateau as they pleased.

Five years after the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1868, Sits In The Middle of the Land had second-thoughts about the agreement. In the following excerpt from his lengthy remarks he would also feature a key metaphor for how his people imagined their territory:

I went to Fort Laramie; the old Indians signed the treaty. We came back to the camp and told the young men, and they said we had done wrong and they did not want to have anything to do with it...When we set up our lodge poles, one reaches to the Yellowstone, the other is on White River, another goes to the Wind River; and the other lodges on the Bridger Mountains. This is our land and so we told the commissioners at Fort Laramie, but all kinds of white people come over it and we tell you of it, though we say nothing to them. On this side of the Yellowstone there is a lake; about it are buffalo. It is rich country; the whites are on it; they are stealing our quartz; it is ours, but we say nothing to them...When we were in council at Laramie we asked whether we might eat the buffalo for a long time. They said yes. That is not in the treaty. We told them we wanted a big country. They said we should have it; and that is not in the treaty...They said "Will you sell the Powder River country, Judith Basin and Wind River country?" I told them "No," but that is not in the treaty...[House Executive Document No. 89, 43rd Congress, 1st Session, pp. 28-42, emphasis ours].

Crows and Yellowstone National Park: Loss of a Landscape (1872-1996)

During the months that the proposal to establish Yellowstone National Park was being debated in Washington in 1872, it is not surprising to observe how little reported discussion there was concerning any Indian rights to the region, or even about the possible cultural remains of Indians within the projected "natural" preserve. In so far as the Crow Indians of Montana were concerned, of course, the government claimed that the Crow 1851 treaty rights to all lands east of their Elk River [Yellowstone] and the Wind River Basin almost down to the Stillwater had been wrested from them

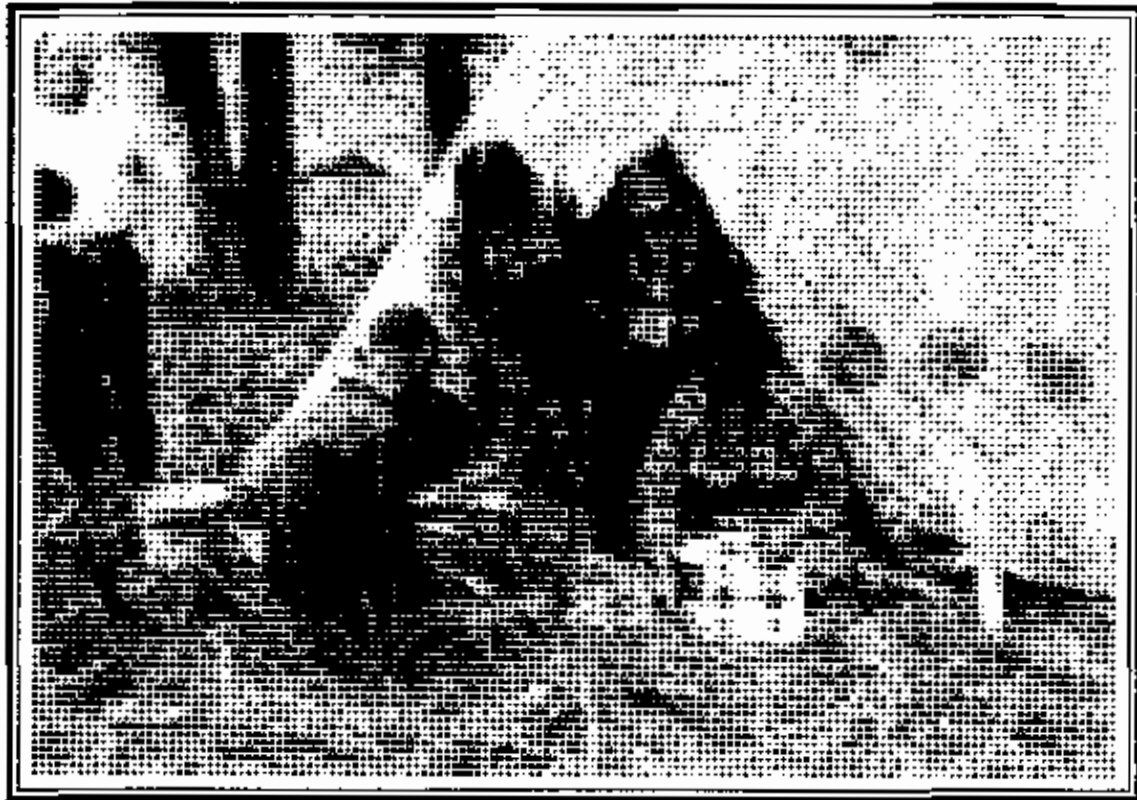


Figure 1.7. Crow Indians at Yellowstone National Park, Lamar Valley, during 1927 buffalo roundup (Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives, Catalog #Yell 37795).

during the subsequent treaty they had signed in 1868 at Fort Laramie. Shrunken by three-fourths, the new map of their reservation had yanked their southern perimeter entirely out of the proposed park, running it north of and just parallel to the present-day Montana-Wyoming state line.

Yet in 1871, when the Crows were slowly acclimatizing to life at their first reservation agency at Mission Creek near present-day Livingston, Montana, they still clung to a sliver of land that would be later accessioned to Yellowstone National Park. Unfortunately, it was to this very region, near the headwaters of the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone, that prospectors had found silver and gold. Since the fall of 1869 there had been bloody ambushes between miners and Indians furious about outsiders digging into their land; Crows were accused, for instance, of the grisly killing of Jack Crandall - discoverer of the first gold strike, and his companion named Daugherty - in which their severed heads were found impaled on upright mining stakes (Hansen and Funderburk 1962:2-3). Now an annual council of the tribe agreed about sending an urgent message to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Washington, asking for protection from the Sioux on the one hand, and from prospectors rushing into the Clark's Fork area on the other.

In 1872, those branches of the tribe more closely connected to the Yellowstone Plateau region - the Mountain Crows and the Kicked-In-The-Bellies - were still smarting from this loss of traditional access to hunting, foraging and raiding grounds. But there were others reasons why, in 1872, the Crow were probably not much concerned about Washington's plans for the country's first national park. At this time the entire tribe was in an anxious state of division and dislocation. While the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 had established reservation boundaries for the division of the tribe known to whites as the Mountain Crow, the less well-to-do division known as the River Crow had only an un-ratified treaty and were in a state of relative homelessness. In accord with that treaty, the tribe's first reservation agency had been constructed on Mission Creek near modern Livingston, Montana in 1869.

Getting used to this new reservation lifestyle at the Mission agency, in the year of 1872 the River Crow were using the Mission Creek agency as a refuge from the diseases prevalent among the Gros Ventre along the Milk River as well as from incessant marauding by the Sioux. In 1879, wrote the Agent, "This summer, for the first time in their history, the Crows have remained upon their reservation" without any problems (Augustus R. Keller to Hon. E. A. Hayt, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 1, 1879, Box 9, Records of the Crow Indian Agency, Federal Records Center, Seattle, Washington). What was left of Crow holdings within the confines of the fledgling Yellowstone National Park in 1880 was referred to as the "Montana Strip," which Agent Keller advised the government against selling, citing the Crow rights by treaty to it and the fact that they:

seldom go above the lower canon [first or Rock Canyon] because of the presence of so many whites above the canon which has destroyed the game to the extent that it is impossible for them to live there. They do, however, go above the Boulder because of that locality being good grazing and the vicinity being one of the best game regions in the Reserve" [Keller to Hayt, June 19, 1879, Box 9, Records of the Crow Indian Agency, Federal Records Center, Seattle, Washington].

But as suggested by this communicac, at this point three factors were crowding in upon the Crows' free and open use of this area. The first concerned the policy against poaching animals in the Park, which was being vigorously enforced by the second superintendent Norris in order to check the dwindling numbers of bears, elk and deer whose decline had become drastically apparent since 1875. While white poachers might have been well aware of the rules they were breaking when they trespassed into the Park for hunting and trapping, to the Indians this white man's notion of a "wilderness game preserve" where game and later even plant procurement was banned would have sounded very strange.

The second intrusion began as more of an ominous shadow than a material substance, but in the long run it would severely aid and abet the Indian loss of territory. This was the laying of railroad lines across Indian country. Already the Union Pacific had been a major factor in the final extinction of buffalo in the southern plains. Now the entrepreneur Jay Cooke, whose wealth had derived from Civil War loans, underwrote the goal of the Northern Pacific to run its trains from Lake Superior to Puget Sound, and railway surveyors had reached the Yellowstone River in 1871 (Bradley 1991:100).

Temporarily stalled by the financial panic of 1873, the Northern Pacific finally penetrated the heart of Crow country by the early 1880s. A prescient promoter, Cooke was soon boosting the visits of famous eastern artists like Thomas Moran and Albert Bierstadt into the Yellowstone country, whose monumental scenes, one might add, would idealize the landscape while erasing the Indian presence.

At the same time a third pressure on Indians was becoming unbearable. This was the influx of miners along the Clarks Fork, who had increasingly called for the wholesale eviction of Indians from their sluicing streams. In the summer of 1862 the first Montana gold strikes were made on Grasshopper Creek, in the western reaches of the territory; within two years mining camps under names such as "Bear Gulch, Clark's Fork, Emigrant Gulch and Mill Creek" cropped up in the westerly portions of the Crow reservation. After the 1868 treaty, of course, these pockets of aggressive frontier industry were more clearly legal trespassers, but the Crow agent still doubted seriously whether there were enough troops in all Montana to keep whites out of any mountains. After Major E.M. Baker's troops and some prospectors attempted to protect the Northern Pacific survey party from the Sioux who were marauding near Bozeman in 1872, the prospectors and their cattle began to stir up the Crow as well by settling on the Boulder River, clearly ignoring their reservation boundaries (Bradley 1991:102).

But the miners would not be impeded from invading Crow country or, from moving up the Rosebud Fork and higher into the mountains under their folk theory that, as Crow elder Barney Old Coyote has phrased it, "the bigger the mountains the more the gold". Yet it was federal policy to encourage such mineral exploitation, so in 1880, the government asked the tribe to sell off the western corner of the reservation, from the Absaroka Range in the west across the Beartooth Plateau and past Rocky Fork. Even before the treaty formally went into effect on April 11, 1882, impatient miners had infiltrated the surrounding valleys and constructed a smelter. And just over the Beartooth Plateau miners had already organized the backwater settlement of thirty to forty cabins into Cooke City - named to entice Jay Cooke into laying a railroad line, which he failed to do (Bradley 1991:114; Haines V. I, 1977:267; Haines personal communication, October 15, 1999).

Now the "white people" to whom *Sits In The Middle of the Land* referred in 1873, were firmly and legally in charge of the major old Crow pass up the Yellowstone River. This 1882 agreement had also extinguished Crow rights to that remaining segment of the Park north of the forty-fifth degree of latitude and east of the Yellowstone River. We may never know exactly the sorts of behind-the-scenes pressures which caused the eventual capitulation of the Crows to this final surrender of northern Yellowstone National Park land. In the case of the Crow it stands to reason that the campaign among the mining interests to clear any impediments, Indians or otherwise, from the lucrative Clarks Fork mines had reached fever-pitch.

As if to hammer home the humiliation of the Crow loss of political and territorial authority, when the Northern Pacific Railroad celebrated the completion of its line with a branch connection into Yellowstone National Park, some Crow leaders were invited to attend the last-spike ceremony in full regalia. Perhaps it was appropriate that the historic tribe with the clearest legal rights to half of the Park were represented at the Gold Creek celebration in early 1884. In the symbolic dramatization of

willing capitulation which ensued, it was the genial Crow Indian named Iron Bull (Bernardis 1986: 52-53) who spoke for his people. Second in rank to Chief Sits In The Middle of the Land and well-known for his hospitality to whites and indigent fellow tribesmen alike, he was assigned the role of handing the metal spike to Henry Villard, president of the Northern Pacific Railroad. And after dutifully performing his role, Iron Bull reportedly told the assembled crowd:

This is the last of it - this is the last thing for me to do. I am glad to see you here, and hope my people of the Crow Nation are glad to see you, too. There is a meaning in my part of the ceremony, and I understand it. The end of our lives is near at hand. The days of my people are almost numbered; already they are dropping off like the rays of sunlight in the western sky. Of our once powerful nation there are now few left - just a little handful, and we, too, will soon be gone" [Livingston Enterprise, March 28, 1884].

We may never be sure about the possible ironies that underlay Iron Bull's words, or the degree to which the carefully-choreographed ceremony whose meaning he says he understood full well was pre-scripted to fit into the "Vanishing American" theory which prevailed at this time (Dippie 1982; and see Chapter 5). This bit of wishful thinking held that the Indian population across the nation was on the wane, and it was only a matter of time before they would be a thing of the past. Whatever was the case, the ambivalent presence and double-edged speech of Iron Bull represented the first of various occasions when fully costumed Indians would be invited into or around Yellowstone National Park in order to grace, and perhaps to authenticate, solemn occasions such as the opening of gateways or the naming of mountains.

Over time the Crows would be asked to cede more land as well. In 1891 they felt the more direct might of the railroad lobby, as the Montana & Wyoming Railroad Company fought for a more direct route to the Clarks Fork mines. While legislators were able to ensure that it would only come within a mile of Yellowstone National Park and no further, they did manage to win full right to lay rails across Crow country (Haines II 1977: 40). Of Crow feelings about these early land losses in and near the Park we have scanty information. However it is recorded that in 1907, when the survivor of the Custer fight, Curley, objected to yet another proposal to open up more of the Crow reservation for non-Indian settlement, he revealed to the officials the depth of his people's feelings for their traditional landscape:

The soil you see is not ordinary soil - it is the dust of the blood, the flesh and bones of our ancestors. We fought and bled and died helping the whites. You will have to dig down through the surface before you can find nature's earth as the upper portion is Crow. The land as it is, is my blood and my dead; it is consecrated and I do not want to give up any portion of it [Garher 1916: 28].

Connections to the Kiowa: Close to "The Heart of God"

When it came to learning as much as possible about different Plains Indian responses to the thermal field of Yellowstone National Park, an unexpected outcome of our research was a purported Kiowa Indian connection. We place this material in this chapter because, according to oral traditions recorded by numerous fieldworkers, there existed a comradely, proto-historical connection between the Crow tribe and the early Kiowa (Mooney 1979[1898]: 153-156; Scott 1911; Lowie 1915:597; Old Horn and McCleary 1995; Parsons 1929:XIX; Voeglin 1933:470-474).

The following narrative came to light in late 1994 during our chance encounter with Kiowa culture researcher and member of the tribe's Business Committee, DDT, in the Smithsonian's National Anthropological Archives in Washington D.C., where we were hunting for photographs for this project. Upon learning of our study of the Yellowstone region this official informed us of a narrative known to the family line of one SC, a Kiowa Indian from Anadarko, Oklahoma, which, surprisingly enough, linked the creation of aboriginal Kiowa territory to the Yellowstone Plateau.

Perhaps the knowledge of this northerly region by the early Kiowa, who eventually settled around Rainy Mountain in western Oklahoma, should not have sounded so far-fetched. In his probe into early Kiowa history James Mooney interviewed elderly tribal members in the 1890s and learned that their traditions located them "in or beyond the mountains at the extreme western sources of the Yellowstone and the Missouri" (Mooney 1979[1898]: 153). Within the oldest memories of these informants were such impressions as an intensely cold region, a place of deep snows, and a people with compressed heads whom Mooney identified as the Flathead. It was while these early Kiowa were living at this location that two rival chiefs got into an argument and the tribe split up. The followers of the one moved to the east, setting up residence near the Crow along the Yellowstone, while the other group remained in the mountains.

Perhaps the most compelling connection between the Kiowa and Yellowstone National Park comes from Hugh Scott, a 7th Cavalryman who was stationed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma in 1889. Scott met many of the old Kiowa warriors who remembered a homeland in what they call Gá'i K'op or the Kiowa Mountains at the extreme sources of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. The exact identity of the Kiowa Mountains is no longer known, but thanks to Scott we know these mountains were near Yellowstone National Park. The Kiowa came from:

The headwaters of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers near where the Kiowa Mountains are and the geysers of the Yellowstone Park which they describe as shooting hot water high in the air - and which no Kiowa has seen for some generations - and probably has heard little of from white people but he describes that country in a way it can be recognized [Scott nd., no pagination].

This strongly suggests the Kiowa lived near the Park, and that the "Kiowa Mountains" are probably the Gallatin Mountains or Madison Mountains of southern Montana.

From the scholarly perspective, the broad outlines of this account for Kiowa ethnogenesis are echoed within the summary recently provided by the ethnohistorian Nancy P. Hickerson:

When the Lewis and Clark expedition ascended the Missouri River in the summer of 1805, they reported that the 'Kiawa' in seventy tents, were located on the headwaters of the Platte, very near to the Yellowstone Valley, the territories of the Crow, and the traditional place of Kiowa emergence (Coues 1965[1893], 1:58-60). ...In their early years of trading in the north, the Kiowa could have been witness to a wave of spectacular ceremonial events, as the Sun Dance complex spread through the tribes of the region. They became friends and trading partners of the Crow, lived among them for periods of time, and eventually internarrated... Eventually, the Kiowas also adopted these ceremonies and adapted them to their own needs. This process was completed when the Kiowa Cold People, after sojourning in the north, eventually reunited with their southern congeners. They brought with them a vision of a new type of tribal unity, promoted by an annual gathering of bands and heightened by the drama of a great ceremonial [Hickerson 1996:86-87, emphasis ours].

At the same time, native accounts offer some corroboration for this scenario of Kiowa genesis and intimate knowledge of the north country. In the 1930s, when the Smithsonian linguist John Peabody Harrington was interviewing Kiowas in Oklahoma, he was surprised to learn that they retained important place-names for both the Yellowstone and Black Hills regions (Harrington 1939). Their term Kaack'oup, for instance, referred to a location in the far north, at least three hundred miles west of the Black Hills, which Harrington conjectured might apply to "the main range of the Rocky Mountains at the Three Forks, and said to be so called because the Kiowas once lived there" (Harrington 1939:167). As for the Kiowa term for the Yellowstone River itself, most of James Mooney's oldest informants concurred with Ts'ouosa, meaning "several rocks stand planted," although when Mooney originally noted the word he had unnecessarily added the postpound, -p'a, meaning "river," after the place-name. Together with the even more intimate residue of Black Hills topographical knowledge which Harrington found among living Kiowas, it appears highly reasonable that their northland experiences could have left an abiding mark on Kiowa cultural memory.

Finally, modern Kiowas claim similar ancestral ties to the Yellowstone region. In writing of his people's origins, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Kiowa Indian novelist, N. Scott Momaday, has said, "Nomads, they had come upon the Southern Plains at about the time of the Revolutionary War, having migrated from the area of the headwaters of the Yellowstone River, in what is now western Montana, by way of the Black Hills and the High Plains. Along the way they had become a people of the deep interior, the midcontinent - hunters, warriors, keepers of the sacred earth" (Momaday 1976:28). And according to native consultants of The Kiowa Historical and Research Society who were authorized by their Kiowa Tribal Council to contribute to a collective project on the tribe's culture history in 1975:

The Kiowa saga began long ago in the north country. In the land of the Yellowstone the Kiowas felt great personal power. They faced the sun, learned the trails, and conquered the mountains. After many years, however, they became restless in the Yellowstone vastness.

Westward and north the panoramic sweep revealed ranges of mountains stretching against the horizon in shades of green, brown, purple, and misty blues. In that direction the past tribal experience was compatible with the demands of the earth and their friends - the Flatheads.

Eastward and south lay vast unknown prairies and unfriendly tribes, but also millions of life-sustaining buffalo. Though legend recounts that some Kiowas chose the northwest route, the bulk of the tribe turned east and southward for what proved to be their great trek through the land of seemingly limitless prairies abundant with buffalo [Boyd 1981:9].

From that point this narrative leads into the story of "why most of the tribe left the plains", the account of "The 'Pulling-out' Band Legend" which opens with the sentence, "Long ago two chiefs led a Kiowa hunting party in the land of the Yellowstone in the north (Boyd 1981:9)." After a dispute between these chiefs over the udder of a slain antelope, one of these chiefs leads his faction, the Kuato or "Pulling Out" band, to the northeast, and they are never heard from again, whereupon the victorious chief led his "main body of Kiowas" southeastward toward the Black Hill country (Boyd 1981:9-10).

Yet our investigation turned up a more detailed picture of mythic Kiowa origins which was also more geographically precise in situating the events within the Yellowstone plateau. This narrative came from SC, a forty-seven year old Vietnam War Veteran and painter who is an enrolled member of the Kiowa Tribe. In the winter of 1986 his tribe commissioned this man and two other Kiowa artists, MCB and PB, to illustrate the mythic and historic background of their people. Each of the ten panels measured 6 x 8 feet and are currently displayed in the Kiowa Tribal Museum at the Kiowa



Figure 1.1: Kiowa construction of the landscape during the early history of the Kiowas, as illustrated in the mural project of SC, Anadarko, Oklahoma).

Tribal Complex in Carnegie, Oklahoma. According to SC, it was MCB who "illustrated the early history of the Kiowas, the Yellowstone, what we call the Yellowstone period, up until the Kiowas moved down to the southern plains area" (personal communication, July 17, 1995).

During this mural project, SC was approached by ST, a Kiowa elder and tribal historian, now deceased, who "related a story to me concerning the Yellowstone area and requested that it be, the story be illustrated in a painting." The story rang a bell, and our consultant

believes he may have heard it earlier, perhaps from his father, a well-known Kiowa storyteller. But the version told by ST was related in "great, great detail...[he] also described the location [in Yellowstone Park] to me." In 1993 our consultant attempted to write the story down, but as he says he has not yet produced a final draft, he preferred to relate it orally on tape rather than read from his written version. Reproduced here in its entirety, SC entitled the following account, "Close to the Heart of God: Kiowa Yellowstone origins narration."

There was a man who the Kiowas say was one of the greatest Kiowas who ever lived, but no one remembers his name so only for the purpose of this story I will call him Kahn Hayn (ph) which means "No Name" in the Kiowa language. Kahn Hayn was orphaned as a young child and he didn't marry. He didn't have any offspring and no immediate family, so his status in the tribe is described as being kah ah, or "poor". But he was a great hunter and a warrior, and he had a big heart and he was always working for the greater welfare of the Kiowa people and helping to provide for those who were less fortunate than him.

When Doh Ki [also known as Doyem Daw-k'hee or "the Earth-maker" (Boyd 1981:2)], or God, put all the people on the earth he placed them here and there in different areas according to how well they could fit in, in those areas. But after that

was done there were still several groups of people, different tribes who didn't have places to call a homeland, and the Kiowas were among this group of people. One day a bush spoke to all these people and called them all together in one area. When the Kiowas arrived at this spot they discovered that the voice was the voice of God, or Doh Ki. Doh Ki explained to this gathering that he had one place left on this earth that didn't have anybody living there. But to get to this place, one of them had to go through a very difficult and dangerous journey to arrive there.

Doh Ki then had these people move to a place that Kahn Hayn thought was somewhere near the end of the earth. There was no vegetation there, no animals, no insects. Nothing moved about the ground or in the air. There was only dirt and rough stone formations, and here and there clouds of steam shot out from holes and fissures in the ground. Doh Ki called everyone around one of these steaming pools, and that was the most disturbing sight in this desolate place. There was a large deep cauldron of boiling water that surged and smashed against the jagged rock walls. It made a loud fearsome thumping noise, the cauldron did. It sounded like a great beast was just below the surface fighting to break free from the cauldron and tossing waters about violently.

Most of the people ran away immediately from the dreadful sight and sounds, and only a handful of chiefs and warriors from the various tribes stayed there, and Kahn Hayn and a few other Kiowa men were among them. Doh Ki then pointed down into the cauldron and told the remaining men that the surrounding land would belong to the tribe of any man who would dive down into the crashing waters. This created a good deal of excited discussion among these men and some began to back away because of fear, and many left because they felt this land, this country was useless and it wasn't worth risking their lives for.

Because of his strong belief and faith in the goodness of God, of Doh Ki, Kahn Hayn knew that there was more to this, to this offer, than what they were seeing and hearing, because Doh Ki didn't play tricks on the people. He constantly tested them, but his rewards were always good and lasting. Kahn Hayn related his feelings to the other Kiowas and said he had decided that he would try this thing, he was Kah Ahn and if this didn't work out right he wouldn't be leaving any family behind, and there would be no one to mourn his passing.

So he stepped over to the edge of the cauldron. He looked around one last time, but there was not much to see in this desolate landscape except his fellow Kiowas watching him with expressions of dread and apprehension. He then looked down into the boiling water, he closed his eyes and pushed himself off and down into the unknown.

Kahn Hayn first felt the extreme heat of the water, this started a small panic within him. The thumping sound that they'd heard was instead above the cauldron now, [there] was a terrible pounding all through his body and made his head feel like it was about to burst. He had a sense that he had dived deep into the hot pool and his thoughts were raised in about what he was supposed to do next. He was wondering if there was something in this pool that he had to reach for, and if so he had to find it real soon because his lungs were beginning to ache, and his skin was getting numb from the heat of the water, and he felt like he was blistering from the intense heat of the water. Now, all of a sudden, while he was going through all these different emotions, something else struck him, just horrified him, and increased his panic. When he entered the water he was tossed about so much that he lost all sense of directions. He wanted to open his eyes to try to find his bearings, but he was afraid that his eyes would be burned like his skin was being burned, and he also felt himself being banged and scraped against the sharp, rough walls. But he couldn't tell, from the angle of the walls, he couldn't tell if he was near to the surface or deeper down into the cauldron, his air was starting to give out and all of the heat and pounding was causing him to lose all hope for his situation.

So just as he felt himself losing consciousness he decided just to let himself go to whatever death had in store for him. So he stopped his moving about, his thrashing, and he let himself go limp and he waited for death to overtake him. He didn't realize that at the time he was near the surface of the water of the cauldron.

When he stopped struggling his body floated up and broke the surface into the cool, sweet air. As he rolled over and began to gulp in the fresh air, he felt himself being lifted from the water by a lot of hands, and the next thing he heard [was] a lot of excited yelling and victory cries that the Kiowas were making.

And then he opened his eyes and he saw the most beautiful sight any human has ever seen. Doh Ki was not around any longer, nor were all the other tribal people who were gathered around as he dove into the cauldron. The only ones that were there were the Kiowas, and they were all trying to explain at once about the miraculous thing that Kahn Hayn had accomplished. The landscape was no longer barren and desolate but was now filled with a thick, rich forest of tall, beautiful trees. The distant mountains were partly covered with snow and small streams and creeks flowed down from the mountains, and they turned into rushing rivers which in turn cascaded into large bodies of water lakes. Also, there were now many large and small animals of all types moving through the forest, across the landscape, and on top and along the waters and waterways. The place that Kahn Hayn left as he dove into the cauldron was now transformed. This became the land that Doh Ki spoke of. This was now the most beautiful and abundant of all places on the earth, and this became the Kiowas' homeland.

Following this journey that Kahn Hayn made, the Kiowas stayed and feasted and celebrated for days and days, and they made many prayers in gratitude to Doh Ki for his gift that he gave to the Kiowas. Kahn Hayn became the chief of the Kiowas, and he had his choice of any young woman from the tribe for wives.

The Kiowas lived in, around this area for many years, and when Kahn Hayn finally died the Kiowas took him back to that cauldron and they buried him nearby. And then, gradually, the Kiowas began to move away from there into other areas.

They say that because of what Kahn Hayn did at that time, and because of the Kiowas' deep faith in God, that the Kiowas would always be prominent, or paramount, to all other peoples, all other tribes, and that we would always remain closest to the heart of God, Orbah Hah. That's all.

In the limited published corpus of Kiowa oral tradition there is some corroboration for this narrative. SC himself came up with one of the three variants for the story, "How the Kiowa Became Paramount," which were collected by the noted anthropologist and folklorist Elsie Clews Parsons in the late 1920s. In Parsons' third version, out of nowhere a mysterious voice issues a challenge: "Whoever jumps into this pool of water, will get something, and that was, to live in the centre of the world (Parsons 1929:15)." What is dangerous about the pool are vaguely-defined "sharp points" sticking from the water, which are described as "sharp as cattails." Everyone else in the vicinity is too afraid to jump, but when a brave Kiowa leaps into the pool he plunges down and through to "the other side", winning the reward "to live in the centre of the world (Parsons 1929:15)." Then the voice went even further and prophesied that if the Kiowa ever died out, "there would be no more life on this earth. When the Indian race and language come to an end, there will be no more life on earth (Parsons 1929:15)."

According to our consultant, his people have a name for the places where these mythic events occurred. He says that "the name that we Kiowas have for that Yellowstone area is Tung Sa'u Dah, which means "hot water", or "the place of hot water." Furthermore, he identified the specific location or "cauldron" where the protagonist he calls Kahn Hayn ("No Name") had his near-death experience as The Dragon's Mouth, next to Mud Volcano, north of Yellowstone Lake.

Continuing Crow Ties to Yellowstone

What with the estrangement between Crows and the Yellowstone Plateau region that commenced with the Treaty of 1868, it is difficult to reconstruct any lingering connections in the 20th century between the tribe and the Park. Our principal Crow consultant did recall one of the few forms of native enterprise open to Indians, in the general area, dancing for Yellowstone-bound tourists at Pahaska Tepee or Cody's Irma Hotel. But his family were not the only Indian entrepreneurs who have attempted to eke out summer earnings by presenting versions of native culture for tourists in the Yellowstone region. Although Yellowstone National Park never seems to have encouraged or

commercially exploited its romantic association with locally-derived Indian images and icons in the outgoing manner that Glacier National Park did with the Blackfeet Indians, Yosemite National Park with the Miwok Indians, or Grand Canyon National Park with the Hopi and Havasupai Indians, over the years there appear to have been sporadic attempts to encourage or allow Indians from adjoining reservations to display wares or exhibit dances for visitors. Although the facts are few and far between, the historical record contains a few glimpses of Indians performing as Indians within the Park.

From the late 19th century come a few hints that the idea of Indians exhibiting their culture in the Park was periodically entertained. One tawdry instance comes to light from a letter in the Park Archives dated July 5, 1896, in which an Indian from an unidentified tribe complained to a "Captain Anderson" at Fort Yellowstone that he had been ordered to leave the park after being cajoled into buying whiskey for a soldier. In order to avoid eviction, the Indian then took a job cutting wood and doing carpentry offered by a Mr. Waters at "Thumbs." But when some acquaintances asked him to "dance a war dance" and he "got a butcher knife in his teeth and danced" he was fired. His letter pleaded that he was "an Indian boy I work for my own living," but a notation penned on his letter indicated that he was a "deaf and drunk Indian" who was merely excusing "the circumstances that led to his being expelled from the Park" (Yellowstone National Park Archives #2586).

Three years later Mr. E.C. Waters, President of the Yellowstone Lake Boat Co. which was located in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, received permission through the Park's Acting Superintendent from the Secretary of the Interior "to locate Indians [in their wigwams] on Dot Island in the Yellowstone Lake from June 13th to September 15th, for exhibition to the tourists in the park." But Interior Secretary E. A. Hitchcock also stipulated that the Indians:

"...who may best be secured from the Crow Agency, Montana, are entirely willing to go...[and that the company will make satisfactory arrangements] for the proper care, protection, and remuneration of the Indians taken, and that it be distinctly understood that the company will pay all the necessary traveling expenses in getting them into the reservation, and returning them promptly to their homes at the close of the season" [Yellowstone National Park Archives, Letters Sent, Vol. 8, April 15, 1899].

Within the time constraints of this research project no confirming documentation could be found as to whether any Indians actually pitched any tipis on Dot Island.

But other opportunities did lure Indians to perform as Indians within the Park. The well-known writer James Willard Schultz arranged for a "very interesting ceremony" at the Yellowstone geyser region in late spring, 1916. Entering by the Cody Road, the Indians were to present "the first ceremony of its kind given by the Crow Indians in the last 20 years," and a proposed film of the proceedings was considered to be compatible with an on-going "Shoshone project" related to the "See America First" promotion of recreational tourism in the country (National Park Service Archives, 1912-18 Roads/Trails, Folder #342 "Opening Roads 1916, from letter by C.J. Blanchard, Statistician for the United States Reclamation Service to P.S. Eustis, Passenger Traffic Manager of

the Burlington Railroad, May 6, 1916). In 1924, for instance, a number of Arapahoes and other tribesmen, the old warrior Goes In Lodge among them, participated in the controversial filming of the Hollywood studio production, The Thundering Herd, within the Park (Wind River Mountaineer, V. 7, N. 1, Jan-March 1991). It is not clear whether this experience was the springboard for a "colorful pageant" which was held the following year near the buffalo ranch in the Lamar Valley between August 30th and September 6th. As described in the Yellowstone National Park's annual report for 1925, each day witnessed a "western frontier round-up celebration:"

The tame buffalo herd of over 700 animals, a score or more of Crow Indians from the nearby reservation dressed in the regalia and war paints of other days, and a few real western cowboys made the round-up a thrilling representation of the old days of the west. Visitors to the ranch during "buffalo plains week," as it was called, were taken from the ranch headquarters to the site of the round-up in the stage-coaches of former days, drawn by four and six horses. The Indian camps were of great interest to visitors. Typical camps with their tepees, open fires, travois, and handiwork of the tribe, and peopled with braves, squaws, and papooses, were a vivid reminder of the fact that not so many years ago the ancestors of these very Indians roamed and hunted over the lands in this vicinity [Annual Report for Yellowstone National Park 1925, p. 16, Yellowstone National Park Archives].

But a more durable relationship between the Park and Indians seems to have been underway only two years later, when an enterprising Crow Indian named Max Big Man was apparently presenting Indian material for tourists within the Yellowstone National Park. Born in 1886 of a Gros Ventre father and Crow mother, after attending the Crow Agency boarding school Big Man had struggled to become an independent rancher before signing on with the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad in 1926 (Hoxie 1995:329). A meeter and greeter to outside visitors to the reservation at the Crow Agency train stop, and an aspiring political leader of the "progressive" stripe who often escorted Chief Plenty Coups and other old war chiefs to public functions, Big Man was also a promoter of Indian culture presentations for the Custer Battlefield Association and briefly left Montana to participate in a Columbia Broadcasting System radio series for Children in the Chicago and New York schools. But within the state he "frequently talked and danced for White men's and women's groups, including visitors to the Crow Reservation and nearby Yellowstone Park" (Heidenreich 1979:55). As Big Man personally wrote Mrs. Jesse Schultz Graham in early February of 1927:

I am planning now to go to the Park [Yellowstone] this coming summer where I am going to have different dances and little games that would interest the White people. I have a good tepee and I am trying to let the White people see how the Indians used to live in the old days, and lecture on different things. When I was a boy in school, I saw a show, and ever since then, I have taken an interest in shows and plays. I know just about what the White people would like to see and what interests them, because I have talked to different tourists and have learned from the questions they ask me [Big Man, in Heidenreich 1979:45].

Big Man's entrepreneurial relationship with the Park would continue in various capacities at least until 1932, when he told stories and was featured on the cover of the in-house Park organ, Yellowstone Nature Notes (Big Man 1932). Apparently this visit, or another around the same time, inspired Big Man to write an article for a reservation newspaper. Opening with his memories of the stories older Crows told him as a boy, about running buffalo over cliffs, Big Man was especially interested when Charley Murphy, a Livingston rancher, had shown him actual jump sites near Murphey's Ox Yoke Ranch. Over the following days, attended by Fox Movietone cameramen, Big Man and Yellowstone National Park rangers, including one mixed-blood Flathead ranger who chided him about continuing to wear his hair long, rode their horses into view of elk, mountain sheep and buffalo. "As I was looking down," Big Man mused about the similarity between old days and the present, "I again thought about the stone age days of my people... As we came down from the mountain, the men were placed all along the trail, so the buffalo would not turn away from us and go over the mountain" (Hardin Tribune, January 13, 1933).

As for Big Man's relationship with Mrs. Graham, daughter of the well-known popular writer about Blackfeet Indians, James Willard Schultz, they appear connected through their efforts on Mrs. Graham's grand pageant, Masque of the Absaroka, which hired Crow actors to launch a public dramatization of Crow origin mythology. Mention of this cultural production is appropriate here because of the strenuous efforts in late 1926 and early 1927 by its director, Jessie Louise Donaldson, to stage it within Yellowstone National Park (File Folder in YNP Archives, PAGEANTS, N. #139.91, Fiscal Year 1927, 1928).

Planning for the Masque appears to have originated in 1926, when Ms. Schultz and two friends took the train to Crow Agency in order to solicit the collaboration of the tribe's Chief of Police Victor Three Irons and Max Big Man in a drama to be presented "at Montana State College to tell the story of the Crow Indians" (Big Man, in Heidenreich 1979:43). After a rocky start, a musical presentation apparently cobbled together from Crow origin narratives and aspects of Tobacco Society ceremonialism was staged with a sizeable Crow cast in Bozeman. Although Ms. Schultz appears to have left the show by this point, it was still being heavily promoted in the closing months of the year by Miss Jessie Louise Donaldson, who managed to win its endorsement by a string of such distinguished Indian writers and sympathizers as George Bird Grinnell and Frank Bird Linderman.

After a detailed projection of the mutual responsibilities and considerable investment in terms of money and personnel involved in mounting the Crow-acted Masque in Yellowstone National Park, itemized by Ms. Donaldson in a letter to Park Superintendent Horace M. Albright, the Superintendent felt compelled to draft a somewhat discouraging reply. Although he apologetically admitted that his earlier letters to Donaldson had been encouraging about the idea, and also commenting that the National Park Service remained "very much interested in productions such as you are planning," he now worried that its scale and costs might be prohibitive (Albright to Donaldson, January 20, 1927; Yellowstone National Park Archives, Mammoth). In fact, a typed confidential memo between Park officials affixed to one piece of official correspondence to Donaldson suggests that the Park staff actually harbored more substantial doubts about the project. It reads: "To me, the attached doesn't seem to be suited for presentation in a National Park. I really

can't see a great deal of connection it has to the Yellowstone and, of course, the Indian problem is going to be a hard one to solve in case they want to use real Indians. How does it appeal to you?" To this communication, Albright replied, "It can be worked out, I think, although we may have some troubles (Albright file December 29, 1926; Yellowstone National Park Archives, Mammoth)."

Whatever were the private connotations behind this mention of "the Indian problem" and "real Indians", the Park appeared to have avoided the obligations which presenting the Masque would have entailed, although Mr. and Mrs. Albright apparently did attend its presentation in the less controversial setting of Bozeman on the night of June 6th, 1927. As for the National Park Service's participation in other pageants, as Superintendent Albright had already written Ms. Donaldson in greater detail, Washington had actually appointed a Mr. Garnet Holms as its "Pageant Master," and had produced pageants at other Indian-connected national landmarks such as California's Yosemite and Sequoia Parks, Arizona's Casa Grande National Monument, and the Ramona play in southern California, among others. As far as Yellowstone was concerned, however, there may also have been a behind-the-scenes story of competing pageants and alternating scenarios for the region's crucial history which contributed to the apparent dropping of the idea of holding the Masque within the park.

For around the same time that the Masque was under original development by Ms. Schultz at Crow Agency, what appears to be the first attempt to present a historical pageant within Yellowstone National Park did take place, in late August, 1926. Before an audience of nearly a thousand visitors, the open-air spectacle of Discovery of the Yellowstone Park featured, according to the Great Falls Tribune:

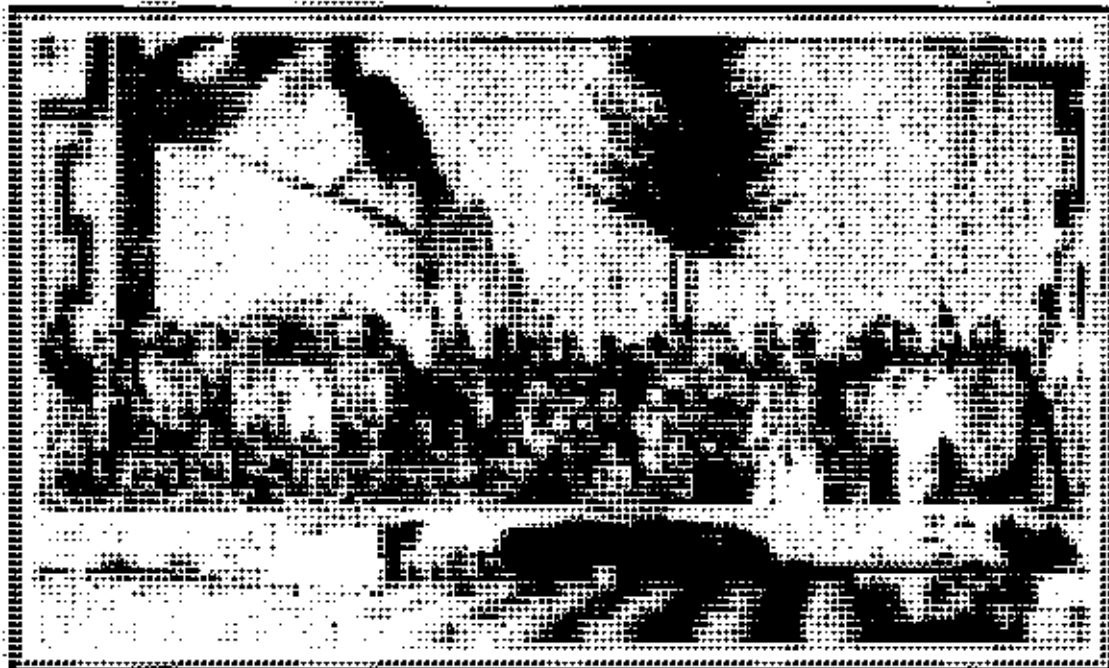


Figure 3.4. The Indian pageant presented at Yellowstone National Park, August 24, 1926. The pageant was presented by Joseph Stanislaus Hyde and others, with the assistance of Max Big Man and Crow Indian actors (photo from *Lifeways of Intermontane and Plains Montana Indians*, edited by Leslie B. Davis, *Museum of the Rockies Occasional Papers*, N.1, 1979, p. 42).

...various times in Yellowstone's history in four scenes. Indians and old-timers-even the Washburn-Langford explorers of 1870-returned to the park...The entire pageant portrays the dream of the old-timer who returns to Yellowstone for the first time since the '70s. First the redskins, with their legends about the formation of the geysers and the Grand Canyon, then the party of exploration and finally the "savages" of today appear in his dreams [Great Falls Tribune, August 24, 1926].

The following summer, another pageant, this time with a more palatable Indian theme than the Masque apparently offered, was presented by the employees of the Old Faithful camp. Falling back on Longfellow's Hiawatha for its general plotline, the amateur actors were non-Indians who resurrected a story which climaxed with Iliawatha introducing his people to a Jesuit missionary. Upon their embrace of the kingdom of Christ, Hiawatha was free to depart for a finale journey towards the setting sun, to the strains of Dvorak's "Indian Lament." The melodrama's connection to the persisting Vanishing Indian motif was not lost on a local newspaper reviewer:

The curling smoke of the pipe of peace that was offered to the [Jesuit] priest reminds one of the poem by P.W. Norris who was formerly a superintendent of the Yellowstone park, and in it, which was called the Calumet of the Coteau, various pictures of Indian life were depicted, though now the aroma of the kinnikinick has also gone into the quiet places beyond the sun with the passing of the redmen [Livingston Enterprise, July 31, 1927].

Independent Indian craft-vending never seemed to gain a foothold in the Park. Although before the establishment of the National Park service in 1916, commercial stores in Yellowstone National Park were selling arrowheads to tourists, our research was unable to come up with evidence of more direct marketing of cultural identity until the 1920s, when the few Indians like Big Man temporarily joined commercial ventures within the Park. While on March 9, 1937, the newly-conceived Arts and Crafts Board of the U.S. Dept. of the Interior attempted to impose an Indian-made-only policy for "Indian jewelry" sold in the national park retail outlets, there appears to have been no encouragement that these "genuine" Indian materials be of local or even regional origin (J.C. McCaskill, U.S. Department of Interior Indian Arts & Crafts Board General Manager, to Eleanor K. Geary, Yellowstone National Park Company, April 28, 1950, YNP Archives, Memos and Correspondence, 1942-1951, Box #C-33). There is even anecdotal evidence that at least one Indian was actively discouraged from developing an entrepreneurial presence in the Park. According to a story purportedly related to Alston Chase by a former North District Ranger in Yellowstone, "Not long ago" an Indian businessman wanted to position a tipi-shaped gift shop near Roosevelt Lodge. When the Indian learned that his concession permit had been denied because the building would detract from the Lodge, which was under nomination for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the Indian is said to have asked in so many words, "How can a white man's building be more historical than an Indian tepee?" (Chase 1987:107, ft. 48 - Chase remembers hearing the story from Ranger David Spirtes, personal communication July 30, 1995).



Figure 1.10. Crow Indians during dedication of Plenty Coups Tablet on Cody Road (Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National park Archives, Catalog #YELL 37805).

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When our principal Crow consultant accompanied his family into the Yellowstone National Park area, they were the ones who were now, formally at least, in the category of tourists. But that did not mean that they forgot their oldest cultural memories of the Yellowstone region, which included that category of Crow prose narratives that explained how the world in its present form was first created.

Among the oldest of Crow story-cycles is that which relates the deeds of Old Woman's Grandson (Káalisbaapitua), a character who functions in the classic role of "culture hero." Not surprisingly, we also find this important character prominent in the folklore of their old kinfolk, the Hidatsas, to the east, as well as in that of their neighbors, the Mandan. As the offspring of the Sun and a Crow Woman, in the Crow version Old Woman's Grandson is usually described as raised by a powerful and often demonic grandmother figure following the death of his human mother. After maturing to young manhood with remarkable speed, he undertakes the killing of a generation of monsters who

rule the world. When he has finally readied the world for human occupation, he often turns into the north star, while his grandmother becomes the moon.

For the Crow people at least some of the environmental characteristics that define Yellowstone National Park apparently came about through the heroic deeds of this mythic personality. One narrative from the Pryor area discusses the origins of two features possibly from the Mud Volcano area. This version of the basic narrative originates from a southern River Crow man named Sharp Horn, who passed it on to his son Comes Up Red, who told it to his son, whose son, GBT, related it for our study. During our interview with this consultant he described the following episode as a portion of the longer cycle of stories about the mythic deeds of Old Woman's Grandchild. The first time GBT told the story it came out like this:

...there was a part where the boy kills a big buffalo bull who sucks in people. A giant buffalo bull that sucks in and eats people. When the boy killed that giant buffalo bull, he turned him into that. That's what he turned into.

Then he put a giant mountain lion right next to it to keep him in check. To keep the bull from coming back. That is what the old people said happened. The old giant buffalo is the one that sucks out the hot blast of air. And then that other hole makes a growling sound. So they say that is the mountain lion that keeps the buffalo bull in check [GBT Interview, July 16, 1996].

A bit later in the interview GBT elaborated on the story, remembering some additional details:

...my father was told by his grandfathers that this [the thermal region of the Park] was where the Grandchild, the Old Lady's Grandchild, fought all of the beasts and killed them, and turned them into mountains and hills after he killed them. Then he turned the giant Buffalo into a geyser's formation. I guess Colter's Hell [GBT later identified Colter's Hell as Mud Volcano and Dragon's Mouth] is the present name for it. It blows hot air out, and for twelve miles windward of it all of the trees are dead. Even animals would die in the old days. But it is not as strong as it used to be. He said I will turn you into this, and then he put another geyser formation there. The other geyser formation roars all of the time. It just makes a sound. He said that was a Mountain Lion, to keep the Buffalo Bull in check, from coming back to life again and harassing the Crows. That was the reason [GBT Interview, July 16, 1996].

Another mythic narrative told by the Crow and associated with the Park was related by this consultant directly on the shores of Yellowstone Lake. It links the earlier theme of the death-of-the-monsters with the strongest variety of supernatural medicine a Crow can receive - that bestowed by the Thunderbird. In terms of the Crow conceptual categories which make up the culture's worldview, this narrative also ties together the three forces and environmental features which still today make the Yellowstone region so unique - the benevolent high mountains, the threatening depths of the great lake, and the hot rocks whose power only a human being can harness. Our consultant

received the rights to this story from the man who had adopted him into the Crow Tobacco Society, FR, who had heard it from his own grandfather. But he prefaced it by emphasizing that "Our legends say that the Sun created the first Crow on Yellowstone River, which we call Elk River. The Crows have always lived here." In this narrative and the one to follow - in both of which Yellowstone Lake seems to play almost a character role - we will also catch an echo of the relationship between birds and the lake which Hunts To Die mentioned earlier in his equation of driftwood with eagle feathers:

The story begins when the Crows were camped at the junction of Pryor Creek and the Yellowstone River. A man was sitting on a high hill on the east side of Pryor Creek one day. He was making arrows and looking out. He was the lookout.

Suddenly from out of the sky the Thunderbird came and grabbed him by his hair. When he grabbed him he said "Do not be afraid." So this man was not afraid when the Thunderbird grabbed him. Then he brought him over here to overlook, Overlook Mountain. It is on the southeast side of the lake where we are at right now.

So the Thunderbird took him to the top of the mountain. His nest was there. So he put him in the nest. He said what do you need for food? What do you need to stay alive. The man said, Bring me a young buffalo," and he said, "I need water." He [Thunderbird] said "all the water you need is here." So he brought him a young buffalo calf. When the man finished eating he asked the Thunderbird why he brought him there.

He said, "this is my nest. This is where I live." Then he showed him Yellowstone Lake, which the Crows have no name for except that we call it the Big Lake, the Large Lake. He said, "Down there monsters live in the water and nearby. When I lay my eggs, and the fledglings come out, on the third day that they come out, all of the beasts come and they eat the little ones. I am constantly at war with these beasts."

He said, "I know you are my allies, because I know that you constantly fight these monsters also." He said, "I want you to kill...there is one certain one that always comes up and eats the fledglings when they are three days old." He said, "I will bring you anything that you need to kill this water beast that lives in the lake.

So the man fasted, and he didn't know what to do at first. He said, "You have greater powers than I. How is it that you cannot kill this beast? He [Thunderbird] said, "Our powers are about the same and that is why I cannot kill him." He said, "You have reason, you have your mind to reason. You can think out a way to kill him. That is why I brought you here."

So the man fasted, and thought, and finally he saw in his dream...he was told how he could kill this beast that would eat the three-day old Thunderbirds. He was told to dig pits, and to build big fires, and to put rocks on it. Certain sized rocks, that he could

pick up with a forked stick. He was told that the monster, when he came up the mountain, would open his mouth. He said, throw as many hot rocks as he could into his mouth. And then dig another pit and put hides in it. Great big hides, and fill it with water and boil it. When it is boiling, make sure that you have a way to pick it up. Put saplings around it so that you can pick it up. When it is close enough pour the hot water into his mouth. That way you will kill him, you see. They told him that he would cook him alive.

So the eggs were about ready to hatch. When they hatched, they had everything ready. All of the rocks, and all of the wood that they needed for the fire. Then on the third day, they saw the beast coming up the mountain. So they got ready, and they built a big fire and got all of the hot rocks that they needed, and they also boiled water.

Then when the beast came up, the man would pick up the hot rocks with his stick and would throw them into his mouth, as much as he could. Then when he got close enough, he poured this hot water into his mouth. Then steam came out of his mouth, and then he tumbled down into the lake. When he hit the lake the water splashed, and went up about as high as the mountain, when it hit the water.

They say that the man who killed the last dinosaur . . . which doesn't mean anything in our language anymore, it is so old. They say that was the last dinosaur. They have never seen any dinosaurs after that [GBT Interview, July 16, 1996].

The second narrative which GBT associated with Yellowstone Lake he heard from both his grandfather, Comes Up Red, and also from a man named George Goes Ahead,

There was a war party. A man named [?] - I don't know what it means, I guess it's too old to translate - led a war party. They came to Yellowstone Lake. Although they were fearful of it, they did not want to go into it, they are drawn to it because of its power, and the mystical quality.

They came to the lake and they saw a swan, way down, almost in the middle of the lake. This war party leader said he needed the feathers of this swan. In his vision he was told to get certain feathers and the swan's feathers fit the description. So he asked if anyone could swim out there and get this swan. All of the men were scared. They did not want to swim out there and get this swan.

But there was one young boy in the war party. He was willing to go out there. He said, "Older brother, let me swim out there. I can swim out there and get that bird for you." But they didn't want him to go. Because all of the men were supposed to be brave and courageous and they showed their fear. They didn't want to be put down

by this young boy. They said, "No, don't go out there, you don't know what you are getting yourself into."

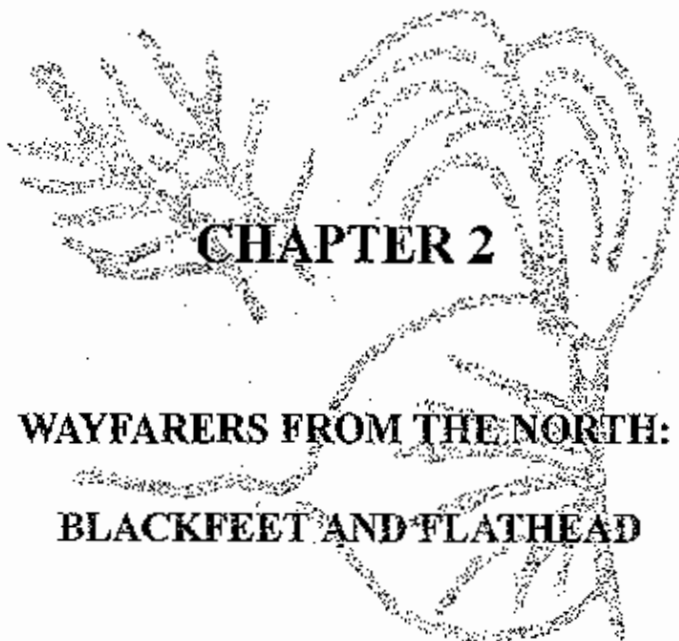
Finally he said, "Just let me go out there a little ways. If something bad happens, I can swim back. They said go ahead. The young boy swam into the lake and went out there and caught the swan, and came back with it. Then all of the men to show their courage swam to the lake and came back. After that they were not as fearful as they were of the lake [GBT Interview July 6, 1995].

Although this second story is also about a Crow contest with the dangers of Yellowstone Lake, it concerns a more psychological and physical conflict with place than the previous narrative, which dealt with a supernatural encounter with "spirit-beings" of the location. When Goes Ahead spoke to our consultant of this story of the war party and the swan, he had envisioned it occurring "in our time, in our era, [but] my grandfather said it was way back." This subtle shift in temporal context seemed to problematize whether the latter narrative fell more into the category of a "myth" like the first story, a genre which according to canons of folklore scholarship refers to prose narratives which "are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past" and are regarded as sacred truth and take place in a far different world (Bascom 1984: 9). Or did it belong more properly in the category of "legends," which Bascom says are regarded "as true by the narrator and his audience, but they are set in a period considered less remote, when the world was much as it is today"[GBT Interview July 6, 1995]?

When our principal Crow consultant tried to resolve the dilemma about what sort of narrative this final story was, like many contemporary Indians he reached for the English language category which he felt would hold greatest truth-value for his non-Crow listeners. Of its storyline about the commencement of a new, more equitable kind of relationship between his people and Yellowstone Lake, he stated simply, "It was part of our history."



Figure 1.11 Crow consultant GBT at Yellowstone Lake, checking over Park cultural sites with Lawrence Loendorf, 1995.



CHAPTER 2

WAYFARERS FROM THE NORTH:

BLACKFEET AND FLATHEAD



Figure 2.1: Yellowstone Park Superintendent Horace Albright adopted by Crow Indians at Gallatin Gateway Opening (Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives, Catalog #Yell 37799-2).

It is an inescapable fact that after well over a hundred years of their absence from the Yellowstone Plateau, documentation on the precise topography which was covered by parties of Blackfeet, Flathead, Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai who penetrated the greater Yellowstone ecosystem is hard to come by. This means that any place-names for the plateau and its entryways, or oral traditions and cultural practices which might link these tribes and the Park area, are rare. For unlike the Crow to the east and Shoshone to the south, the hunting territories of these northerly tribes, as delineated at least in early treaties, rarely overlapped that of Yellowstone National Park - although these distinct ethnic groups certainly claimed hunting rights to vaster territories than their reservation boundaries today. Furthermore, these Indian travelers left scantier material evidence of their experiences in the Yellowstone region - with the exception of the occasionally dropped or discarded tools or weapons, which are next to impossible to identify as to tribal provenance even if one is lucky enough to locate them today. And finally, during the historical period many of these northern tribes people were actively trying to cover up their tracks, since their purpose was often a stealthy raid to take the horses, furs or weapons from any enemy tribes people or non-Indians who were traversing, trapping or camping in or around the Park area. Nonetheless, we have gathered and organized what meager information is available concerning their movements, and their possible cultural associations and claims with the region.

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Up and Down the Yellowstone - A Northern Entrance

Parties of Indian travelers such as the Flathead and Blackfeet reached the northern rim of the Yellowstone Plateau through the Bridger or Flathead passes out of present-day Bozeman, or they arrived there by dropping south from the Crazy Mountains by way of the Shields River. These two access trails which then brought them into the inner sanctum of present-day Yellowstone National Park could hardly stand in greater contrast.

The first trail opened two-thirds of the way west along the Park's northern perimeter and offered a relatively gentle gateway to the high country. In its broad curve between the Absaroka and Gallatin mountain ranges, this was the long welcoming corridor of the upper Yellowstone River valley which would eventually lead them directly into today's Park. At this point the Flathead, Pend d'Oreille and Blackfeet, who would have already ventured many days from the upper ranges of present-day Montana, eventually entered the trough of the Paradise Valley, about thirty miles long and ten to twelve miles wide, just south of today's Livingston. Here was also one of those unusual moments when it was necessary to head "down" in order to go "up" against the river, as the Yellowstone flows north into Montana.

As the traveling Indian parties would have paralleled the river, moving steadily upstream by means of easily-traveling flat terraces and halting occasionally in the shade of cottonwoods along its banks to feed their horses from its nourishing inner bark during the winter, they were probably

well aware of the presence of older Indian encampments all along the way. Just past Livingston, for instance, they passed between deserted old Indian sites positioned on both opposing ridges of the river. The camp location on the western bank (Brawner I and II, 24PA503) was recent enough to have had cooking hearths used by their own relatives, but according to archeological estimates the site on the opposite ridge (Myers-Hindman, 24PA504) would have seen Indian fires nearly nine thousand years before then (Lahren 1971).

Among the thousands of old Indian sites along this major native trade route into Yellowstone National Park, according to archaeologist Larry Lahren, is the terrace above Emigrant where on today's Church Universal and Triumphant subdivision of Glastonbury North one can still pick out miles-long rows of stones - remnants of an old Indian buffalo jump (in Billings Gazette, July 6, 1995, p. 4B). Such locations would have made Indian travelers like the Blackfeet feel at home; back north their yearly round involved stopping at fixed winter campsites when the buffalo were fat and prime for driving the animals into the boulder drive-lines they called piskun (Barrett 1921:23). In one of its rare references to any Indians whatsoever in the Yellowstone valley, an early guidebook to Yellowstone National Park did mention how much early white settlement in the fertile Paradise Valley attracted "Indian marauders." But since this was only ten years after the Nez Perce troubles in the Park, the guide immediately felt obliged to assuage any anxieties with an all-clear advisory: "But fear of Indian attack has now forever passed away" (Hyde 1887:18-19).

Long appreciated as a rich archaeological area, as early as 1893 William S. Brackett described the "Indian forts" he noticed on the river benches above this stretch of the Yellowstone River, the tipi rings that lay farther into the mountains. He also stressed other "interesting remains left by Indians who lived and hunted in this fertile valley as late as the year 1876" which he found in local ranches, especially at one which lay "opposite Emigrant Peak, where I am writing" (Brackett 1893:127). Continuing upstream through this Park County corridor, archaeologist Lahren guesses there are an average of "two or more archaeological sites per square mile." Especially promising locations found, predictably, wherever creek drainages such as Six Mile and Tom Miner Creeks would have offered proximity to water and wood, shelter from wind and sun, or, as in the Tom Miner Basin, the topographic conditions for a buffalo jump with attendant tipi rings, stone corrals, drive lines and kill sites (Lahren 1971).

Forging beyond Tom Miner Creek any experienced Indian wayfarers heading south would have squeezed through the river's constricted bend at Yankee Jim Canyon only to spy increasing signs of older Indian camping and hunting sites. Emerging from this canyon, for instance, they would have skirted one very old Indian camp on the eastern bank, right on the valley floor (Rigler Bluffs, 24PA401). Since its rock-lined hearth lay beneath 22 feet of river silt, the passersby were unaware of the fact that walnut-sized chunks of charcoal (identified as yew wood), probably five thousand years old, lay within it (Haines 1966; Lahren 1971:170). At the same time any Flatheads traveling by would have prized the yew (which still grows in the Bitter Root Valley), for it was the preferred wood for bow-making. A prominent Flathead elder named Pete Beaverhead remembered the process: first season the wood before carving it down to form, then varnish it with a concoction of boiled animal muscle and sinew before stringing and shooting with it (Hart 1976: 49).

Continuing towards the present-day town of Gardiner, the Indian travelers would have beaten against the cooling winds that regularly sweep down from the upper river channel to replace the rising lowland heat. As the landscape grows progressively drier near the present-day Park entrance, they neared a prominent mountain to their right that regularly seemed to attract lightning strikes. In the high volcanic talus that overlooks the river trail opposite Electric Peak stood another old Indian site of which the scouts accompanying these travelers were almost certainly aware. Over the years various explanations have been offered for these pits which were scooped out of the chunky, loose rocks and covered with well-aged pieces of crudely-chopped wood. Were they vision-questing sites, observation posts or, as local folklore has it, pits for catching eagles?



Figure 11. Possible Indian cherting sites (arrowed) overlooking Yellowstone River, 1996.

Just northwest of the present Park boundary, the Indian visitors could see the heights of Mount Everts, which they probably knew was another magnet for earlier natives. Closer to the river trail, among other old sites in the immediate vicinity of Mammoth Hot Springs, was the 52-meter rock

alignment which, strung out along a glacial ridge, indicates a drive line or a religious site which, it has been suggested, "has the potential to yield important information on Native American life in the Mammoth region" (Sanders et. al. 1996:39-42). By this time any native visitors from the north would have found themselves well onto the Yellowstone heartland, and surely they were on the lookout for other tribesmen who had ventured there as well, also in search of game, minerals, or the other Indian trails that exited the Plateau to the south and east.

Up the Beartooth Pass- A Northeastern Entrance

But the second old path which allowed access from the north into the Yellowstone Plateau demanded a far more grueling exertion from any inbound natives. Lifting out of Red Lodge not far from the Park's northeastern corner, its sketchy remnants can still be spotted zig-zagging almost straight up alongside today's Beartooth Highway. To the Crow Indians the location of the present-day town of Red Lodge was known as "Where the Red Lodge Was Annihilated" (Ashhishalahaawii). This name originated from the Crow account of killing by Shoshone warriors of an entire Crow band, thirty lodges strong, which were led by a camp chief with the name of "The Red Lodge," and which included his brother, "The Yellow Lodge." The tragedy occurred along the banks of Red Lodge's present-day Rock River, which was referred to by the Crow as "Fast Current" (Bililiikashee) (Old Coyote and Old Coyote 1985:7).

As for the trail whose traces still ascend the side of the present-day Beartooth Pass, here Indians like the Crows, Blackfeet, Assiniboine and others would have faced a much harder road, for it forced them to clamber back and forth up the single-file footpath which lifted two thousand feet at a sheer incline. Once this exhausting ascent to nearly 11,000 feet above sea level was accomplished, the subsequent leg to the Cooke City area and the present-day Park entrance would have seemed like a breeze. Anyone who tries to hike that old Indian route today can quickly appreciate why the early Cooke City miners probably preferred the easier, if lengthier, supply route which tracked the Yellowstone River farther north. At the same time it might be a mistake to hypothesize only a meager Indian use or even occupation of these granite, snowy highlands with their mirror-like lakes simply because non-Indians today find them cold, forbidding and grizzly-infested. Former game warden, Verne Waples, found hundreds of arrowheads and other artifacts around these lakes and old Indian sites continue to turn up on the Beartooth Plateau, as archaeologist George Arthur has written of the region:

Several large private collections of artifacts recovered from high elevation sites in the Beartooth Mountains west of Red Lodge, Montana, add further support for Early Period occupancy throughout this large area. The Early Period artifacts suggest, inferentially, that similar environments and cultural events existed during this period on both sides of the Rockies and throughout the mountains of Southern Montana. A similar cultural homogeneity is inferred for both the Middle and Late Prehistoric Periods, so that the Rocky Mountains may not be considered a barrier to culture [Arthur 1968:53].

While there has been little archaeological effort to reconstruct the skimpy remains of this steep Beartooth Pass footpath, we do have other clues that Indians were at least familiar with its alpine habitat. Near the head of Little Rock and Bennett Creeks on the Plateau and beside one of the numerous bodies of water known as Leg Lake, in 1891 a Red Lodge cowboy found a crude log "stockade" which one U.S. ranger conjectured may have been built by early trappers and their Indian wives who conceivably led them there (Rollinson 1942:138-139). Additionally, we know that tribespeople around the Yellowstone plateau could be quite familiar with areas distant from their immediate terrain: just as it was Crows on the Yellowstone who first informed mountain man Tom Fitzpatrick of the whereabouts of the important pass (South Pass) through the Wind River mountains in order that his trappers could easily find beaver streams on the other side (in Hafen 1981:339), so it would be six Wind River Shoshones who apparently guided Lt. Gen. P.H. Sheridan's first military expedition across the Beartooth Plateau in August, 1882 (U.S. Department of Agriculture 1941:6).

Place-names can also provide indirect linkage between cultural groups and geography. In a 1979 affidavit by Walter F. Columbus, in which he remembered his days as transit man on a surveying crew between Red Lodge and Cooke City in the summer of 1920, Columbus stated that the sole mountain place-name on their maps at the time was Beartooth Butte. "I recall talking to some old-timers in Cooke City," testified Columbus, "who said that Beartooth Mountain was named by Indians because of a prominent rock which looked like a bear's tooth. They did not say what tribe of Indians but there was a tribe of sheep eaters who were familiar with the Yellowstone area" (Columbus, November 6, 1979). From the Crow Indian perspective comes a bit more detail, thanks to information provided in 1969 by tribal historian Joseph Medicine Crow. Responding to a request for information from a Public Information Specialist at the Helena National Forest office regarding the origin of the Beartooth place-name, Medicine Crow sought out some elderly Crows, and then wrote back:

Unfortunately the old tribal historians, keepers of tribal annals and oral traditions, are gone now and I must find people who had recalled the old story tellers mentioning certain events, etc..

One old lady related that her grandmother used to refer to the whole mountain area around Red Lodge as DAK-PIT-CHAY IGOTUSH, meaning 'Bear's Small Teeth'. Several other informants agreed with this version; but none of them is certain about the origin of the description. I am inclined to believe that such a description is based on a distant view of the whole area, particularly the jagged looking horizon which may resemble a bear's teeth from a side view.

Another informant, raised by his old grand parents, recalled his grandmother using the words DAK-PIT-CHAY ITAGOTUSH, which means, 'Bear's Tusk' or 'Bear's Small Tusk'. This informant believes that this description referred of a particular rock formation in the mountains but later the whole area was known by singular term...

It is feasible that the original Crow description of a particular rock formation resembling a bear's tusk or fang in time was used to include a general area. This

would take place after 1700-25 when the ancestral tribe of the Crow Indians came into this area after a long migration trek taking nearly 100 years [Medicine Crow to Helena National Forest, February 20, 1980].

To this hint of Crow familiarity we can add an intriguing bit of Blackfeet data regarding the Beartooth Mountain locale. On a map for which a Blackfoot Indian Chief named Ac Ko Mok Ki, or "the Feathers," provided information to a Hudson Bay Co. fur trader in 1801, the Indian offered some interesting glimpses of the broad extent of Blackfoot familiarity with the plains (Moodie and Kaye 1977). Along the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains he clearly indicated Ki oo pe kis, or "Bears Tooth", by which he apparently was referring to the same mountains mentioned by Medicine Crow above, lying at Latitude 45 degrees north in the Absaroka range. And when it came to identifying the entire range by a single promontory he seems to have effected the submersion of the singular into the plural which Medicine Crow suggests was the same process that gave the mountains their name today.

For research on this region Stuart W. Conner has added a final piece of evidence for an old Indian presence on the Beartooth Plateau. From Vern Waples of Red Lodge, Montana he heard the following story, which also illustrates the pool of local lore which formal studies and surveys too often overlook. It seems that in 1936, shortly after the Beartooth Highway was completed, Waples was searching for a conical timber lodge which he, in turn, had heard about from Dominick Reno who ran a store at Beartooth Lake. Looking near the USFS fire lookout on the west side of the Beartooth Highway and overlooking the Clark's Fork valley, Waples found a circle of 13 buffalo skulls "in pretty good shape" (Stuart Conner, Personal Communication, August 11, 1993). No additional information or photographs have come to light about this site. Although none of these circles has been found in Yellowstone National Park, such ritual circles of buffalo skulls are known on the high plains; some say Indian hunters laid them out as a magical way to attract buffalo (see painting of buffalo skull circles by Alfred Jacob Miller, Barsness 1977:86).

The foregoing discussion is not meant to imply that these routes, up the Yellowstone River and over the Beartooth Pass, were the sole means of access for northern Indians into the Park landscape. As some northern Indian visitors quietly told Park Service officials when they were visiting in 1993, "We used those major trails, but we had many ways of getting into the Park" (David Ruppert, NPS Regional Ethnographer, Personal Communication, August 9, 1996). Members of tribes as far north as the Canadian border did travel widely and over extremely long distances, and they frequently entered the Park or passed within the rain shadow alongside it. As their own narratives and recorded geographic knowledge, as well as the chronicles of non-Indians, make very clear, tribesmen from the Blackfeet, Flathead, Kootenai and Assiniboine nations could penetrate the Park's mountainous perimeter and circulate within it at will. Or they skirted its eastern or western boundaries on long-distance travels farther south, in order to make the annual Green River trade rendezvous in Shoshone country, or even to venture still deeper into the Southwest and beyond to Mexico.

Blackfeet Towards the "Many Smoke"

In the chronicles of Indian-white as well as Indian-Indian relations related to the Yellowstone Plateau in the first half of the 19th century, few tribes are as associated with dangerous hit-and-run raids as the Blackfeet, who hailed from country along both sides of the U.S.-Canada border. By at least 1775 this sizeable tribe had become a linguistically-homogeneous Plains Indian group who were already major players in early European exploration and economic exploitation of the northern Plains. All of their three politically-independent divisions spoke dialects of the same Algonquian stock, but only one of them possessed territories which spilled over the lands of the United States and Canada. Yet distance rarely deterred any of their warriors from going wherever they wanted.

Today the members of the tribes collectively but incorrectly known as Blackfeet are increasingly preferring to be known by their old name, Natsitapii. According to Reeves and Peacock, they are composed of three tribes, the Kainaa, Piikani and Siksika, with the history of sub-groups of these tribes, such as the South Piikani who traditionally hunted, collected plants, camped and conducted ceremonies in Glacier National Park, following their own, unique trajectory (Reeves and Peacock 1995:3). The most northerly division of the three tribal groups were the Siksika, whose upper boundary was the Northern Branch of the Saskatchewan River. Between the Battle and Bow Rivers lay the land of the Blood, or Kainawa. But the territory of the third division, the Piikani, stretched along the mountains and dropped well south of the border, past Glacier Park and, say the early scholars George Bird Grinnell (1912) and Walter McClintock (1910), actually extending well towards the Yellowstone River (Steward 1934:3). One band of Piikani, known as the Small Robes, even developed a special affinity for the southland, intermarrying with Flatheads and settling near the Musselshell River (Ewers 1955:216-217).

In the late 18th century David Thompson heard of a sizeable Piegan war party which, unable to locate any Shoshones to raid, had ventured farther south to intercept a Spanish column of pack animals. Descending upon them, the Indians forced the Spaniards to flee. The Blackfeet tossed away their cargo, which turned out to be silver ore, and drove the animals an estimated 1500 miles home (in Ewers 1958:197). The validity of this account is underscored by explorer Alexander Mackenzie, who characterized the Blackfeet of 1800 as an adventuresome, far-ranging people, "who deal in horses and take them upon war parties towards Mexico, from which they enter into the country to the south-east, which consists of plains" (quoted in McClintock 1910:3). It is also reinforced by a story reported by James Doty of a Blackfeet trip in the mid-1840s which took three years and transported about five of their chiefs to Taos and Santa Fe (Ewers 1955:198-199).

Clearly the Blackfeet warriors could strike wherever they desired, from the Rockies to the Mississippi, from northern Canada down through the southwestern deserts, with stabs into the Yellowstone Plateau in between. And fairly clearly they were familiar with its interior. While accompanying some Blackfeet on a hunt in the Missouri-Yellowstone country in spring, 1865, a Jesuit priest named Father Xavier Kuppens was regaled by a chief named Big Lake "on the beauties of that wonderful spot." His curiosity was so great that Kuppens persuaded some young warriors to guide him into the Park area, whereupon they escorted him directly to its "chief attraction" - the Grand Canyon and the Firehole basins (Kuppens 1962:7).

Around 1800, when the Blackfeet made their earliest historically-documented entry into the history of the Yellowstone Plateau, they numbered conservatively 15,000 strong (Mooney 1928: 13), with one estimate of the size of their available warriors at the time reaching 9,000 (Jenness 1932: 324 - quoting Alexander Mackenzie in 1801). By then, thanks to their fortuitous acquisition of both the gun (from European traders at the northern plains posts) and the horse (from southern Plains Indian middlemen in the tribal horse trade), they had already succeeded in flexing their muscles on their southeastern borders through Shoshone country and on into the Bighorn Mountains of the Crow. This burst of expansionism wound up pushing the Shoshones all the way back into their old Wyoming hunting grounds, as the invaders attempted to occupy the territory in between. "Gradually," writes Åke Hultkrantz, "single bands of Blackfeet reached the Yellowstone Park (probably along the Gallatin and Yellowstone), and in the middle of the 19th century they claimed the plains next to the Rocky Mountains clear down to Yellowstone Park" (Hultkrantz 1957: 142, corroborated by Schultz 1930:27).

Entering the Park area to trap beaver but more commonly to maraud the fur caches of American trappers for resale to British traders (Spence 1996:22), the Blackfeet never pretended to call the Yellowstone region their own, in the fashion that they laid spiritual claim to the Rocky Mountain highlands of Glacier National Park and the Badger-Two Medicine region (as excellently documented by Reeves and Peacock 1995). At the same time, they did accord the area special respect, according to interviews by Joseph Weixelman with Blackfeet elders:

George Kicking Woman identified the lands of Yellowstone as sacred, although not to the Blackfeet directly. Because they were sacred to others, they were treated as such by them. When passing through Yellowstone on the way to the basins of the Snake or Green rivers, they would stop to pray with their pipes or leave tobacco. Prayers might have especially been said for a safe journey since travel was dangerous in the nineteenth century [Weixelman 1992:55].

By what routes the Blackfeet made their predatory forays into and around this landscape we have only a spotty record. But thanks to James Willard Schultz, there is one intriguing anecdote about a Piegan war party which traveled directly into the heart of what is now Yellowstone National Park. There they are said to have come upon what they took at first to be the smoke from a slew of campfires. But after night fell they could detect no flickering flames, and only later did they discover that what they had seen was the steam rising from the hot springs. Hence their name for the Park's area of thermal activity: Aisitsi, or "Many Smoke" (Schultz 1962:377).

Even some contemporary Blackfeet can recall hearing of such long-distance travels. One Blackfeet consultant, CCB, a Liaison, Program and Exhibition Development employee at Calgary's Glenbow Museum, recalled a story told him by his grandfather, Mark Mayfield, who belonged to "Chief Old Sun's clan" of the northerly Blackfeet and who died in 1991 at the age of 94:

One day, he told me, they used to go as far as the Mexicans, go all the way down and come back. I would look at him and think, he was crazy, how could they get there? He said they would start when the grass starts to turn green, and sometimes they take a whole year to get back. Long, long time ago, a group of them were going south and came upon a huge lake. One old chief was very hot and went to the hills. He was cooling himself - it hardly ever snowed there - when behind him came a ripple. Through his legs came this monster and it burned or did something to him. The chief said to the Thunder God that he didn't do anything. Can you help me in stopping this creature? Then thunder came down, and a huge tornado sucked up that monster, and they left. The following year when they came back by the place where this happened [on the return trip to the north], there was no water left at that place [Phone Interview with Blackfeet consultant CCB, August 22, 1996].



Figure 2.3. Pelican Creek site of Osborne Russell's 1839 battle with Blackfeet (Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives, Catalog #YELL 37880).

Although after considerable searching we have been unable to find more geographically-precise versions of the trails followed on such Piegan adventures to the south, a general picture of Blackfoot long-distance travel has come from Brings-Down-The-Sun, a Canadian Blackfoot man who was interviewed by the amateur scholar and photographer Walter McClintock in 1905. The old man said that his people customarily used two main routes for their major journeys. One led them northwards out of Calgary, Alberta, up into the Barren Lands of the Northwest Territory and beyond to the Yukon - "as far as people live," in the old man's words. However, the Old North Trail which took them in the opposite direction bordered the southern mountains, and even extended "south into the country inhabited by a people with dark skins, and long hair falling over their faces (Mexico)" (McClintock 1930:435). Fast-moving war parties would ply these routes, but also whole families and bands traversed them as well. As one Blackfoot memory of the tribe's last, unsuccessful journey to make peace with the Shoshone describes these families on the move:

When we traveled, if you were with the head ones, you could not see the last ones, they were so far back. They had more horses than they could count, so they used fresh horses every day and traveled very fast. On the twenty-fourth day they reached the place where Owl Bear had told the Snake they would camp, and put up their lodges along the creek [Grinnell 1961:130].

The father of Brings-Down-The-Sun told McClintock about one of these long voyages to visit the dark-skinned southerners which was undertaken in the early 19th century by a man named Elk Tongue and his wife. In Elk Tongue's case, the ultimate purpose of the odyssey was neither for raiding or hunting but turned out to be the quest for powerful medicine. Down in the hot country a "South Man" had sold him an extremely sacred "Dancing Pipe", which was to be used on important occasions, in conjunction with its medicine bundle. One feature of this bundle's ceremony was its power to grant practitioners, through gazing into the ritually-eviscerated body of a badger, a glimpse of whether they would die young or live to enjoy old age. But because this foreknowledge too often saddened people, the "South Man" discouraged its new Blackfoot owners from trying it out (McClintock 1930:435-436).

While on such missions the Blackfoot war parties seized every opportunity to ambush their old enemies, whether they were the Shoshones or the Crows. Brings-Down-The-Sun remembered one "picture writing" created by his father which recorded such a far-reaching military expedition led by a young chief named Calf Robc. After "traveling southward along the Rocky Mountains," the band crossed the Yellowstone and entered "the country of the Snakes" with whom they skirmished, barely escaping with their lives (McClintock 1930: 469). Thanks again to the prolific chronicler of early Blackfoot travels, James Willard Schultz, we have yet another description of such a long-distance journey to the south, a narrative which Schultz heard first-hand from a Blood chief named Eagle Plume.

Departing for his raid upon the Crows, early one morning the young Eagle Plume led nine warriors from their tipis along the "Belly River" to the banks of the "Bear" [Marias] River, which they crossed near a large, sacred red rock on its northern shore "just above Great Northern Railway

Branch." After praying to this rock for success on their raid, they then crossed the "Milk" [Teton] River below the breast-shaped butte which lent the stream its name. At the junction of the "Pile of Rocks" [Sun] and "Big" [Missouri] rivers, the young men, by now very hungry, forded the latter stream and camped for a few nights at "Rock-Ridge-Across", the site of present-day Great Falls, in order to hunt for buffalo.

Successful at obtaining meat, they then pressed onward, crossing the "Yellow" [Judith] Mountains through the gap and soon reaching the "Dried Meat" [Musselshell] River. Shortly after wading this river they glimpsed the outline of the north end of the "Bad" or "Unfaithful" [Crazy] Mountains, halting at the head of the "Bad" [Shields] River that they knew flowed into the "Elk" [Yellowstone]. Now they knew they were close to their destination, and before long, "where Elk River comes from the mountains [probably near Big Timber] into the plain, we saw rising the smoke of many lodge fires, of a big Crow camp, of course" (Schultz 1930:217-224).

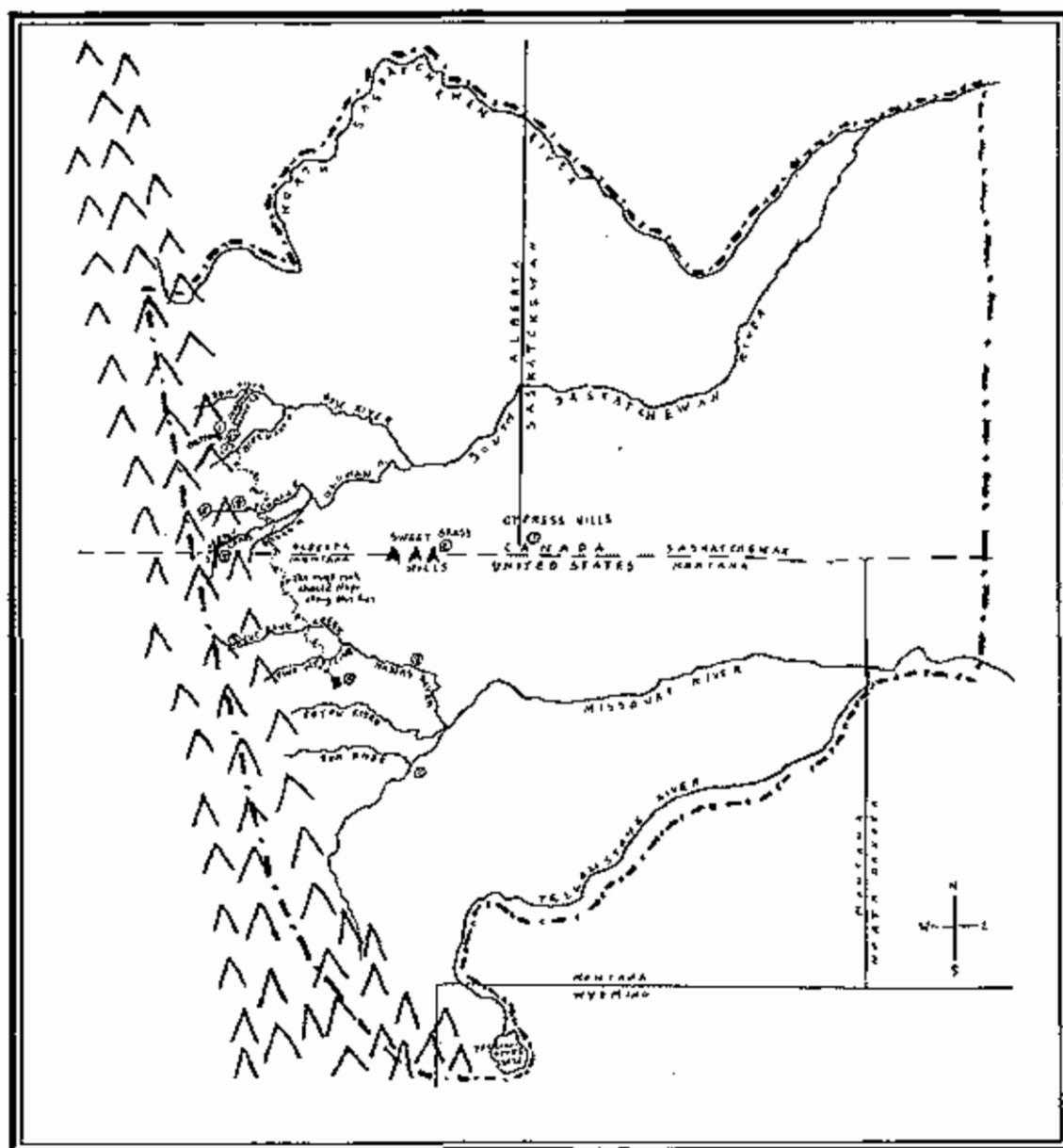


Figure 2.4. Map of Piegan-Blackfoot aboriginal hunting territory, which includes portion of Yellowstone National Park within southern perimeter (From *The Sun Came Down* by Percy Bullchild, 1985 n.p.).

According to Brings-Down-The-Sun, his people might be away on such journeys for many months, which most likely led them through or just skirting the Yellowstone plateau, and eventually brought them into the far southwestern country from whence they brought back the rare materials

which were native to those foreign landscapes. But their absences could also stretch far longer: Elk Tongue's trip took four years - twelve months of steady traveling to get there, and eighteen months just to get back because he chose the longer detour through the "High Trees" or Bitterroot country in order to avoid any Crows, Sioux and Cheyennes who might be lying in wait along their main North Trail. There was tremendous rejoicing when the Blackfeet warriors finally returned home with their spoils and stories like those reviewed here.

While on the road they also visited time-honored locations for obtaining natural resources they could not find at home. It was on the Little Big Horn River (Khpaksi Tuktai, or "Ash River"), for instance, deep in Crow country, that they interrupted their raiding long enough to hunt for wood for their bows and arrows and ash for their pipestems (Schultz 1962:373). Along the way they also paid special attention to any mineral paint deposits which figured in their "mental maps" of the countryside, as will be described below.

Aside from such written accounts and their direct interviews, the other genre of native Blackfeet source material that allows us to appreciate the breadth of Blackfeet travels and territorial awareness are their visual renderings, either pictographic drawings which usually require interpretation by the original artist as Brings-Down-The-Sun mentions above, or their infrequent maps. One is the cartographic document referred to above which was prepared by a Blackfeet man named Ac Ko mok ki, or "The Feathers." The Indian may have first sketched it in the ground or the snow when he met the Hudson's Bay Company Trader named Peter Fidler at his post on the Saskatchewan River in February, 1801, possibly in response to a request from Fidler, who then apparently copied it in his notebook (Ruggles 1991:62-65; information courtesy of Mark Warhus and the Newberry Library, Chicago, from exhibit description for A.N. Arrowsmith's "A map exhibiting all the New Discoveries in the Interior Parts of North America, January 1st 1795, additions to 1802"). What The Feathers depicted was an area that extended at least 500 miles south, down into central Wyoming. On the east, he illustrated the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers and then indicated his people's range past the Rocky Mountains all the way to the Pacific Ocean. In its entirety this constituted an area of about 200,000 square miles, to which the Indian then appended a census for the 32 Indian groups living in the region, even showing their relative locations and giving the number of tipis for each as well.

From this document one obtains vivid evidence of Blackfeet trading and warring routes that led them from western Canada down along the Rockies - through or edging along the Yellowstone National Park region - to Shoshone country and the central Wyoming tribes as well as east to the trading rendezvous at the Mandan, Hisatsa and Arikara villages long the middle Missouri. To cover the full journey from north to south, according to Ac Ko mok ki, Blackfeet horsemen took thirty-three days. Also the map reveals tribal names for such sites along the Absaroka front range as "The Rattle" (Rattlesnake Mountain), "The Heart" (Heart Mountain), "Bull's Nose" (the Bull Mountains) and "Warm Water River," (almost certainly the Shoshone River).

Yet even a cursory re-examination of this map suggests that with a little closer awareness of Shoshonean social groupings the Blackfeet knowledge regarding these and other Yellowstone

Plateau-associated tribes might be interpreted a bit more precisely than the decoding which accompanied its 1977 publication might suggest. For example, #17 on the map, or the "Fish eating Indians" is probably the Agaidika, or Lemhi; #18, or the "root" eating Indians very likely refers to the camas eaters or some other Shoshonean group; and #19, or the "Wood Indians" could well be the Boise Indians, otherwise known as the Yahandika or ground hog eaters.

Nor did this impulse on the part of Blackfeet to depict the territory known and covered by their forefathers cease in the 19th century. As recently as the 1980s, the Piegan Blackfeet storyteller Percy Bullchild, in his collection of traditional narratives entitled The Sun Came Down, included his hand-drawn map of his people's territorial boundaries, boldly positioning a clearly-labeled "Yellowstone Park" within its southern extremity (1985). But another way to get a sense of the continuity of Blackfeet awareness of the greater Yellowstone region throughout the first half of the 19th century is to tabulate some reports of their incursions into or just past this area.

Blackfeet In or Around the Yellowstone Plateau

- 1787 Fur trader David Thompson hears from a Blackfeet warrior about his people's first horse-stealing raid into Shoshone territory (Thompson 1916:342-343).
- 1808 On a branch of the Jefferson Fork, near the Missouri headwaters, fur trapper John Colter barely escapes from a large Blackfeet war party (Chittenden 1964:28-29).
- 1809-10 Blackfeet push Missouri Fur Co. trappers away from the vicinity of Yellowstone (American State Papers VI, Indian Affairs II, pp. 451,453).
- 1826
July Northeast of Yellowstone Lake, near West Thumb Geyser Basin, Daniel T. Potts describes two Blackfeet attacks from one "large party" (Haines 1996:42).
- 1826 In area of Yellowstone's springs, a trapper and his party are driven onto the plains by Blackfeet (Hultkrantz 1957:142, after Crampton 1932:5, after letter in The Philadelphia Gazette, Sept. 1927).
- 1828 En route to a peace parley with Shoshones in the south, Blackfeet Chief Crowfoot and fourteen warriors ambush a white man (Dempsey 1965:8).
- 1829 Between the Yellowstone River and Devils Slide, party of fur trappers (including young Joe Meck) is attacked by a party of Piegans (Chittenden 1895:39-40).
- 1832 Battle between Blackfeet and fur traders, with Hannock friends, at the Pierre's Hole rendezvous site (Replogle 1956: 37; Norris 1879:988).

- 1834 Accompanying Crows for buffalo hunt a half day's travel from No Wood Creek, trapper Zenas Leonard is attacked by Blackfeet (Brown 1961: 55-56).
- 1839 Near Pelican Creek outlet into Yellowstone Lake, Osborne Russell's camp is ransacked by Piegans; he never returns to the region (Russell 1965:101-105).
- 1839 Just north of Yellowstone Lake, at Indian Pond, the trappers led by Baptise Decharme clash with a large body of Blackfeet (Hamilton 1905:94-95; Norris 1882:40-45).
- 1844 On western shore of Yellowstone Lake a large group of trappers from north battle with Blackfeet (Chittenden 1895:45).
- 1845 Reports of Blackfeet leader Painted Wing and 275 warriors pursuing Shoshoncs who stole their horses into geyser area (Linford 1947: 251).
- 1865 Belgian Jesuit Francis Xavier Kuppens is guided to Yellowstone Grand Canyon and Firehole basins by Piegan warriors (Haines 1996:89).
- 1867 Prospecting crew and trading post entrepreneurs detects signs of hostile Blackfeet near the Upper Falls of Yellowstone River (Haines 1974:37; Brown 1961:170-171).

Today, of course, we cannot be sure whether any of these Blackfeet parties took advantage of the earthen paint deposits to be found at key points along their southern trek. As seems to have been the case with the Flathead, did these warriors dig into ochre seams near the Missouri River to wrap up in special paint-bags for the trip home (suggested by Claude Schaeffer field notes, Glenbow Institute)? Or did they stop at one time-honored Blackfeet spot, reportedly near some "warm springs" on the Yellowstone River, to offer the customary prayers to a renowned medicine man before digging deep into a cut-bank for yellow paint (for Blackfeet paint-collecting practices, see McClintock 1910:207-224)? Once they approached the Park, might these Blackfeet visitors have also ventured a quarter of a mile beyond those wood-covered pits on the talus slope opposite Electric peak, just outside the Park's northern entrance, to utilize the quarry which local whites would later call Indian Paint Cave, with its premium-quality red and yellow clay, and the pick marks which indicated the work of other native excavators (Walt Allen, Gallatin National Forest Archaeologist, Personal Communication, August 15, 1996)? And within the present Park boundaries and perhaps following Obsidian Creek to Lake of the Woods, did these Blackfeet then turn southeast to Amphitheater Springs, the source of Lemonade Creek, in order to extract any of the abundant vermilion paint which Indians are known to have obtained in that vicinity (Bach 1973:165) or in red and yellow paint deposits found in the fissure opposite the mouth of Hellroaring Creek which Park superintendent P.W. Norris noticed had evidently been visited by Indians in modern times (Norris 1881:54)?

We may not know about their possible use of these mineral resources, but we have a more probable speculation that they kept their eyes peeled for any edible foods or useable plants they found along their path. Coming up the Yellowstone River the Blackfeet were surely struck by certain obvious differences between some biotic communities and those back home. But moving through the sagebrush grasslands on the valley bottom in the right season, along Mill Creek, Big Creek or similar tributary streams, they would easily find bushes of ripe serviceberries, gooseberries, raspberries and chokecherries. As the aridity of the sun-beaten ground increased en route towards present-day Mammoth, they would also discover clumps of prickly pear cactus, while even in the driest portion of the Park, around Mammoth itself, only a short distance up the side canyons would bring them to the sites of old-time, "ghost" beaver dams which featured richer soils, more moisture and ample foraging opportunities.

On the "People's Trail" - Flatheads Remember Going South

Other northerly tribes with cultural memories or fragmentary knowledge of the upper Yellowstone and environs were the Flathead, or Salish-speaking people, of Montana, and their immediate native neighbors. Since there exists no evidence of any sort that this nation ever flattened their heads - as did their linguistic brethren along the Columbia River - the term Salish is often preferred. In Carling Malouf's opinion, their aboriginal center was at "Three Forks" - the confluence of the Missouri, Madison and Jefferson rivers, and in the Gallatin Valley to the south, even though they hunted and raided as far east as present-day Billings and into the Wyoming Big Horns. Although the earlier scholar James A. Teit placed them as far east as the upper Yellowstone Valley. "Parties of Flathead," he wrote, "also visited the mountain Snake, especially the Lemhi, and they also visited Shoshoni bands on the Yellowstone" (Teit 1930:269, also 303-306).

As for the closely-associated (Upper) Pend d'Oreille, they were once actually part of the Salish nation (and the two still speak mutually intelligible languages). Before they were concentrated on a separate reservation in Washington State, they could be found around Flathead Lake, the Bitterroot Valley and the Upper Clark Fork River between present-day Missoula and Butte, Montana (Malouf 1998: 297). At the time of Yellowstone Park's inception these Pend d'Oreille numbered around 1000 souls. Just west of Salish territory proper lived the linguistically-related Coeur d'Alene, whose established permanent and temporary camps throughout the Spokane River system but who also could be found along portions of the Clearwater and Clark Fork streams (Palmer 1998: 313). Reduced from an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 in 1780 to about 320 members in 1853, the Coeur d'Alene foraging grounds probably overlapped in amicable, mutual-use fashion with that of their surrounding linguistic cousins. Finally, one must include in this particular corner of shoulder-to-shoulder Plateau Indian peoples the linguistically-unique Kootenai, whose traditional lands north of the Montana Salish extended into Canada but who undertook long-distance buffalo-hunting expeditions into the plains, and whose American branch drew closer to the Flathead when the Jesuits created their St. Ignatius Mission in 1854 (Brunton 1998: 224-234). From the early reservation period through today, their historical experience has increasingly been shared with that tribe (except



Figure 2.5. Folklore from tribes to the north and west of Yellowstone National Park both feature the mythic being, Coyote, striving to procure fish for the Indians on either side of the Continental Divide in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem. But while Coyote is only successful in establishing smaller fish for highland dwellers on the western side, as this illustration by Flathead artist Frederick E. Roullier shows he fails entirely to capture salmon for Indians on the "dawn side of the mountains." This explains why it will largely be buffalo that these Plains peoples will pursue in the future (from *Coyote Tales of the Mountain Salish* by Harriet Miller and Elizabeth Harrison, from narratives they recorded from Pierre Pichette. Rapid City, South Dakota: *The Tipi Shop*, 1974, p. 19).

that, as Brunton also notes, they have "tended to belong to a less-acculturated, traditional group...somewhat isolated on the northern end of the Flathead Reservation" (Brunton 1998: 234).

The extent of southern visits by these Flathead was made somewhat more precise by anthropologist Carling Malouf, whose early fieldwork was largely devoted to the tribe, and who states unequivocally that "they went as far as Yellowstone National Park" (Malouf 1967:4). What Malouf argues as the principal motivation for their relocation into the Bitterroot Valley was the

intrusion, as early as the 1600s, of Shoshoean Indians from Idaho and Wyoming who began marauding up from the south once they had been emboldened by the horses and leather armor they acquired from the Spanish. Some oral traditions also support knowledge and use of the Park to the Flathead. According to interviews by the bi-lingual Flathead interpreter, Pierre Pichette - who talked in the 1930s on behalf of narrative-collectors Bon Whcadon and Claude Schaeffer with such reliable tribal elders as Paul Antoine, Victor and Mortine Vanderburg, and Baptiste and Larse Lumpry - the ancestors of the Flatheads expressly sought out the obsidian quarries in Yellowstone National Park (Clark 1966:87). Although in 1833, Warren Ferris recalled that his Pend d'Oreilles guides were "appalled" by the geysers, and that one Indian remarked that "hell, of which he had heard from the white-man, must be in that vicinity," one of Pichette's stories shed a more positive light on the Park. The narrative featured the trickster figure, Coyote, in his familiar role in the Plateau as landscape transformer, and protector and culture-bearer for human beings.

But before summarizing Pichette's story, which anthologizer Ella E. Clark entitled "Coyote's Prophecy Concerning Yellowstone National Park" (Clark 1966:86-90), we must first address the issue of its authenticity. As for assessing the bonafides of storyteller Pichette, what we know about the man attests to his competence as a traditional narrator. Born in 1877 on the Flathead Indian Reservation's Jocko Agency near the present-day location of Arlee, Montana, when he died in 1955 it was said that "Pichette had made an enormous contribution to the preservation and understanding of the culture of his people" (Miller, Harrison and Pichette 1974:7). His cultural knowledge came through his family but was certainly deepened by personal tragedy: at the age of fifteen while a student at the mission boarding school in St. Ignatius, Pichette contracted measles and lost his eyesight.

Thereafter the boy became a tribal intellectual. Pichette had been only a year old when his mother, an enrolled Pend d'Oreille and Kalispell woman named Mary Sabine, passed away. Instead of living with his father, however, an enrolled Spokane named Modess Pichette, Pierre was raised by his maternal grandmother, also named Mary, who is believed to have been among Chief Arlec's band when it gave up its beloved Bitterroot country and moved to the Jocko Agency after 1872. From his grandmother young Pierre absorbed many narratives -

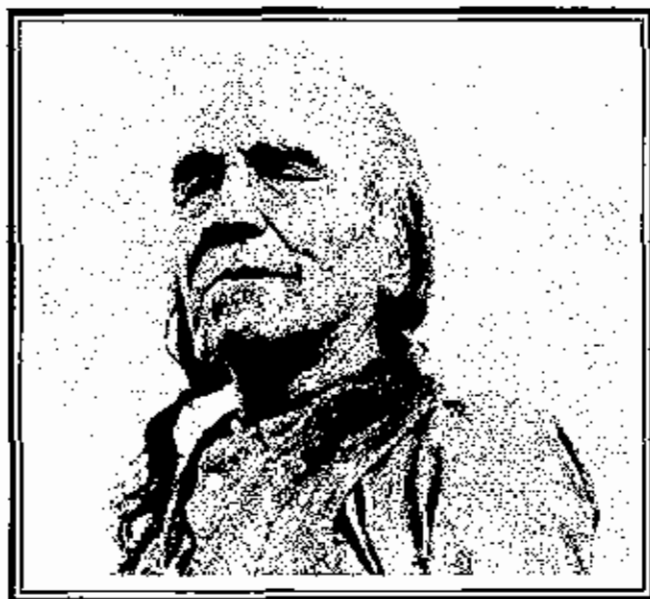


Figure 2.6. Pierre Pichette, Salish-Kutenai oral historian and storyteller, from *Coyote Tales of the Montana Salish* by Harriet Miller and Elizabeth Harrison from tales narrated by Pierre Pichette, illustrations by Frederick E. Roullier, Rapid City, South Dakota: The Tipi Shop, 1974, Page 7).

mythic, legendary and historical. Once he became blind, he taught himself to read and use a typewriter in Braille, and thereafter became renowned among his people for his bilingual skills, his clear memory, his gifts as a public orator, and his collaboration and correspondence with numerous scholars on matters of Salish-Kutenai tradition. Furthermore, his reputation for truthfulness and linguistic accuracy made him a valued interpreter for his tribe throughout their eventually successful land claim hearings. This background would seem to validate Pichette's credibility as a trustworthy storyteller, which is reinforced by the fact that the well-respected anthropologist-historian Claude Schaefer considered Pichette sufficiently knowledgeable to engage him as a key informant, and used him to obtain detailed data on Flathead camp moves.

One might also examine the credibility of the document's interlocutor. We have no detailed information on the late Ella Elizabeth Clark's interviewing practices. An English professor at Washington State University in Pullman, Washington, Ms. Clark's career focused on collecting Indian texts from the Pacific Northwest and the Rockies. She obtained her material from both field interviews and library research. For a professional evaluation of her work, however, we contacted the two major scholars of Northwest Indian narratives, Dr. Jarold Ramsey and, through Dr. Ramsey, the dean of American linguistic studies, Dr. Dell Hymes. First, from Dr. Ramsey:

Without knowing the details of the charges and biases against Clark's work, I'm afraid I can't give you a very sharp-edged comment. But I'll venture this. In looking at and sometimes consulting her two main collections of Indian narrative texts (from Pacific Northwest and the Rockies), I have never found any evidence that she "made things up" or even embroidered her materials...My feeling about her work has always been something like this: that she deserves some credit for recognizing and trying to promote the study of traditional Indian oral literature as literature, in a time (30's to 50's) when few scholars were following that line; and she also deserves credit for undertaking quite a lot of folkloric field work — she worked, for example, on the Warm Springs Reservation in Central Oregon, near where I grew up. When I began to work on my own anthology, Coyote Was Going There: Indian Literature of the Oregon Country, I thought of her as a worthy predecessor and rival in the cause of gaining serious literary attention for the transcribed oral traditions of the Far West [Personal Communication, August 11, 1998].

As a consideration for this project, Dr. Ramsey mentioned our concerns to Dr. Dell Hymes and reported the following:

No sooner had I mailed my letter to you - couple of days ago, then Dell Hymes called from his place in Oregon. He says he never knew Ella Clark, but has always considered her Indian collecting and editing honest, careful, and valuable within what now seem like its limits (re: concern with native literary conventions and assumptions and with questions of translation and textualization). He's as puzzled as I by the opposition you've encountered to her work [Personal Communication, August 13, 1998].

The main thrust of these two positive testimonials concerns Clark's field collecting endorsements echoed in Dr. Marius Barbeau's review of Ms. Clark's Indian Legends of Canada - Barbeau 1962). But perhaps her care with the vetting of received texts did leave something to be desired. In his August 11, 1998 letter Ramsey added the "...she does cast a very wide and sometimes unaccountable net for her materials," and cited a Wasco Indian story which Clark copied from another work, a source which Ramsey assessed as "romanticized and utterly shaky as to its provenance" (Personal Communication, August 11, 1998). We sense this same discrepancy in Clark's materials between those she collected personally and those she lifted from earlier publications. For instance, in our search for Northern Cheyenne materials connected to Yellowstone National Park we were intrigued to locate a purported Cheyenne creation story for the "Land of Great Fire" accompanied by a color photograph of Minerva Terrace at Mammoth Hot Springs, in a 1995 coffee table publication (Milne 1995:89). Upon reaching the author, however, we discovered he had lifted the narrative from an anthology of Indian narratives coedited by Ella E. Clark (Edmonds and Clark: 1989). Inspecting that publication led us to a third work from which Ms. Clark had, in turn, uncritically borrowed this story. Edited by an Eastern Montana College professor of Education, Hap Gilliland, this pamphlet, The Flood, was first published in 1972 (Gilliland 1972). But upon reaching Mr. Gilliland and inquiring about the geographical specifics of his narrative he admitted that he had added those to make the story more concrete and acceptable. In the original narrative he had heard from his Northern Cheyenne consultants (neither audio-taping nor preserving his handwritten notes) the story had been geographically vague. "So I think I added those places there, to make it more specific. Yes, I know I did" (Personal Phone Communication, September 4, 1998).

Another way to assess whether such a narrative is "authentic" might be to examine its plot and to judge its conformity with other aspects of Flathead and Plateau Coyote narratives and storytelling techniques. The story opens with Coyote leaving a well-known spot in Flathead geography: the sacred springs above the medicine tree near the town of Darby in western Montana. This is where Coyote chased a bighorn ram across an arroyo so that its horns stuck in a ponderosa pine tree that is still revered by Flathead people. In fact, the entire narrative is anchored by authentic Flathead places; for at the very end of the story the plum trees, which Coyote creates out of his horse whip for the benefit of people, now become the Flathead name for what the white man calls the Jocko River, near the town of Dixon, Montana. And in the tale Coyote behaves according to type: he is thin and gaunt but relentlessly traveling. We learn that Grizzly Bear has convened a great "gathering of the tribes," but Coyote hears about it too late and must race to the location for this event "in a valley of what is now Yellowstone Park," an area known to teem with these dangerous animals.

But instead of walking right in, Coyote stays unnoticed with an old woman nearby. As is the typical number symbol for Indian folklore of this region, four times he has her make requests of Grizzly Bear, the leader of the gathering, twice for his best food, twice for his best drum. Finally getting Grizzly Bear's instrument, Coyote then summons supernatural powers to kill him. When the people then want Coyote for their new chief, he promotes Golden Eagle instead. As if in exchange for the thankful gift of a horse from the people, Coyote responds with a glowing verbal portrayal of the thermal region which sounds at odds with the forbidding image reported by Ferris:

In generations to come, this place around here will be a treasure of the people. They will be proud of it and of all the curious things in it - flint rocks, hot springs, and cold springs. People will be proud of this spot. Springs will bubble out, and steam will shoot out. Hot springs and cold springs will be side by side. Hot water will fly into the air, in this place and that place. No one knows how long this will continue. And voices will be heard here, in different languages, in the generations to come [Clark 1966:89].

Coyote's fight against grizzly bears is told in two of Pichette's other narratives (Miller, Harrison and Pichette 1974:46-49, 54-57) and is an extension of the ubiquitous Plateau theme of Coyote conquering dangerous beasts or supernatural monsters to ready the world for human habitation, as evidenced in Deward Walker's collection of Coyote-versus-Grizzly stories from the neighboring Nez Perce (Walker 1994:103-120). The Flathead has him killing them on behalf of human beings and so do the Nez Perce (Walker 1994:107-109, 116), and like the Flathead story, the Nez Perce even suggest Coyote trying to use Grizzly's own power against him. As for Haines' objection that the "modern" element of the horse negates the narrative's authenticity, Plains Indian folklore contains frequent references to the supernatural origin of horses which are blithely oblivious to their historical origin from Euro-American society. For example, the Pawnee told of a young man who dreamt of their creator, Tirawa, opening the sky and dropping the first two ponies down to earth (Dorsey 1906a:123). Among the Cheyenne, when the people led by their culture hero, Sweet Medicine, are camping at Devil's Tower, he predicts the day when an animal "will carry you on his back and help you in many ways" (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:40). The Piegan linked their version of the widespread story of the woman who marries a star with an account of how the Great Chief of the Sky World made a horse from wet clay for their offspring to ride (Bradley 1923:298-299).

But both this horse element and the Yellowstone National Park forecast in the Pichette narrative exemplify a deeper creative twist often found in American Indian folklore, which Plateau Indian folklore scholar Jarold Ramsay calls "retroactive prophecy." By this term Ramsay refers to the genre of stories that often claim special knowledge, or forecast aspects or consequences of Indian-white interaction or even cataclysmic events which, in reality, have already happened or are already known. However such stories are recast as prophecies which existed long before, and result from "Indian mythologies endeavoring to preserve the continuums of the old ways in the face of their apparent utter disruption" (Ramsay 1983:164). In this particular case, from a non-Indian point-of-view the Flathead originator of this story would have retooled information he had heard about the Yellowstone thermal features in order to give his people the indirect credit for knowing about this "treasure" of a place, since it was their culture hero who generously gave it to people from all over the world, who would then flock to it (which can be read as a rare Indian endorsement of a multi-use policy). From a Flathead perspective, however, the narrator is only doing what comes naturally, attributing the world's wonders to the four-legged demi-urge whom they have always acknowledged created the known world for them.

Furthermore, like some of the examples cited by Ramsay, this Pichette narrative actually seems to be spliced together from two time-frames: the "Myth Age" in the first part of the story, where

Coyote kills the Grizzly Bear, and the second part, occurring in the more "Historical Age," where people thank Coyote for saving them with the gift of the gray horse, and then Coyote's final prophetic words about Yellowstone National Park as if in reward for their gratitude. Just as no one can say that the aforementioned stories of horses were not grafted onto older narratives on the spot, we cannot be sure whether Pichette himself invented his last section as well. But what Ramsay's essay argues is that this creative process of trying to make novel phenomena consistent with tribal worldview has been a persistent impulse throughout the American Indian world ever since Euro-American and Native Americans first began interacting. From Native American, or cultural anthropological perspectives, then, the above narrative would appear wholly appropriate to traditional Indian storytelling mechanisms and motivations, even if historians doubt its consistency with chronological sequences or tidy associations between regions and tribes. (Among those who remain highly dubious about the authenticity of this Clark/Pichette narrative is Park historian Lee Whittlesey who regards its closing section particularly as sounding Euro-American and concocted or at least rewritten by a popularizer (Clark) who was a teacher of English literature and neither a trained ethnographer or linguist.)

Now we return from Flathead folklore to their history. It has been hypothesized that the Flathead split from their Salishan-speaking relatives to the west at an early date (Turney-High 1937:11-21). Thereafter they became known in Montana for blending their adoption of many key Plains Indian traits, such as utilization of the horse (receiving them from the Northern Shoshone sometime after 1730-40 - Ewers 1955; Malouf 1957), buffalo hunting, and the conical tipi, with key characteristics of the Plateau cultural world, such as foraging for tubers with digging sticks and creating collective vision-inspired ceremonies such as the Blue Jay Dance. Never a very large tribe, the Flatheads were down to about 600 souls in 1806, if we believe Lewis and Clark. Due largely to their incessant strife with the overpowering Blackfeet, however, by the time they signed the treaty of Hell Gate in 1855 their numbers had almost been reduced by half again.

The Flathead hunters of the early 19th century who left the Bitterroot Valley in search of buffalo to the east faced a rougher and longer road to their old hunting grounds than the one they had once undertaken from their earlier homeland at Three Forks, but they surely were acquainted with the route. Their fairly-detailed recollections of this long-distance trek, which would have been the major phase of a journey that subsequently could have brought them to the Yellowstone region, were narrated in the 1930s, through interpreter Pichette, by elders Paul Antoine and Louise Lumpry to the ethnographer Claude Schaeffer (Claude Schaeffer Papers, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, courtesy of the Kootenai-Salish Culture Committee).

By about 1800 it had become their customary practice to launch upon bi-annual quests for buffalo meat, following what the Salish called Sinkakatiwax, which translates as "The People's Trail." For this journey they generally allowed at least ten days, and eventually it took them to the headwaters of the Mussellshell River. For the first stretch of such an expedition the Salish party would bid farewell to their campsites which were located in the vicinity of Stevensville, Montana. Moving north up the Bitterroot Valley, they headed for the present site of Missoula. There they turned east,

following the trail along Petty (Pattec) Creek which flowed between old Fort Missoula and today's University of Montana campus.

Riding along this creek as it cut through the hills to the "Missoula river" (Clark Fork of the Columbia), they forded it just east of its junction with the Big Blackfoot River, and then continued to follow its northern banks for a distance of "nine miles above Bonita." At this point they crossed the river to its southern shoreline, rode eastward past Medicine Tree, and finally arrived at the present town of



Figure 2.7. Kootenai-Salish Consultant, TT, at Obsidian Cliff.

Drummond. Sticking to the southern shoreline, they dropped about halfway to Garrison before crossing the river once again and pursuing the southern course of the "north fork" (Little Blackfoot River) towards the hamlet of Avon.

Now they forded this river, keeping to the southern banks to Elliston, where they again waded back across, sticking with its northern shore until they reached a place "where two creeks empty into the river, one from the north and one from the south." At this point the party would turn up the northernmost of these creeks (possibly Dog Creek), which they shortly abandoned, however, to head directly east through a pass (possibly Mullen Pass) in the Continental Divide - although Schaeffer's consultants said that they could also have chosen to cut directly east a little earlier so as to use MacDonald Pass through the Divide (probably following Tenmile Creek after that). By either route, they soon found the Missouri River, which they crossed just east of the present-day state capital of Helena.

To the Flathead Indians the Missouri River was known as *ep iyu nrwc?tkwus*, which meant "river of the red paint." At a well-known site just to the north of where their trail actually traversed the Missouri they often dug out the reddish hematite which they used in ceremonial activities and to paint their tipis. If this expedition was taking place in the fall usually they could have forded the river without assistance. But if it was summertime, said Schaeffer's narrators, they would have to make "tipi-skin boats." Had they then wanted to strike out for the Yellowstone Plateau, it would have been

an easy matter to continue to follow the Missouri River due south to Three Forks, and from there stick with the Madison to the Park's present western entrance. However, none of Schaeffer's informants, at least, mentioned this option.

From the Missouri the hunters headed into the Big Belt Mountains, which they traversed by means of a pass [possibly Deep Creek] before riding by a Fort Logan (?), still maintaining their course due east so as to cross directly between the Little Belt Mountains (Castle Mountains) and the Crazy Mountains. Picking up the South Fork of the Musselshell in this widening basin, at last the men would gain their first sight of the desired buffalo herds. According to the Flathead informants, once the party had entered this river plain and edged farther along the well-timbered Musselshell, they had to remain ever alert, for surprise attacks by Blackfeet or others might come at any time.

Penetrating the "Smokey Ground"

It was at this point, Schaeffer's informants added, that had they wished the Flathead hunters (sometimes accompanied by the Pend d'Oreille) might have decided upon the additional trek down to the Yellowstone. This they accomplished by dropping a little further down the Musselshell before turning southeast on their southern trail. Without further explanation as to the significance of the date, they said that this latter route was used "more frequently previous to 1877" - which, however, would have been when those Flathead surely knew that military activity over the Nez Perce war was intense and uncomfortably close-by.

Unfortunately Schaeffer elicited no further details for what might have been the next leg of this journey to the Yellowstone Plateau, nor about any possible routes they followed within the current Park. One amusing story told by a Kutenai, however, gets natives from northern Montana at least partway to the Park. Remembering humorous "firsts" among his people, Baptiste Mathias told Thain White that it was "down towards Red Lodge" that one traveler to the south picked up a five pound lard bucket. When he returned home he put a cover on it. As curious onlookers gathered around to see the strange metal container, he whipped off its cover to astound them with reflections of their faces in the metal base. "They offered him all kinds of things but he wouldn't sell it (White 1952: 4)."

Even after all this time of removal from the Yellowstone environs, our recent interview with a Flathead elder confirmed the general outline of the Schaeffer claims about southern travels, and places his people's geographical knowledge squarely within the Park. A forestry technician for the Flathead Tribe, LA, was born near Arlee, Montana, sixty-two years ago, in the house of elder SR. As he remembered the stories of old people like his grandmother LV, her brother JV, their stepmother, SM, and especially his grandmother's aunt, MC, the Flathead would gather in the vicinity of Stevensville for the summer. But come fall and they scattered into two-three family foraging bands, with some "ending up in Yellowstone in the fall"(LA Interview, June 4, 1996).

It was LA's belief that if they did gather enough food during the fall, "they might stay all winter, they liked the hot waters, I guess." They had taken so long to get there, he thought, that they took

their time before coming home, since the region provided sufficient elk, buffalo, fish and roots for their survival. Sometimes, he said, their fellow tribesmen might not see a family for a year or more, and occasionally never - "which meant they maybe met up with Crows or Blackfeet." LA himself remembered one summer trip when he was a little boy, when his family ventured deep into the Bob Marshall wilderness and came upon a clearing at the "place of meadows" (L-qul-go-le-wh) with a group of Salish already camped there. Today that memory of a "circle of five or six tipis" remains for him "like a dream." After talking with the campers for a few hours, his parents returned to their own camp.

When the family groups finally returned to the Bitterroot in the fall, LA said they told stories of what they had seen in the southland; "they talked about this hard stuff like glass," and about the arrow points (la-pa-mi) and spear points (noo-loo-loo-moo) they found there. In addition, the consultant remembered three place-names associated with the Yellowstone region:

1) K ali ssens, for "Yellow Stone."

2) n' aq es ocq?etKw for "Hot Water Coming out of the Ground" or "hot springs" (which the Salish were not loath to visit, whether at Lolo Hot Springs or Hot Springs, Montana).

3) mo'mo'tu'lex for "Smoke from the Ground," presumably associated with steam issuing from the thermal beds.

Indian Hunting and the Greater Yellowstone

While this chapter offers a good opportunity to introduce multi-tribal usage of large mammal resources in and around Yellowstone National Park, by no means are we suggesting that the Blackfeet or other groups dropping south into the Park enjoyed any special advantage or claim over other tribes where the activities of buffalo or elk hunting were concerned. Quite the contrary, nearly all the native groups featured in this study - and quite possibly others as well - hunted in and around the Yellowstone Plateau. But due to cultural or environmental reasons some tribes may have had a wider range of options for bringing other staples such as fish or camas into their regular diet. With the exception of our discussion of bighorn sheep, however, we will collapse much of our hunting information in this chapter - much as we will condense our material on the use of camas roots into Chapter 6 - in part for reasons of convenience. Yet there may be another justification as well. For as will become clear, it may have been in part thanks to one of these northern tribes that Yellowstone National Park was able to salvage its threatened buffalo population in the first place.

Before turning to this most prominent animal symbol for Yellowstone National Park, however, we will touch on information which has come to light during our research regarding Indian hunting of elk in and immediately around the Park. One 19th century account comes from Theodore Roosevelt, perhaps the most high profile of Yellowstone National Park boosters but at the same time an inveterate hunter. During one elk hunt into the Two-Ocean Pass region of the Wind River

Mountains, before the area was protected within the U.S. National Forest Reserve, Roosevelt ran into a large hunting party of Shoshones on horseback, who were split into bands of eight or ten members each. According to him:

Their method of hunting was to organize great drives, the riders strung in lines far apart; they signaled to one another by means of willow whistles, with which they also imitated the calling of the bull elk, thus calling the animals to them, or making them betray their whereabouts. As they slew whatever they could but by preference cows and calves, and as they were very persevering, but also very excitable and generally poor shots, so that they wasted much powder, they not only wrought havoc among the elk, but also scared the survivors out of all the country over which they hunted [Roosevelt 1892:718].

Some days earlier on this expedition, Roosevelt had also briefly stopped at the encampment of an old mountain man with profound knowledge of the Teton country by the nickname of "Beaver Dick", who occupied a buffalo-hide tipi with "his comely wife and half-breed children" with their sizeable herd of horses nearby (Roosevelt 1892:714). This individual's full name was Richard Leigh, and we are grateful that Park Historian Lee Whittlesey provided our project with a typed summary of Dick's notations on Indian hunting from his personal journal of experiences in the Pierre's Hole-Henry's Fork areas adjoining the Park.

British by birth, Dick came to America as a teenager, and ventured west in the early 1850s. Shortly after arriving in the Teton country, around 1862 or 63 he married a Shoshone woman, but tragedy struck thirteen years later - and clearly after Roosevelt's stopover - when his wife and six children all died from smallpox (Whittlesey 1996:23). The legendary reputation of Beaver Dick's prowess as a outdoorsman would find its way into the popular novel, *The Virginian*, by the Wyoming hunter and author, Owen Wister. As Whittlesey has quoted from Dick's own broken-English diary, the guide seemed "to have had a sense of the importance of his own history with the Indians, for he wished fervently at one point that he could somehow 'give to the world my experience [sic] in Indan [sic] life and the rocky mountains so that thay [sic] could understand it'" (Dick Journal entry for September 12, 1878).

During the years of 1875, 1876 and 1878, even as most Plains Indians were being actively discouraged from leaving their reservations Dick periodically bumped into Indians hunting not far from the Park. As nicely edited by Whittlesey, these comments offer some sense of the forays by various tribal representatives into the general Yellowstone area:

On June 8, 1875, Leigh traveled down Pine Creek in the Snake River Range above present Swan Valley, Idaho, and reported that "Indians [h]ad run the elk and scattered them" there.

On August 25, 1875, Leigh was confronted with four Indians at his cabin and boat near the mouth of South Teton River who wanted passage across the river. They told

him that 'the [other] Indans that was out hunting the teton range [h]as got a big scair [scare] dan thay say thare is war partey's of the seux [Sioux] Indians in the [Teton] range and it is making these Indans go for the [ir] reserve in duple quick [time]. Here we have a rare reference to Sioux Indians in the Teton and a confirmation of Bannock/Shoshone use of the area for hunting.

Below present Swan Valley Idaho, on September 12, 1876, Leigh ran into two lodges of Indians camped on Snake River: "I talked with them they ware [were] shoshones hunting elk and deer but was making very poor work of it thay [h]ad killed 2 deer and no elk and [h]ad beenc out 6 weeks."

On October 12, 1876, while trying to get his cabin built near the mouth of South Teton River (present Rexburg, Idaho), Dick noted that he stopped hunting because "the Indans was hunting all around us."

On September 5, 1878, while at his home near the mouth of South Teton River, Dick mentioned that Indians were "scaterd thrc [scattered through] the timber hunting elk" ["A Pre-1905 History of Large Mammals in Pierre's Hole, Idaho; Jackson Hole, Wyoming; and the Bechler Region of south western Yellowstone," November, 1994, draft manuscript by Lee H. Whittlesey, forthcoming in P. Schullery and L. Whittlesey, History of Large Mammals on the Yellowstone Plateau].

While these sightings of Indians in the 1870s involved elk hunting, by far the greatest symbolic attention given to animals in the Park has been to its buffalo, the creature whose likeness is emblazoned on the National Park Service official seal. Today one can observe meandering herds of those Yellowstone buffalo grazing and switching their tails in broad daylight by the roadside down the Lamar Valley. But in the Park of yesteryear, according to a 19th century geologist who knew the place well, it would have been "most unusual, save in midwinter, to find them [buffalo] in open valley or on the treeless mountain slope (Hague 1893)." This striking contrast in habitats can be explained of course by the changing adaptive processes, in which today's buffalo have become accustomed to the incessant gazes, even meddling, by gawkers and the intrusion of their vehicles. But it can also be explained by the fact that we actually are speaking of different subspecies of buffalo, as the Indians who had personal experience with both strains must have recognized full well.

When wayfaring parties of Indian hunters or raiders pursued buffalo within Yellowstone National Park or its enfolding mountain ranges they were hunting an animal (Bison bison athabascac Rhoads) that contrasted in singular ways from their cousins of the plains (Bison bison bison Linacus). These so-called "mountain" or "wood" bison were generally tougher and faster, while their fur was darker, finer and curlier (Meagher 1973:14-15). They were also somewhat smaller than the Plains buffalo, and quite skittish, having a keen sense of smell which alerted them to anyone who came too near. The preferred habitat of the Yellowstone herds was described by geologist Hague when he was working in the Park a hundred years ago, "They haunt the most inaccessible and out-of-the-way places...living in open glades and pastures, the oases of the dense forest." These woodland bison

were almost surely the species which earlier Indians drove over cliffs eastward into the Bighorn Basin or into catchment pens just south of the Park. Wrote a correspondent for Live Stock Markets in 1931, the last of these subspecies was killed in the Big Horn mountains in 1885, and he added the following anecdotal comments about the strain:

They [woodland bison] grazed largely on willow and browsed on the leaves, shoots, bark, and twigs of trees. This gave the flesh a peculiar aromatic flavor, and you very soon tired of the meat. It was a great source of meat when the overland railroads were built. The hides made good robes, but the leather was not good. It was spongy [Burnett 1988:23].

Not until 1989 was the site of an actual Indian bison kill discovered within the Park proper. Four years after the bones of a bull began eroding from a cliff of billowing steam vents above Yellowstone Lake at Steamboat Point, a team from the Park Service's Midwest Archaeological Center carefully exposed nearly the entire animal, including bones with butchering marks and obsidian flakes from the cutting tools which made them. The kill site was dated at around A.D. 1200, and quite possibly was chosen by the Indian hunters because of the nearby steam vents as a comfortable, warm place to camp, and also so that they might corner the animals against the lakeside cliff (The Lincoln Star, September 24, 1993, p. 1,6). As to exactly when the different Indian groups might have made their last buffalo hunts in the Park area, little is known since, after 1872, those forays were clandestine, and sightings of trespassing Indians were sketchy and infrequent.

However the following rare account of a Crow pursuit of buffalo at a known location within Yellowstone National Park was elicited by a WPA fieldworker in the early 1940s. The story came from a part-Indian cowhand and former stage coach driver named Horace La Bree who in 1929 talked with the important Crow leader Plenty Coups about what the elderly Crow chief believed was the last Crow hunt to transpire within the northern reaches of Yellowstone National Park (Howard 1941:3-5). That year the two old men got together when they were both honored guests at a celebration at the Park's northern entrance at Gardiner. Plenty Coups had been hoping to talk with La Bree because something about the landscape around Gardiner had jogged his memory of an experience he associated with his father, Medicine Bird. It concerned a buffalo hunt, and he wanted to check it out with someone with a good familiarity of the countryside. About eighty-one years of age at the time, Plenty Coups retained this image of long-ago Crow hunters chasing animals up a particular creek that split into two forks, and then trapping the buffalo against a high rock or mountain.

Fortunately La Bree was able to pinpoint the stream Plenty Coups was talking about. It was Buffalo Creek, and he knew where the later-named Hellroaring and Coyote Creeks, the two streams of Plenty Coups' memory, poured into the Yellowstone. Their conversation about the location also triggered Plenty Coups' further recollections about the hunt. As it turned out, he had been about 12 years old at the time [c.1860], and now, in telegraphic phrases translated from the Crow language, Plenty Coups recollected the experience for La Bree:

The Crows were hungry--in need of meat--food--clothing--The buffalo were becoming scarce--a bunch had gone into the Park--and they could not reach them--they spotted a herd of some two or three hundred--going up--towards these mountains--cross the Yellowstone--This was just what the Indians had hoped they would do.

As Plenticoups explained--that his father knew the lay of the country--where the two creeks came into the Yellowstone--back of which was a high cliff--of a rocky kind(.) The Crows--kept right in pursuit of the bunch of buffalo--running them--between the two creeks--right up against the rocky cliff.

Of course--there was only thing the animals could do that was to mill around at the foot of the Cliff--then try to return--and the Indians had their game corralled.

This was the last hunt of the wild buffalo herd--in that locality. So Plenticoups told them [Howard 1941:4-5].

According to Plenty Coups, directly below this hunting location and across the Yellowstone was the expanse known as Buffalo Flat, which one can find today just north of the Northeast Entrance Road (Whittlesey 1988:29). One of seven named plateaus that taken altogether comprise the Yellowstone Plateau, it was in 1870 that a group of prospectors first named it Buffalo Flat, because "we found thousands of buffalo quietly grazing" (Henderson Diary, Yellowstone National Park Research Library, p. 50). This description accords with Plenty Coups' impression of the place, for it was his recollection that in earlier days here "the buffalo would gather--to sun themselves. Often many were killed on this spot" (Howard 1941:5).

Aside from its rarity as a description of an uncommon Crow method of driving and hunting bison in Yellowstone, Plenty Coups' account is also provocative because of its location. The spot near where the two creeks run into the Yellowstone River would also seem around five miles or so from a buffalo-hunting site identified in the late 1950s during a preliminary archaeological survey of the Park by J. Jacob Hoffman. He called the location "The Slough Creek Compound, 48YE420" (Hoffman 1961:28-30). As Hoffman described the terrain of the half-mile by quarter-mile site, "It consists of a series of knolls and terraces overlooking Slough Creek and two intermittent streams that enter the creek from the north" (Hoffman 1961:24).

The combined evidence of rock piles, a rock wall, evidence of camping and butchering, and "a natural cul-de-sac on the south side" of the creek were all indications that Indians had taken temporary advantage of the natural topography to drive buffalo into a spot for easier killing and processing. Hoffman even found some intriguing post holes on the creek's northern bank, which could have been part of the animal-drive complex, although he could not be sure whether they were dug during the historic period or not. While the bison bone deposits that protruded out of the Slough Creek banks were not terribly extensive, Hoffman, citing Mulloy (1958), felt this was in accord with the characteristically thin animal remains at other game compounds which had been associated with late prehistoric or historic times on the northwestern Plains. Suffice to say, however, that such cross-referencing between personal memory and archaeological reconstruction in the same immediate

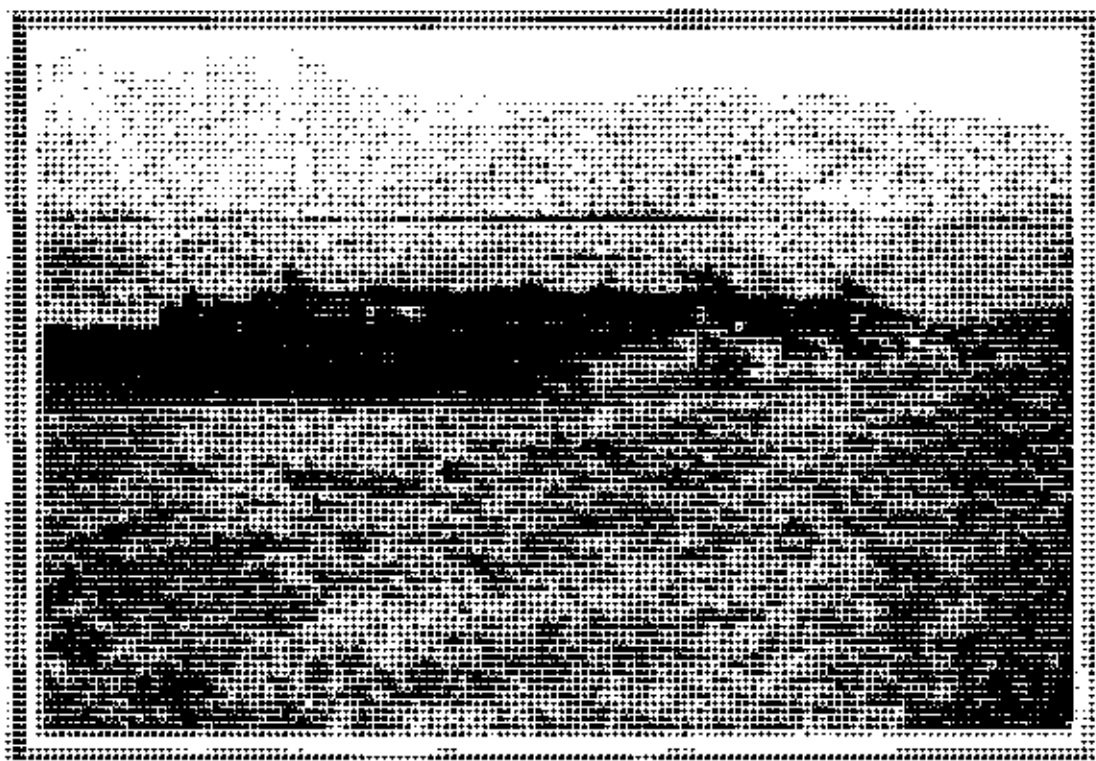


Figure 2.8. Crow and Shoshone Indians driving buffalo in Lamar Valley for filming of The Thundering Herd (Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives, Catalog #YELL 27919-1).

vicinity is unusual in the annals of Plains Indian culture history (for an excellent Crow Indian account of buffalo jumps, and the importance of the early leader, Running Coyote, in initiating the first Crow technique of running buffalo over embankments, see Medicine Crow 1992:86-99).

Yellowstone National Park was also the venue for another Crow reminiscence about buffalo hunting. In early fall of 1932 Max Big Man - see Chapter 1 for biographical information - was visiting the Park to participate in the buffalo roundup at Buffalo Ranch. Before the roundup he visited the Mammoth museum, helped to interpret its elk hide painting, and related a "real" Crow story, possibly to explain why his wife had not joined him in the Park for the roundup. Although he never clarified whether its account of the vicissitudes of Indian buffalo hunting took place within Yellowstone National Park proper, the Park officials considered it interesting enough to publish, and so do we:

My grandfather once told me a real buffalo story. He was not my grandfather, but my grandfather's brother, but he was always kind to me and I call him "grandfather". He said, "I was riding along with my wife and could see the buffalo hunters. Some of the buffalo came very near to us. One of the faster ones, a three-year-old, came right next to us. My wife said, 'You had better chase it and get some nice fresh meat.'

"Very seldom, at that time, was a woman ever on a buffalo hunt. Sometimes a woman cannot keep up with buffalo; sometimes get killed. Woman supposed to stay at home. But I was leading the buffalo off, --a war-whoop--, look to the right of me, and shot an arrow. I did not want to be very far from my wife and because my wife was along I did not have the right skill.

"When I wounded the buffalo I was on a little knoll and I looked back to see if my wife was coming. When I turned I stopped and I heard a noise and the buffalo was right at me. I leaned over quick to help my horse start. Too late! The buffalo hit me from behind. Mean fellow! I was thrown. I lay very still. Buffalo might not see me. Alas! he caught me and threw me high. I fell right next to a cut-bank, rolled over, but did not get into that ditch. Buffalo caught me again and struck on my head. Crawled over to deeper place. Got up and gave war-whoop. Wife coming closer.

"Don't come near, I yelled, 'buffalo is mad!'

"I ran to a nearby tree and climbed it. Buffalo came on. War-whoop given in different places. I look around. In different places I see streaks of dust with spots on the end coming toward me. The riders killed the buffalo., I got down. The blood was streaming from my face and leg and I could see a tendon hanging from my leg. I fainted.

"When I came to that night I heard a noise like running water. The Medicine Man was directly over me and his medicine was buffalo meat. Medicine Men had buffalo horns on. I thought it was the buffalo once more and again I fainted. When I came to a second time they had stopped crying and gave me water! I was hungry.

"He must be near death', they said, 'asking for food.'

No matter how sick an Indian is, he is fed buffalo meat. If he asks for food then he may be going to the Happy Hunting Ground.

"The Medicine Man said, 'Feed him', and they gave me meat and I ate just like a sound man.

"It did not have bad effects; there are my marks. There is the mark on my forehead, touch that, and there is the scar on my leg. Touch that. This is the proof of my story. It is true. Ever since that lesson I make my arrow count.

Never take a wife on a buffalo hunt. Whenever you do a thing, leave out other things. Concentrate! [Yellowstone National Park Nature Notes, V.9, N. 10/11, October/November, 1932:45-46].

How Indians Saved the Yellowstone Buffalo - Version I

In more aboriginal times, or roughly before A.D. 1750, these mountain buffalo which ranged throughout the Rocky Mountain region and its intermountain valleys were part of a continental buffalo population of all subspecies which has been estimated at sixty million animals (Thornton 1987:52). Although by the 1840s, most of the buffalo were gone from the wider plains, reports from the Yellowstone Plateau from about 1869 to 1885 suggest that a sizeable number could still be found. In the case of the mountain bison, at least, the early vision of Yellowstone National Park as a safety zone for animal species quickly being hunted to the verge of extinction seems to be valid. Especially on the upper Lamar River, this sequestered domain seems to have provided one of their last refuges.

In his survey of Yellowstone National Park with the Ludlow reconnaissance expedition of 1875, the naturalist and popular writer George Bird Grinnell encountered skin hunters running thick throughout the area, whose access by means of the new railways set the stage for a final assault against big game in the Rocky Mountain west. A year later Grinnell would advocate that Congress pay attention to "the terrible destruction of large game, for the hides alone, which is constantly going on in those portions of Montana and Wyoming through which we passed. Buffalo, elk, mule deer and antelope are being slaughtered by thousands each year, without regard to age or sex, and at all seasons. Of the vast majority of animals killed, the hide only is taken. Females of all these species are as eagerly pursued in the spring, when just about to bring forth their young..." (Grinnell 1972:118).

The impact of this overkill on the unprotected buffalo of Yellowstone National Park would be assessed in 1889, when William T. Hornaday's census would discover only 200 of these animals still surviving under lax federal supervision (McHugh 1972:294), with the larger population on the North American continent estimated at down to 1,091 buffalo for that year (Thornton 1987:52). [An irony of Hornaday's report was that he would blame Indians for this decline, claiming that "up to the year 1880 the Indians of the tribes previously mentioned (Sioux, Cheyenne, Crow, Blackfoot, Assiniboin, Gros Ventre, Shoshoni) killed probably three times as many buffaloes as did the white hunters" (Hornaday 1889:505f.). And Hultkrantz comments, "So speaks an inveterate Indian hater, a person who is out to free his white compatriots from the charges of having extinguished the precious American buffalo" (Hultkrantz 1981:133).] When dire predictions of the extinction of the Yellowstone herd due to rampant poaching reached the U.S. Congress, the unique symbolic power



Figure 2.9. Michael Pablo, Flathead Indian rancher, early supplier of buffalo to Yellowstone National Park (from *A Short History of The American Bison* by Martin S. Garretson. *The American Bison Society*, New York, 1934, p. 56)

of this Park to focus and highlight public debate became vigorously evident. Quickly the politicians drafted the first federal law to protect buffalo, which was signed by President Grover Cleveland in May, 1894, and backed up by penalties of thousand-dollar fines or even imprisonment.

As an additional effort to preserve the Yellowstone herd, one year after it was estimated to number hardly twenty-five animals struggling for survival in 1902 controlled groups of the plains subspecies were introduced into the Park. These newcomers apparently were drawn from two sources. The first came from a small herd which Charles Goodnight of west Texas had gathered from wild strays he found near Palo Duro Canyon in the 1870s. The second were a group of eighteen cows which had belonged to another private refuge for buffaloes which was co-owned by two mixed-blood Indians,

Michael Pablo and Charles Allard, in northern Montana.

At first this fresh blood was not intended to replenish the meager remnants of free-range mountain bison who still hid out in the nooks and crannies of the upper Lamar Valley. Until at least 1915, these newcomers were relatively quarantined, herded under careful monitoring and corralled together at night. But around that year these subspecies began to intermingle and crossbreed, until by the 1970s it was estimated that since the preponderance of surviving bulls originated from the mountain-type population, "the wild strain in the present bison population would seem to be 30-40%" (Haines 1970: 29).

But how were these Plains buffalo which were brought into the Park in 1902 originally saved from the unprecedented intensity of mass hunting in western North America, which saw the millions of buffalo which roamed free at the onset of white contact in 1541 reduced to a few hundred by 1900? The following account is a blend of material supplied by Francis Haines (1970: 6, 34, 148, 219-222) Ernest Thompson Seton (1929:658) and Martin S. Garretson (1938). Apparently the Pablo-Allard herd, which by the turn of this century is estimated to have supplied "more than 80 percent of the buffalo in the United States," was an especially strong force in their rescue from the brink of extinction. As mentioned above, this was also the group of animals which contributed to the new breeding stock for Yellowstone. And it was also these animals whose preservation can be traced back to Montana's Flathead reservation.

Of all the four original breeding herds which ensured the survival of buffalo before the turn of the century, the first two appear to have been captured and preserved by Indians; as Martin S. Garretson of the New York Zoological Society wrote, "It is a singular fact, and contrary to general belief, that we owe much to the Indians for saving the buffalo from extinction" (Garretson 1938:215). In the first case it was a group of Indians hailing from the Winnipeg area who captured a bull and four calves just north of the Canadian border in Manitoba and sold them to a local trader.

But the other situation involved a member of the Pend d'Oreille tribe named (Sam) Walking Coyote, who in the spring of 1873 joined a friendly band of Piegan hunters along the U.S.-Canadian border, near the Milk River, not far from present-day Buffalo, Montana. After killing a number of adults, the men noticed six stray, motherless calves plus two bulls and four cows hovering for company around their horses. In tandem with a rancher who was planning to drive a herd of cattle 150 miles to Flathead country, Walking Buffalo and his new animals made the mountainous trek south.

Once he was home in the Jocko Valley, Walking Buffalo released his buffalo on open cattle range. Eleven years later, when the herd had grown to thirteen or fourteen animals, he sold ten of them, at \$250 a head, to the newly-formed partnership of half-Piegan Michael Pablo and the part-Indian Charles A. Allard. By the time of Allard's death in 1896, the herd had grown to about 300 animals. A portion of this stock were sold to a Kalispell rancher, who provided the startup group for the National Bison Range located in Moise, Montana. Yet another bunch went to Howard Eaton, the rancher to actually supply the eighteen cows for the replenished first herd at Yellowstone National

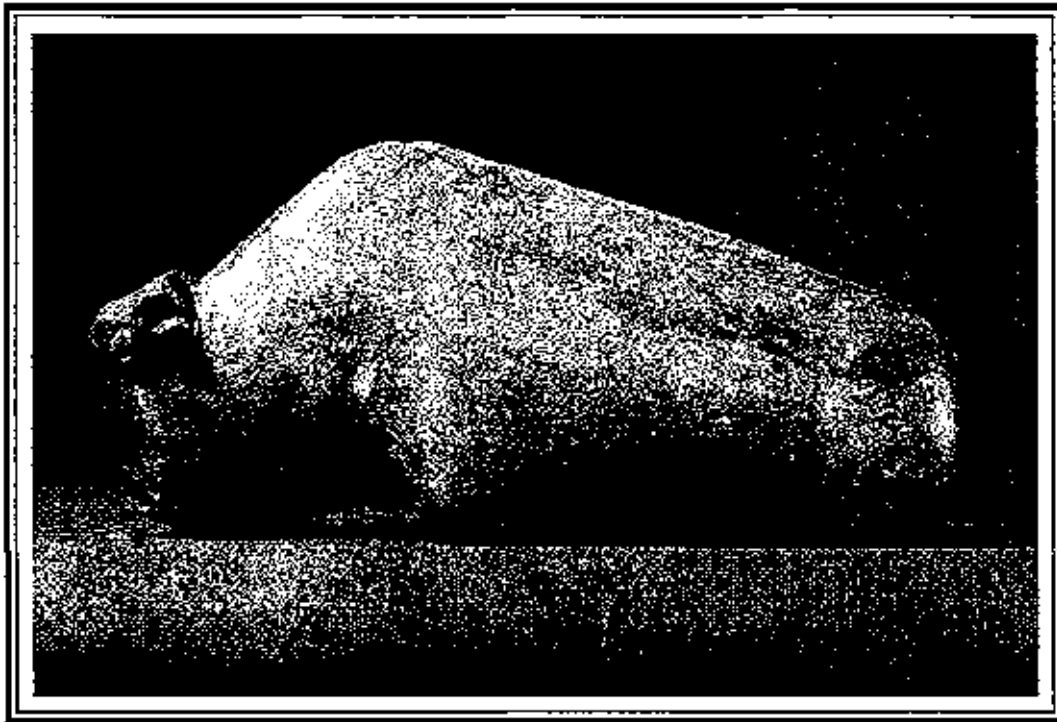


Figure 2.10. Effigy of buffalo found in Absaroka Mountains, (Photo courtesy of National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Catalog #77-13300).

Park. In this roundabout way, then, even the Anglo-American version of the hybridized Yellowstone National Park buffalo herd has some Indian roots.

Origin of Yellowstone National Park's Buffalo - Version II

The foregoing narrative has been pieced together from non-Indian accounts of the many-stranded origins of today's buffalo herd in Yellowstone National Park. But, on the Kootenai-Salish Indian reservation an account of the partial saving of ancestors to this herd has been preserved within a longer, three-part narrative, which also fits within an older, more complex tradition of the intimate relationship between the Flathead Indians and the buffalo. Early in 1977 these stories were related on tape by an 87-year-old elder and famous storyteller named Blind Mose Chouteh, and were translated by Dolly Linschbigler in 1992. A portion of it is reproduced here courtesy of the Kootenai-Salish Culture Committee, and was permitted to be incorporated into this document so long as it was not reproduced in any form without the express approval of the Kootenai-Salish Culture Committee. All three of the summaries of the Chouteh narratives to follow feature the family line of a part-

Kalispel, part-Salish man called Blanket Hawk, whose name apparently referred to the protective neckpiece of hawkskins which he habitually wore into battle.

1) The first narrative places Blanket Hawk as a young man in the middle of an especially harsh Montana winter, when his people are camped away from their valley home and out on the plains. Soon the chiefs cast around for medicine men with the supernatural power to bring warm weather and make the snow melt. Although Blanket Hawk and his friends propose a Jump Dance, an older medicine man dismisses the idea as futile. When the children who are the last to be given food are threatened with starvation, the leading chiefs plead with Blanket Hawk for help.

Staying in his own tipi, Blanket Hawk conducts his Jump Dance to attract the warm, Chinook winds, and afterwards he predicts that come the following morning nine buffalo will enter the camp, only to be followed by a much larger herd. At around sunup the camp is awakened by barking dogs, and everyone comes out of their lodges to see the presence of nine buffalo bulls standing and waiting in the midst of camp. They are quickly slaughtered, and then the warm weather also moves in. Everyone is relieved and happy again, the narrative has the youngsters throwing snowballs, all sit down to meals of boiled and roasted buffalo meat, and the remainder of the flesh is dried for later use. And then still more buffalo appear, assuring an adequate food supply for the future. The people survive and return home.

2) By the opening of Chouteh's second story the character known as Blanket Hawk is now a full-grown man. Again the Salish are out on the plains getting their annual meat supply, however now it is spring - "when the wild roses were in bloom," as they phrase it. As they return home from their successful hunt, they camp for three days in Blackfeet country. It is then that Blanket Hawk apparently gets the unique idea of initiating a minimal form of animal husbandry. As he explains to his friends and his mother, "I am going to ask the Chief and the people. I am going to tell the Chiefs and leaders if we can bring back some buffalo." After smoking with the chiefs, he explains his plan for having buffalo always close by so that his people will be safe from distant enemies like the Crees.

But half of the Chiefs argue that it is important to make such long journeys because it is good to be able to fight other tribes, and worthwhile to travel so they can hunt and "pass the time." However the other half of the leaders side with Blanket Hawk. When they cannot arrive at a consensus, Blanket Hawk finally abandons his idea: "I quit asking. I will be silent. The buffalo can stay here on the plains. Maybe you like our people getting killed by the different tribes of Indians. Maybe you like us to get tired by coming here to hunt buffalo for our food".

The next day when they break camp, "The buffalo surrounded the people who were moving. The buffalo stayed close by, going along with the people; and some stayed near Atatice? (Blanket Hawk) and his friends." But since the other camp members would not allow the buffalo to join them, Blanket Hawk must part with the animals, and as the story continues:

His friends mounted their horses. And Atatice? was last. Before he mounted on his horse, he made sounds, saying, "Qeyq, qeyq-ceec." He waved to the buffalo, as if to separate the buffalo. He said to the buffalo, "Go on, it is your destiny, whatever may happen to all of you buffalo. They would not let you go back with me. It is up to you, whatever happens to you and whatever happens to me. That is all". And Atatice cried, His friends also cried. They regretted to part with the buffalo.

The buffalo turned towards the east (rising sun). They went in different directions.

The men were crying as they moved on forward. As they were crossing over the mountains, they looked back and saw the buffalo, saw the black forms of the buffalo moving along.

Thus ended his second story, but before Chouteh moved to his third narrative he interjected a somewhat shocking anecdote which may shed light on the deeper meaning behind this unusual affinity between the human being Blanket Hawk and the buffalo as an animal species. It seems his wife brought a buffalo head into their house in order to butcher it up and boil it. Blanket Hawk was playing cards with friends at the time, and turned to her, aghast at what he saw. Immediately he begged her, "Don't, don't, don't. Take the head outside and fix it, chop it up, because I have always told you all not to prepare it inside of the house. You will hurt me."

Ignoring his plea, she continued chopping on the head. Suddenly Blanket Hawk began to suffer from a nose-bleed. But fairly soon he was vomiting up blood. When she did not cease sawing away on the head, he shortly collapsed and died.

This taboo against bringing a buffalo head into the house is interestingly similar to that which inhibited the Crow elder, FS, from allowing one into his house in Wyola, Montana in 1986. That was when one of the authors of this report showed up with a large buffalo bull skull from an animal he had hunted in Black Canyon on the Crow Reservation in 1962 while working for the Crow tribe's Fish and Game division. It was needed for FS's medicine pipe bundle ceremony, but at the same time the restrictions associated with FS's rock medicine bundle would not let a buffalo head remain under his roof. In the case of this Salish Indian, Blanket Hawk, we might infer that his close tie with the buffalo world, whether or not due to the fact that the buffalo was his guardian spirit acquired by means of a vision quest, was based on respect for the creature as a species, or obligation to it as his supernatural guardian. In the two narratives already cited, such a special relationship had been clearly evidenced. However, power works for you or against you; in this story the continuing insult shown to the animal under Blanket Hawk's own roof sealed his gory fate.

3) Next comes Chouteh's third narrative concerning the symbiotic relationship between humans and buffalo. Now our protagonist has shifted from Blanket Hawk to his son, a young man by the name of Susep tatati, or "Hawk." In this story there is more of an abbreviated sense of a memorandum, and less of a well-developed narrative. Without any preamble we are told that Hawk

is a "big-sized boy" and we sense that he seems to have inherited something of his father's personality or inclinations, for we immediately learn that, "He brought back two buffalo from the plains country," and that his intent is to keep them alive. After his father's death, his mother, Sabine Mary, had remarried a man named Samuel. It was near their house, just north of the old Dixon Agency, that this particular buffalo herd began to increase and multiply.

But while the boy was away on a trip, two men showed up at his parent's place and offered to buy the entire bunch. Choutch gives their names as the aforementioned Michael Pablo and Charles Allard, and recalls that they paid a thousand and several hundred dollars for the entire small herd. As the story continues from there:

The buffalo were herded, going by way of Dixon, Ravalli and came through here. They were driven by way of where the present bridge is now. There were a lot of buffalo.

When the buffalo came over the hill and the Indians here saw the buffalo, they shouted, hollering with excitement. The Indians kept shouting as the buffalo went by.

Charles Allard and Michael Pablo already had a herd of buffalo. They wanted to increase their herd. They were the only two people who had any buffalo.

Maybe it was two days later, maybe it was later that [Hawk] returned and missed the presence of the buffalo. He looked around and found the buffalo gone.

When he got home, he asked his mother, "Where are my buffalo?"

"They are gone," his mother told him. "Your [stepfather] sold them. They were driven off several days ago. You have some money in the amount of a thousand and several hundred dollars. Your stepfather has your money. We are using some of it for food, bought groceries."

[Hawk] cried, he felt so bad. That was the end of that [Tape 95, FCC Transcripts, Courtesy of Kootenai-Salish Culture Committee].

From both this account of the Blanket Hawk family, and the earlier story of Walking Coyote, one gets the sense that the Pablo-Allard herd, which was beneficial to the controlled reestablishment of buffalo in the Park, possibly received two infusions through Plateau Indian donors. But from the rich, latter account, we also get a deeper sense of the sorts of mysterious personal affinities and cultural ties that linked Indians and these animals. Most importantly, as far as the history of Yellowstone National Park is concerned, these narratives now help us to appreciate that crucial relationship between American Indians and Yellowstone's buffalo in both biological and cultural terms [for an account of Flathead use of buffalo, see Appendix C].

Connections between the animals of the Yellowstone Plateau and American Indians did not end with the establishment of the Park, even though both of them fell under increasing control by the Department of the Interior after 1880: the animals were held in game refuges while the Indians were held on reservations. With the congressional outcry over the decline of wildlife across the west, uncompromising protection and natural replenishment of wild stock came to dominate Park policy in the 1890s. But this strict approach was eventually followed by a second period of highly controlled giveaways of elk and buffalo. A major donation of buffalo for the Crow tribe in 1934 came after energetic lobbying by the new native superintendent of the



Figure 2.11. Elk carcasses in Yellowstone National Park before distributing to Indian reservations, 1930s (Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives, Catalog #YELL 28591-2).



Figure 2.12. Indian schoolchildren being fed Yellowstone National Park elk, 1930s (Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives, Catalog #YELL 109352).

Crow Indian Agency, Robert Yellowtail. In this case the Yellowstone National Park herd symbolically paid Indians hack, so to speak, by supplying 69 cows and 8 bulls for a new herd to be pastured on rich grassland in the Bull Elk and Black Canyon highlands of the Crow reservation. Trucked about 350 miles from Yellowstone to south-central Montana, Yellowtail furnished the trucks and raised \$750 for other expenses. The Park also provided buffalo to start up another Indian herd at Pine Ridge (Sioux) and for feeding needy families at Wind River (Shoshone).

But the Shoshone were also interested in obtaining Yellowstone buffalo to feed their spirit as well. As a tourist who visited the Wind River community suggested to the Park superintendent that same summer of 1934:

...they (members of the Fort Washakie Indian council) remarked how hard it was to get buffalo heads and pelts for their ceremonies; (they said) that you had given them one last year but that they were persuaded not to come asking again this year, even though you would have been more than willing to have given them one from surplus...Fort Washakie Indians wish very much to have a little bison herd of their own. They have blind canyons where they could winter them; plenty of range they say. And since these animals mean so much to these plains tribes, it hits me as something worth talking over with you - this idea of giving them live bison instead of dead 'uns. Maybe just a reasonable start. I think I believe they'd come with pomp and ceremony to drive the bison over the hill and to the trihal lands. It might make a grand story from the park publicity angle; and from the Department of the Interior and its two divisions, Parks and Indian Affairs, angle. New Deal slant [Denver, RG 75 BIA, NA-RMR, Wind River Agency, General Administrative Records, 1890-1960, Box 237, folder 920].

Nothing came of this idea, but in the case of elk, increasingly the Park found itself with surplus carcasses after periodically culling them in order to bring the herd within the constraints imposed by the available winter food supply. Initially, the live animals and or carcasses were parceled out to zoos, state parks, rod and gun clubs and paternal organizations, but it would take over forty years for them to be distributed among needy Indian groups. Four animals which were donated to Washington's National Zoological Park in 1892 began the process, and the increasing annual shipments continued intermittently through 1967 (Yellowstone National Park Archives, Box N-6, 4, File: "Distribution of the Elk Shipments").

According to Park records, the earliest elk carcasses to feed indigent Indians entailed about 150 head which went to Crow Indian Agency in 1935; the following year that tribe received 384 with the Pine Ridge Sioux agency getting eleven. But it appears to have been in 1942 that the Park archival records accessed by this project seem to reflect intensified efforts to route elk carcasses to reservation agencies requesting food assistance. Some of these animals originated from the regularly confiscated remains of animals killed illegally, but most were the result of a major program to reduce the Park's northerly elk herd, estimated at around 13,000 head, so as to bring the stock within the carrying capacity of the Park's winter food resources. The 321 animal carcasses distributed that year to Indians wound up on eleven reservations, with Fort Hall getting 16, Wind River getting 50, and 70 apiece to the Blackfeet and Crow. From Park correspondence with both Wind River and Blackfeet agencies it also appears that hides and hooves for arts and crafts projects were requested along with meat (Yellowstone National Park Archives, Animals (cont.), Box No. N-20).

The next and final records we have of such elk reduction and meat distribution to Indians occurred in 1961-62, as "Plan 1" in the Park's program for reducing the 5,000-member northern elk herd by half involved the distribution of 2,655 animals to nearly 41 reservations, schools, hospitals or missions to benefit Indians (Yellowstone National Park Archives, Final Reduction Report, 1961-62, Northern Yellowstone Elk Herd).

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Those older, more subsistence and religious-based Indian relationships with buffalo were evoked at the end of the winter of 1996-97, as losses to Yellowstone National Park's herd due to especially harsh ice storms, freezing temperatures, footloose animals, and motor accidents cut the population by over two-thirds. About 300-400 animals were winter killed because of heavy weather, 41 more were struck by vehicles, and another 1,080 which wandered beyond the Park perimeter and were feared to contaminate neighboring cattle with brucellosis were shot by Montana officials or sent to slaughter. Of the original 3,436 bison in the Park at the beginning of the winter of 1996-97, there were only 1,089 animals left in and around the park as of an aerial count on conducted on March 18, 1997. It represented "the largest slaughter of wild bison this century" (Ravndal, April 6, 1997 draft, p. 1).

For their part, American Indian groups have responded to these crisis conditions in three ways. One Indian response was spiritual, as tribal members joined the protestors who gathered on March 6, 1997 to pray for buffalo welfare as the full dimensions of this crisis in wildlife management became clear. Representatives of the Montana/Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council convened their International Prayer Day in three locations. The Indians selected their date to fit within the very week that the Park was celebrating its 125th birthday, but it also coincided with the shooting of the 1000th animal to wander outside the Park. One of the prayer groups gathered at the Capital Building in Montana's state capitol of Helena. In Washington, D.C., President Bill Clinton was offered a pipe by tribal elders in Washington, D.C. Yet back near the Park's northern entrance in Gardiner, Montana, the Montana State Department of Livestock killed 14 buffalo the very same day and Prayer Day coordinator, Rosalie Little Thunder was arrested for trespassing while trying to say a prayer for them. As Lakota Gerald Millard summarized the mounting sense of Indian (and non-Indian) sorrow and outrage in his remarks on the Capitol steps in Washington:

The snow, once white, is yet again red with blood. I am here to speak for the thousand who have passed over to the spirit world and also those yet in danger. I have come to demand the stop of the genocide against my relatives of the Tatanka Oyate, Buffalo Nation [Brian O. Daley, in the Casper Star-Tribune, March 20, 1997].

A second Indian response was equally traditional but based on subsistence rather than religious impulses. The one-time hunters of Yellowstone Plateau buffalo, the Shoshone of the Wind River Reservation, argued for the Park breaking its old rule against hunting in the Park to allow Indians and only Indians to cull buffalo within the Park.

Given the idea of a buffalo breeding refuge introduced in the recently-translated Flathead narratives which we have reviewed above, the third Indian response may be considered equally "traditional", even if it was couched in modern terminology. About forty-one different tribes established the Intertribal Bison Cooperative, spearheaded by founding president, Fred DuBray, from South Dakota's Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation. This group proposed building a \$2 million

buffalo compound on the state's Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in northern Montana for quarantining all buffalo who tested negative for the brucellosis disease. "To avoid any contamination of tribal cattle," said a press report on the proposal, "1,280 acres would be encircled by two 8-foot high game-proof fences and a third fence of barbed wire" (New York Times, April 13, 1997, p. 18).

At this writing the buffalo crisis in Yellowstone National Park has made national television news and is changing monthly. An interim proposal for intensified buffalo management is under review. The National Park Service's Intermountain Field Office in Denver contracted with Virginia Ravndal to draft a social/cultural study of Indian and non-Indian opinion about the bison/brucellosis issue.

Northern Indians at the Geysers

When researcher Joseph Weixelman was interviewing Indians in 1991 for his report on traditional native attitudes towards the Yellowstone geysers, he visited the Assiniboine Reservation at Wolf Point, Montana. There he picked up some of those tantalizing fragments of personal narratives which, in the past, were conceivably richer in descriptive detail and cultural significance. According to one Assiniboine, a man named Leslie Four Star, the area "where water spouted from the ground" marked the southwestern boundary of traditional Assiniboine territory, and Four Star maintained that this boundary was confirmed by where the French placed the tribe.

Furthermore, Four Star had a dim memory of his mother-in-law's grandmother who recalled a trip she took to Yellowstone, which he claimed would have taken place "in the late 1700's or early 1800's" (Her husband, he maintained, was born in 1832). At the place where the water spouted from the ground Four Star speculated that his relatives had probably "prayed...thanked the Great Spirit and asked that the water doesn't come any closer" [Interview: September 15, 1991, 11:30 a.m., Wolf Point, Montana].

Weixelman was also able to talk with an 86-year old Assiniboine named Chief Blue Bird, who was considered "spiritual leader" of the tribe. As a young man he had known a much older fellow tribesman named Walking Bull, said to be the step-grandson of Yellowstone Kelly, who had unwittingly visited the Yellowstone thermal region. According to Chief Blue Bird, Walking Bull had traveled far. He got lost and was gone for over a year. Eventually he came upon a place where smoke came from the ground. His instinctive reaction was to say a prayer. Touching the nearby water he discovered that it was hot. But when he put his hand in some water not far away, it was cold.

"Maybe it was Thermopolis," said Chief Bluebird, "maybe it was Yellowstone." Later Walking Bull found a place that was flat and white and tasted like salt. He brought this salt back home and the people put it on their meat, and it tasted good. But his people did not believe the rest of "those wild stories" (Interview: September 14, 1991, 10:00 a.m., Wolf Point Lutheran Rest Home).

The End of Northerly Indian Visits to Yellowstone

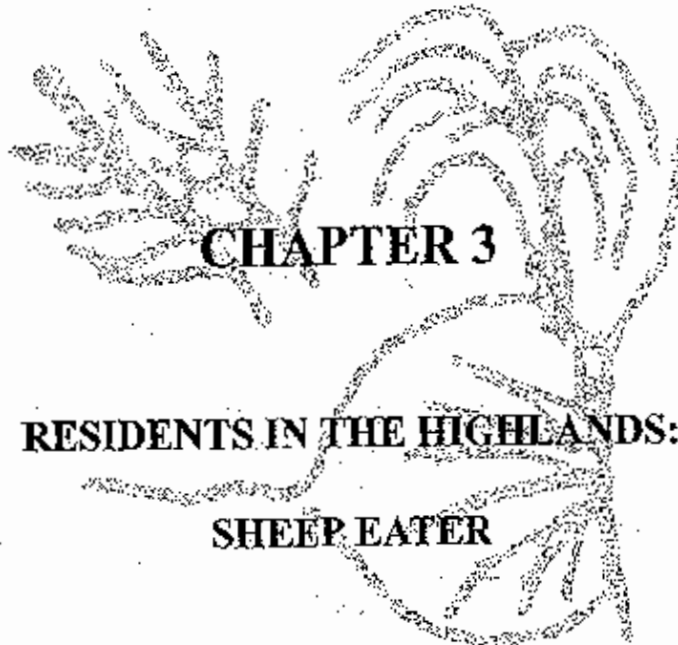
Twelve years before the last reported speculation in 1867 that Blackfeet were possibly marauding within the Park, the American Blackfeet signed a treaty with the U.S. government which, for the most part, put a damper on the tribe's forays into the Yellowstone highlands. It was Washington Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens whose series of treaty councils through the northwest helped to pacify the region for the railroad.

In the so-called "Judith Treaty" of 1855, the Blackfeet signed a pact with Stevens which accepted a hunting ground "from the valleys of the Three Forks of the Missouri River, east to the upper waters of the Yellowstone, an area of 30,000 square miles" (Lewis 1942: 62). Although this agreement seems to have inhibited most of the tribe's long-distance missions into the proximity of the Park, it merely shoved the locales for increasingly bitter Blackfeet-settler conflict farther to the north.

Only smallpox, hunger and the infamous Baker massacre of Heavy Runner's camp of Piegans in early 1870 finally broke Blackfeet resistance to the subsequent treaty proposals that had tried to evict them north of the Missouri. By the time they finally agreed to a reservation near Browning, Montana two years after the establishment of Yellowstone National Park, their intimate memories of its haunts twenty years before were already getting rusty. (Although, ironically, in 1920 and 1921 the government would push for using Blackfeet tribal funds to complete a highway linking that reservation, and Glacier National Park directly to Yellowstone National Park - Kappler, Laws Relating to Indian Affairs, 65th Congress, Sess. III., Ch. 119, p. 305 and 66th Congress, Sess. II., Ch. 75, p. 249).

As for the Kootenai-Salish relationship to the Park, consultant TT said:

Our people always had a connection with that [greater Yellowstone Region]... Even in the valley where Bozeman is today, in Belgrade, Manhattan, Livingston, and all that area, Helena, Townsend, Great Falls, all that area, Butte, the Beaverhead, the Dillon area, all those areas are basically Bitterroot Salish aboriginal territories. That's where they lived for thousands and thousands of years. That was before any white contact, before any fur traders got there, before anybody. Basically all the way to where the Crow Indian reservation is, and the Northern Cheyenne Indian reservation is, our aboriginal territories went all the way up to Canada, all the way to Montana and Idaho and Yellowstone Park, a vast, vast aboriginal territory [TT Interview, Pablo, Montana, August 22, 1995].



CHAPTER 3

RESIDENTS IN THE HIGHLANDS:

SHEEP EATER



Figure 1.1. Forest scene near Interstate 205, North Carolina, United States
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6066).

This chapter is devoted to reassessing and reassembling what scraps we have of information about the lifeways of the mountain Shoshoneans or "Sheep Eaters", and to restoring some dignity in the written record to their cultural milieu and their world-view. It borrows almost entirely from the work of other writers and their native consultants, with some of their efforts remaining unpublished. Even though the following descriptions will sometimes seem to be framed within a "timeless present," we must never forget that, like all Native American societies, the Sheep Eaters of Yellowstone National Park were also a people of history. That is, their modes of adaptation to their high country habitat certainly underwent change and development before the coming of Euro-Americans, and those adaptations only accelerated afterwards. Furthermore, at the close of Chapter Five we will return to Sheep Eater history as it interacts with that of the Wind River Shoshone.

If there is a time frame to the following summaries of their customary modes of hunting, foraging, housing, cooking, tool-using, social organization, or religious practices, it might be around A.D. 1850. Yet we will feel free to move back and forth in time in order to enrich our sometimes circumstantial profile of their culture. But we also feel compelled to contextualize these Sheep Eaters in deeper time, by summarizing the various, competing archaeological conjectures about their longer-term societal development. By way of introduction, then, let us briefly review some basic facts that we do have about these people before going into their material culture, social organization, and religious world-view in greater detail.

Properly known in the Shoshonean language as Tukudika (Murphy and Murphy 1986:306), Tukuarika (Hodge 1910:835) or Tukadudka (Steward 1938:186-187), which translates as "eaters of meat [or in this case bighorn sheep]", the Sheep Eaters are among several other groups of Shoshonean-speaking Indians that were recognized and distinguished among themselves primarily by their dominant food pursuits. Two other important Shoshone groups who frequented the region in and around Yellowstone National Park included the "salmon eaters", or Agaidika, and the "buffalo eaters", or Kukundika. However, once Euro-Americans entered the Rocky Mountain region they imposed different names to these groups. (1) The Lemhi also frequently referred to as the Northern Shoshone included a western group of Sheep Eaters and the Agaidika or "salmon eaters". (2) The Eastern Shoshone or Plains Shoshone included primarily the Kukundika or "buffalo eaters". (3) The Sheep Eaters, sometimes called the Mountain Shoshone, lived throughout the warmer months in Yellowstone National Park and the adjacent plateaus, following the bighorn sheep as they moved off the high country to seek shelter in the winter. To confuse this issue even more, much of the early literature on these Shoshoneans lumps them all together as "Snake".

With all the population losses, group mergings and fissions, re-namings and forced relocations experienced by the highland Shoshoneans featured in this chapter after their earliest contact with Euro-Americans in the late 18th century, it is often hard to trace and distinguish their separate histories over the years. It is important to remind ourselves that the confusing, multiple references in scholarly literature and government documents to the Sheep Eaters, the Tukudika, the Mountain Shoshone, or the Mountain Snakes, are probably talking about the same people. At the same time, however, we will offer a cautionary word when the Sheep Eaters of the 1870s are mentioned, for in

that decade popular characterization seems to have tarred two different groups of Shoshonean-Sheep Eaters with the same derogatory brush, and created a bit of historical confusion in the process.

As for their linguistic identity, scholars concur that these Shoshonean groups of present-day Wyoming and Idaho spoke mutually-intelligible dialects of the Central Numic division of the Uto-Aztecan language stock, with only minor variation between them. We get a hint that sounds of Sheep Eater language were somewhat more singular than the others, since they were reported to have a decidedly "slow, singsong speech" (Liljeblad 1957:95), but we have little idea how that actually sounded. The Bannock, a tribe closely related to the Shoshone, speak a northern Paiute language from the western Numic Division of Uto-Aztecan.

These high altitude-dwelling Shoshoneans inhabited the mountainous regions of Wyoming, northern Idaho, and southern Montana, and are often described as the only permanent residents of Yellowstone National Park. But it should also be understood that "permanent" does not mean that the Sheep Eaters lived in stationary villages or fixed locations. They were semi-nomadic hunters, whose family bands generally followed the migration of the bighorn sheep in much the same way year after year. This pattern was recognized early on by Yellowstone National Park author Charles Phillips:

Their distribution in the Park was determined largely by that of the mountain sheep. Col. Norris found a recently deserted encampment in the Lava Creek canyon [on Gardner River south of present Bunsen Peak] and named the basalt wall above Sheepeater Cliffs in consequence. Gen. Sheridan's party which entered the Park at Snake River found them in the vicinity of Mt. Hancock and Mt. Sheridan, but the five who accompanied the expedition had never seen the geyser regions. The shores of Yellowstone Lake seem to have been a favorite summer camping ground where they could vary their diet with fish. The flat open country around Indian Pond ("Squaw Lake") was much frequented and the discovery of a number of obsidian implements and arrowheads during the construction of the Lake Shore road would indicate that the promontory between the Thumb and Lake proper was also used as a camp site [Phillips 1927:38-39].

Today the Plains Shoshone or Eastern Shoshone, along with descendants of Sheep Eaters, reside in Wyoming on the Wind River Reservation. In Idaho's Fort Hall Reservation one finds the Lemhi, Bannock, and other sub-groups of Shoshone, together with others of Sheep Eater ancestry.

What follows, then, will constitute a circumstantial outline of Sheep Eater culture history. But before that profile we must first look at what earlier chroniclers thought they knew about Yellowstone's resident Indians, and also at the legacy of distorted information they left behind them.

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Stereotypes About Sheep Eaters

Few American Indian groups have been saddled with as many demeaning and dismissive descriptors, heaped on them by non-Indian writers over the years, as have the Sheep Eaters of the Yellowstone Plateau and mountainous environs. Even the California Indians who were historically vilified with the pejorative term "Diggers" did not have it as bad, for they were not incessantly compared to any "more advanced" native neighbors. However, The Sheep Eaters, often by inference, were negatively compared to the more aggressive, horse-riding Plains or Plateau Indians around them. It was as if, even though Plains Indians were far more threatening to Euro-American interests once they elevated themselves onto horses in the early 18th century, those plains equestrians at least had managed to rise a rung on some evolutionary ladder when compared to their high-country neighbors. They still had to be conquered or killed, but to their credit these Plains Indians astride their horses were noble, even admirably pugnacious, foes. By contrast, the Sheep Eaters were repeatedly described as reclusive, generally fearful of confrontation, traveling afoot, dependant upon their dogs, and hence were demoted almost to sub-human status. Even the literature relating to Yellowstone National Park reveals how deeply this evolutionary prejudice underlay common opinion about ethnic distinctions within the greater Shoshonean fold:

The Shoshone Nation was in general characterized by the small stature of the people, who were timid and not of the comparatively high mentality of other neighboring tribes. A few of the tribes of this nation rose over the general plane of development, were mounted, and occasionally met their enemies in open combat . . . Despite the fact that these Indians were considerably above the average of this nation, they held the Blackfeet to the north in wholesome respect [Mills 1935:22].

Within this comparison between Plains and Mountain Shoshonean Indians - in which the key criterion for elevated culture status appears to be aggressiveness - lurked the strong echo of an antiquated 19th century theory of societal development. This theory held that all cultures ascended through identical "levels" of cultural growth. Thus they could be compared on their upward advancement, from a level of "savagery" to that of "barbarism" to that of "civilization," with sub-phases between. Each level was associated with such diagnostic categories as social organization, housing, and subsistence practices. In the case of our comparison between Sheep Eaters and Plains Indians, for example, this meant that they were an example of an arrested development: their wickiup encampment was less evolved than that of a tipi village, their use of dogs lay beneath that of their horse-raising neighbors, and their reliance on roots and sheep placed them behind the meat-eating habits of the buffalo-hunting horsemen. They were considered an example of what early anthropology dubbed a "survival," stone-age remnants who never evolved beyond an earlier, more primitive strata of human development. (Conversely, these buffalo-hunting Plains Indians could find themselves demoted on the Euro-American's evolutionary ladder as well, when their seasonal, nomadic utilization of a Montana region was placed on a rung lower than that of sedentary gardening peoples of North Dakota with their permanent earth lodge villages (Miller 1981:109).

One of our earliest depictions of the Sheep Eaters comes out of an experience in September of 1832, when Captain Bonneville and his party of trappers were searching for a route over the Wind River Mountains. To the west of present-day Lander, Wyoming the travelers encountered a band of Sheep Eaters. While editing Bonneville's journal, Washington Irving occasionally embellished the material, so we are not certain to what degree this description is exclusively Bonneville's. But we are aware that Irving was also personally familiar with Sheep Eaters, because he mentions an 1811 run-in with them in the Snake River country (Irving 1964:271), and through conversations with trappers he may have gathered more bits of information. As Bonneville/Irving write in this classic early account:

Notwithstanding the savage and almost inaccessible nature of these mountains, they have their inhabitants. As one of the party was out hunting, he came upon the track of a man, in a lonely valley. Following it up, he reached the brow of a cliff, whence he beheld three savages running across the valley below him. He fired his gun to call their attention, hoping to induce them to turn back. They only fled the faster, and disappeared among the rocks. The hunter returned and reported what he had seen. Captain Bonneville at once concluded that these belonged to a kind of hermit race, scanty in number, that inhabit the highest and most inaccessible fastnesses. They speak the Shoshone language, and probably are offsets from that tribe, though they have peculiarities of their own which distinguish them from all other Indians. They are miserably poor, own no horses, and are destitute of every convenience to be derived from an intercourse with the whites. Their weapons are bows and stone-pointed arrows, with which they hunt the deer, the elk, and the mountain sheep. They are to be found scattered about the countries of the Shoshone, Flathead, Crow, and Blackfeet tribes; but their residences are always in lonely places, and the clefts of the rocks.

Their footsteps are often seen by the trappers in the high and solitary valleys among the mountains, and the smokes of their fires descried among the precipices, but they themselves are rarely met with, and still more rarely brought to a parley, so great is their shyness and their dread of strangers.

As their poverty offers no temptation to the marauder, and as they are inoffensive in their habits, they are never the objects of warfare; should one of them, however, fall into the hands of a war party, he is sure to be made a sacrifice, for the sake of that savage trophy, a scalp, and that barbarous ceremony, a scalp dance. These forlorn beings, forming a mere link between human nature and the brute, have been looked down upon with pity and contempt by the creole trappers, who have given them the appellation of "*les dignes de pitié*," or "the objects of pity." They appear more worthy to be called the wild men of the mountains [Irving 1961:192-193].

Another famous early description of the Sheep Eaters comes from an articulate Rocky Mountain trapper named Osborne Russell (1965:26). His meeting with a handful of them took place in the

Lamar Valley of Yellowstone National Park in 1834. Skillfully edited and geographically retraced with maps prepared by Aubrey Haines, Russell's commentary offers important details of Sheep Eater material culture, which will also be cited in our sections on their technology, and he appears somewhat impressed by the Sheep Eater lifestyle:

Here we found a few Snake Indians . . . who were the only inhabitants of this lonely and secluded spot. They were all neatly clothed in dressed deer and Sheep skins of the best quality and seemed to be perfectly contented and happy. They were rather surprised at our approach and retreated to the heights where they might have a view of us without apprehending any danger, but having persuaded them of our pacific intentions we then succeeded in getting them to encamp with us [Russell 1965:26].

During the night the trappers traded with the Sheep Eaters, and with charcoal on a whitened elk skin one of them drew the trappers a map of their territory. Traveling through the Lamar Valley on the route depicted by the Indian cartographer, Russell and his companions camped somewhere near the junction of the Lamar and the Yellowstone rivers. That night he rhapsodized about this Sheep Eater landscape:

For my own part I almost wished I could spend the remainder of my days in a place like this where happiness and contentment seemed to reign in wild romantic splendor surrounded by majestic battlements which seemed to support the heavens and shut out all hostile intruders [Russell 1965:27-28].

So far these early descriptions of Sheep Eaters leave us with contradictory cultural perceptions and contextual moods. On the one hand, they are portrayed as miserably poor, naked, and forlorn beings who are a close link between humans and brutes, and are considered "objects of pity;" on the other hand, they are depicted as neatly clothed, contented and happy, a people with whom it would be enjoyable to spend the remainder of one's days. This polarized picture opens our profile of the "mysterious" Sheep Eaters, who throughout the literature will be continually represented in this contradictory way: as either "social outcasts" who fall not much above apes on the evolutionary scale, or as the epitome of noble savages who lived in a state of grace with nature. Åke Hultkrantz has pointed out, even though early texts presented them as squalid and impoverished, the more romantic image arising from Russell's reminiscences has also persisted over time:

The story of "the wild men of the mountains," shy inhabitants of the inaccessible mountain vastness, whose footsteps and camp smoke only may be seen, spread rapidly. It was in due time built on with new details: the sheepeaters were pygmies and wild men living like animals, or they were the most dignified and morally "clean" of all Indian tribes. Their disappearance from the ethnographic scene was ascribed to a dramatic disaster of one kind or another. The mystification went so far that the Shoshoni Indians on the Wind River Reservation heard rumors of wild mountain men, and that one investigator of Shoshoni folklore even thought that the

belief in dwarf spirits went back to the general picture of the Sheepeaters [Hultkrantz n.d. I:12].

But in the long run the accounts of these mountain dwellers, whether cobbled together from unsubstantiated rumors or cannibalized from earlier published misinformation, produced a predominantly negative portrayal of Sheep Eaters, as evidenced by the comments about them by a Washakie National Forest ranger in 1926:

They were renegade Indians, who, for the sake of safety and perhaps convenience, with the age old fellowship of man, banded together where possible and lived their lives in the mountain fastnesses. They had evidently violated various tribal laws and did not belong to any fixed tribe, having been compelled on penalty of death to live as fugitives. At times they preyed upon small parties or lone Indians for the purpose of equipping themselves with such implements or weapons as were obtainable, or possibly to steal a squaw, returning at once to their mountain retreats. They were not warlike but were supposed to have been cowardly and shy, which, under the circumstances is easily understood. Plainly they were social outcasts [Clayton 1926:277-278].

Sixty-five years later disparaging stereotypes about Sheep Eaters had not much changed, when a former Chief Ranger of Yellowstone National Park wrote in his memoirs:

Known as the Tukudikas, or "Sheepeaters," they had been considered, as I have said, the lowliest of the low in the Shoshone Indian tribes. Lacking either the will or the courage to compete in a world upset by the introduction of the horse and gun, they sought to eke out an existence in the then mostly undesired rugged country...They stayed mostly to themselves, were timid, small in stature...Dirty, destitute, primitive...the Sheep eaters were anything but fodder for the Indian romancer [Sholly and Newman 1991:106-107].

It is out of the accumulation of such demeaning and inconsistent descriptions and images that we have isolated the following five popular conceptions and stereotypes about these one-time dwellers of Yellowstone National Park:

- (1) The Sheep Eaters were pygmies with diminutive limbs and stature.
- (2) Because the Sheep Eaters were timid, and so low on the evolutionary scale, they were probably feeble-minded.
- (3) Like all the Indian tribes of the region, the Sheep Eaters were afraid of the geysers.

(4) The Sheep Eaters were a poor people, living on the edge of starvation, who lacked the appropriate technology to take care of themselves. Coupled within this is the misconception that the Sheep Eaters had no dogs or other beasts of burden.

(5) The Sheep Eaters were an impure, motley crew of renegades whose misdeeds had exiled them from various tribes, and who banded together like fugitives to prey on the unwary.

Responding to Popular Conceptions About Sheep Eaters

Throughout the historical record, we learn that each one of these stereotypes or misconceptions had their advocates. Often one of these questionable characterizations was simply recycled from an earlier comment, which helped to cement the generally degrading image not only in public opinion but also in the writings of those who might have known better; as recently as 1994, for example, the portrait of Sheep Eaters by a well-known historian was that they were "poor even for Indians" (Aubrey Haines lecture in Mammoth, Yellowstone National Park, 1994). Taking each of the above listed distortions or misconceptions in turn, however, it is possible to outline their early protagonists and to debate their accuracy.

(1) Sheep Eaters Were Pygmies. The first person to describe the Sheep Eaters as "pygmies" was none other than the second superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, Philetus Norris. In his annual report for 1880 Norris writes:

The only real occupants of the Park were the pygmy tribe of three or four hundred timid and harmless Shocpeater Indians, who seem to have won this appellation on account of their use of the bighorn sheep for food and clothing [Norris 1881a:35].

One wonders how Norris arrived at this conclusion, because he personally visited the Ross Fork Agency of Sheep Eaters, Bannocks, and Shoshones to obtain their pledge they would not visit the Park (Norris 1881a:45). He must have met some of these Indians and seen for himself that they were not stunted dim-wits. To be sure, the Sheep Eaters were not tall people and as a group were medium to short in stature, resembling the general build of Great Basin Indians. Their bones have been described as more gracile than robust (Gill 1991), but one should not take this to mean they were incapable of feats of strength. After all, the Sheep Eaters regularly strung and shot horn bows with a pull strength of about sixty-five pounds, and after witnessing the difficulty today's experienced bowhunters had with attempting to string one of his horn bows, Wyoming bow-maker Tom Lucas concluded these Indians had to possess considerable upper body strength (personal communication, July 8, 1995).

As with all ethnic groups, there were some Sheep Eaters who did not fit the norm. There was Togwotee, for example, perhaps the best-known of the Sheep Eaters because he assumed a role as a sub-chief under Washakie, who Åke Hultkrantz heard was tall, slim, crook-nosed and "looked like a Sioux Indian" (Hultkrantz n.d. I:18), and Hultkrantz personally interviewed a Sheep Eater, CS,

born in 1885, whom he described as "tall and slim" (Hultkrantz n.d. 1:61). If the average height and build of Sheep Eaters were small in comparison to Plainsmen like the Crow - whose Missouri River cousins, the Hidatsa, were famously tall - there was clearly variation among individuals. While they were positively not "pygmies," a wider understanding of Norris' agenda regarding Indians in Yellowstone suggests that by describing them as diminutive he might have been trying to diminish the shadows of their presence in "his" Park.

Unfortunately the characterization was embraced by trusted scholars of the day, and appears in their writings even when Norris is not credited. As Coutant, a distinguished Wyoming historian, describes the Sheep Eaters:

Not cultivating the acts of war, they became a timid and inoffensive tribe, marrying among themselves and at last became dwarfed and were despised by war-like nations [Coutant 1899:705].

Here Coutant has added insult to injury by suggesting that their allegedly stunted size was caused by eschewing war and by in-breeding. Even the noted Yellowstone National Park historian, Hiram Chittenden, was coerced into imagining the Sheep Eaters as lacking size and intelligence. Following the Bonneville/Irving line, he describes them as:

These hermits of the mountains, whom the French trappers called "les dignes de pitie," have engaged the sympathy or contempt of explorers since our earliest knowledge of them. Utterly unfit for warlike contention, they seem to have sought immunity from their dangerous neighbors by dwelling in the fastnesses of the mountains. They were destitute of even savage comforts . . . Their rigorous existence left its mark on their physical nature. They were feeble in mind and diminutive in stature, and are described as a "timid, harmless race" [Chittenden 1964:11].

(2) Sheep Eaters Were Timid and Feeble-Minded. In the foregoing depiction of Sheep Eaters, Chittenden also managed to introduce the second misconception that they were fearful and dim-witted. After Chittenden it was not uncommon to hear Yellowstone National Park and non-Park commentators refer to the Sheep Eaters as "a weak and degenerate race, wholly unfitted to hold their own" (Phillips 1927:32). Well acquainted with the Park's interpretative programs over the years, Yellowstone veteran Paul Schullery recently summarized these Chittenden-instigated notions of Sheep Eater mental competence and the presumed degree of weakened fortitude which derived from it:

They are the most maligned of the native groups that used Yellowstone. When I came to work in the park in 1972, park educational programs still presented Chittenden's view that the Sheepeaters were culturally deprived weaklings, hiding in a few remote areas of Yellowstone because they simply couldn't survive anyplace else [Schullery 1997:24].

Well into the present century one continued to hear this characterization of Sheep Eaters as excessively shy and retiring, with Nedward M. Frost writing in 1941 that, "Explorers left few records concerning these now extinct Indians, probably because their extreme shyness made it difficult to approach them" (Frost 1941:17).

This belief coupled their alleged mental inferiority led to the conclusion they were unable to defend themselves. Again, the subtext of this characterization seems to have been a sort of highly dubious equivalence between pugnacity and heightened brain-power. Yet even favorable assessments of the Sheep Eaters have accepted this equivalence, as Sarah Olden writes, "This band [of Sheep Eaters] was more intelligent, and very warlike" (Olden 1923:13). While Olden offers no documentation for her declaration, Åke Hultkrantz turned up an older discussion of Sheep Eater mental capacity from a Middle Oregon Indian agent named R. R. Thompson, who wrote in 1854:

The Mountain Snake Indians are a branch of the Root Diggers, (who, in the extreme south, are presumed to be the lowest order of the aboriginal race,) and have a common language. They occupy the country on the north and east of Fort Hall, and to the south to include Bear River valley. These Indians gradually improve in their habits and intelligence as they approach the northern and eastern extremities of their country [Thompson 1854:490].

But even when they are introduced for positive rather than negative commentary, most of the amateurish or anecdotal speculations about the relative mental capacity of Sheep Eaters have the nasty ring of the sort of pseudo-scientific, racist criteria which is often used to denigrate or aggrandize other cultures. If physical and cultural anthropology have taught us anything about modern populations, it is the futility of making such comparisons, especially on the basis of such uncontrolled rumor and hearsay. It might be far more worthwhile to simply examine closely Sheep Eater adaptations to surviving in the mountains. In their material culture and technology, as we shall soon see, will lie ample evidence of their basic intelligence and good practical sense.

(3) Sheep Eaters Were Afraid of Geysers. A third misconception that needs to be laid to rest is that Sheep Eaters were terrified of Yellowstone's geysers. Although this notion may be more closely associated with other Indian wayfarers through the Park, a few words about Sheep Eaters and the Yellowstone National Park thermal field are in order. In more than one treatise, Åke Hultkrantz championed this misconception (Hultkrantz 1954; 1979), but closer inspection of his writings reveals a confusion and contradiction on the theory, which will always be associated with his name. In a single essay he speculates that "the Sheepeaters shunned the geyser areas -- and the reason for this can scarcely have been anything but fear" (Hultkrantz 1954:46), but then he offers these comments from George Wesaw, a Shoshone Indian:

The Indians prayed to the geysers because they believed that there were spirits inside them. Sometimes, when nearing enemies, they let the water from the geysers spray over themselves so they became invisible [Hultkrantz 1954:44].

This man was a direct descendant of the "Wesaw" who was also Colonel Norris' foremost Indian informant. At one point the older Wesaw had told Norris that the Shoshone, Bannock, and Crow "occasionally visited Yellowstone Lake and river portion of the Park, but seldom the geyser regions, which he declared were 'heap, heap bad,' and never wintered there, as whites sometimes did with horses" (Norris 1881b:38). We might hear in this mock-Indian English expression "heap, heap bad" an echo of Norris's infamous poetry that more than one writer has declared "unfit for human ears," but more importantly we should give the Indian's words the credit for being a precise response to Norris' query as to whether any tribes wintered near the geysers. The thrust of Wesaw's answer is that the geyser area was a bad place to berth horses over a winter. Behind his response must also have been Wesaw's awareness, passed on from him to subsequent generations, that spirits lived at the geysers, and that places where powerful spirits dwell are rarely suitable locations for the everyday activities of hunting, gathering, and camping.

Hultkrantz (1954:49) knew full well that to the Shoshone hot springs and geysers were the abodes of spirits who could help or harm human beings. Besides those in Yellowstone National Park, the best-known thermal pools are found at Thermopolis, Wyoming. According to the Shoshone, a gigantic "dragon" formerly lived there, as well as the water creatures known as pan dzoavits and water ghosts who made the water boil. As George Wesaw explained to him, such powerful spirits within geysers and thermal pools could be propitiated with prayers. The same essay has Hultkrantz pinpointing these places of religious power as the sites which actually attracted Shoshone who were seeking supernatural power:

... a centre of religious power having the indifferent character of natural force does not act only negatively; he who knows the secret may turn its destructive activity into useful constructive force. The Shoshone knew that the sacred springs could be utilized for positive purposes. As we have seen, the hot jet of geyser provided invisibility medicine [Hultkrantz 1954:49-50].

Throughout the Shoshone realm were steaming, mysterious spots which contained these invisible, spiritual forces. On the one hand they were certainly held in healthy respect, even awe; on the other, contact with them was an absolute requisite for personal success. It is known that the most respected Sheep Eater leader and medicine man, Togwotee, had this pan dzoavits as his personal power; it may not be far-fetched to speculate that, like the Crow Indian medicine man known as The Fringe, he sought the supernatural being out during an arduous fast near the Yellowstone thermal field. If so, certainly Togwotee would have felt some fear as well -- who would not be somewhat anxious about spending three or four days and nights alone beside the thundering geysers, abstaining from food and water, awaiting the wondrous and powerful spirits who lived there? Individuals seeking power often speak of their fear while waiting for a visit from the supernatural, but after the event they have respect for the power rather than fear. Survival in Yellowstone National Park depended upon the ability of the Sheep Eaters to live in accord with such "frightening" natural forces as blizzards, grizzly bears, and thunderstorms, as well as geysers. Encountering any one of them took caution and experience, and on occasions when one was transacting with their spirits, respect and prayer.

(4) Sheep Eaters Were Paupers. The fourth misconception is that Sheep Eaters were a poverty-stricken lot, barely surviving on the verge of starvation. The explanation often provided for their sorry state is that the Sheep Eaters were forced into the mountains by the advanced and more militaristic tribes of the lowlands. Among recent references where this idea is still circulated, one is actually found within a curriculum handbook for the Wind River Reservation where it states, "It is probable that the Sheep Eaters of Yellowstone National Park were stragglers of the Northern Shoshones driven into and forced to live in the high mountains by their enemies (Anonymous ca.1985:9). Implicit in the misconception is a picture of the Sheep Eaters as second-class losers scrounging for survival in an unforgiving landscape.

The idea that Sheep Eaters were "miserably poor" was prevalent among the chroniclers who had only chance encounters with them. In the north, it apparently originates from the Lewis and Clark journeys, following the killing of a deer by one of the expedition's hunters on Friday August 16, 1805. According to Meriwether Lewis, after a dash to the spot where the deer had been dressed by the hunter, the Mountain Shoshone (Lemhi):

all dismounted and ran tumbling over each other like famished dogs, each man tore away at whatever part he could, and instantly began to eat it; some had the liver, some the kidneys, in short no part with which we look with disgust escaped them; one of them who had seized about nine feet of entrails was chewing at one end, while with his hands he was diligently clearing his way by discharging the contents at the other [Lewis and Clark 1904-1905:401].

This quotation was highlighted in a popular anthropology text book Man in the Primitive World by E. Adamson Hoebel. First published in 1949, the book sustained many printings and was used by tens of thousands of anthropology students in colleges and universities across America. In his discussion of the Shoshone, Hoebel maintains that "fear of starvation constantly haunted the Shoshones" (Hoebel 1949:102). The image that the hunting and gathering cultures which early Euro-Americans found throughout aboriginal California, the Great Basin, and the Rocky Mountain Highlands lived with the wolf always at their door was recycled into the 20th century.

Not until 1966 did scholars challenge this common wisdom. That was when an international conference on Hunters and Gatherers used finer-grained data based on ethnographic fieldwork to reappraise the life-ways of band-size hunters and gatherers. Inspired by the methodology of Richard B. Lee among the San-!Kung Bushmen of South Africa (Lee 1965; Lee and DeVore 1968), anthropologists followed hunters and gatherers on their daily tasks, paid particular attention to what they ate and drank, then analyzed their food supply to learn its caloric and nutritional value. They realized that, by and large, most hunters and gatherers enjoyed a reliable and varied food base, subsisting on plants far more than meat (ratio of 4:1 in dry environments), working only at intensive intervals to satisfy their food needs, living to old ages with minimal worries over survival (Lee and DeVore 1968). Although some of this ground-breaking research has been re-evaluated in recent years, the general conclusion remains viable. Among fairly small (30 to 40 individuals), mobile and

socially flexible hunting and gathering peoples, their lifestyle was an impressively successful subsistence strategy which required periodic bursts of effort followed by leisurely intervals for enjoying such freedom from want that the label of "the world's original leisure society" was bestowed on them. Some of Lee's reflections on the subsistence patterns of South African natives might provide a corrective guide towards the reappraisal of a band-based, hunting-and-gathering lifestyle such as that of the Sheep Eaters as well:

Over the course of a year, the picture of steady work, steady leisure and adequate diet was maintained... In assuming that their life must be a constant struggle for existence, we succumb to the ethnocentric notions that place our own Western adaptation at the pinnacle of success and make all other second or third best. Judged by these standards, the !Kung are bound to fail. But judged on their own terms, they do pretty well for themselves.

If I had to point to one single feature that makes this way of life possible, I would focus on sharing. Each !Kung is not an island unto himself or herself; each is part of a collective. It is a small, rudimentary collective, and at times a fragile one, but it is a collective nonetheless. What I mean is that the living group pools the resources that are brought into camp so that everyone receives an equitable share. The !Kung and people like them don't do this out of nobility of soul or because they are made of better stuff than we are. In fact, they often gripe about sharing. They do it because it works for them and it enhances their survival. Without this core of sharing, life for the !Kung would be harder and infinitely less pleasant [Lee 1984:55].

Before painting a picture that makes life too rosy, we should remember that at certain times hunters and gatherers did face times of food shortages, even those whose territories include the richest of resources. As we are reminded by Colson (1979) quoting the research of Aginsky (1939) the Indians of central California who formerly inhabited one of the richest biomes in the world had memories of years when there was hunger. Colson (1979:20) suggests that a five-fold plan can help alleviate periods of starvation.. This plan includes the reliance upon a diversified food base wherein the hunters and gatherers exploit multiple animal and plant species, the storage or preservation of some foodstuffs, the use of and the transmission of knowledge regarding what might be called famine foods, the conversion of surplus food into durable articles that could be exchanged for food in times of scarcity, and the cultivation of a strong set of social relations that could be called upon to help in times of food shortage. We know that the Sheep Eaters practiced several of the points in this strategy. They exploited a wide array of animal and plant foods; they dried fish and meat as well as root plants and berries; they apparently would have known about starvation foods, like the cambium of pine trees available during the winter; they could have traded surplus food for other objects and they had access to other valuable resources, such as obsidian, for trade; and they maintained a network of relatives and friends to rely upon in scarcity. Of all these the last was probably the most important because the Sheep Eaters lived in such a fluid social organization that they could have moved to a neighboring group in times of food shortages.

With the abundant supplies of bighorn sheep, fish and root plants in their mountainous territory, it seems unlikely they were starving or destitute. During the Standifer gold-prospecting expedition of 1866 into Yellowstone country, A.B. Henderson was dispatched to "hunt up the Sheep Eaters camp for the purposes of trading skins etc. with them, as we knew they had hundreds of fine sheep skins and furs of all kinds." When they finally connected with the group of some 60 Sheep Eaters, they shared a meal and then traded for the sheepskins and martin furs (Henderson 1866:19-20).

Although these Sheep Eaters were certainly eager to obtain the white man's trade goods in exchange, they do not sound impoverished. Nor do the Sheep Eaters whom Osborne Russell found in his famous encounter with the Indians in the Lamar Valley to which we have already referred:

Here we found a few Snake Indians comprising 6 men 7 women and 8 or 10 children who were the only inhabitants of this lonely and secluded spot. They were all neatly clothed in dressed deer and Sheep skins of the best quality and seemed to be perfectly contented and happy . . . Their personal property consisted of one old butcher Knife nearly worn to the back two old shattered fuses which had long since become useless for want of ammunition a Small Stone pot and about 30 dogs upon which they carried their skins, clothing, provisions etc on their hunting excursions. They were well armed with bows and arrows pointed with obsidian. The bows were beautifully wrought from Sheep, Buffalo and Elk horns secured with Deer and Elk sinews and ornamented with porcupine quills and generally about 3 feet long. We obtained a large number of Elk Deer and Sheep skins from them of the finest quality and three large neatly dressed Panther Skins in return for awls axes kettles tobacco ammunition etc. They would throw the skins at our feet and say "give us whatever you please for them we are satisfied. We can get plenty of skins" [Russell 1965:26-27].

If this description purports to represent a people on their last legs, how were they feeding 30 dogs? If they had to struggle all day to feed themselves, how did they find time to dress skins of the finest quality and make beautifully wrought bows? If they were so poor, why would they throw skins at the feet of the trappers in exchange for their goods? The Sheep Eaters themselves answered the last question for us -- they could get plenty of skins and, of course, we must remember those skins were attached to edible flesh. It is true that they were poor in guns, knives, and horses, but that did not prevent this band of 23 Sheep Eaters from living what in their view might have been considered the good life.

(5) Sheep Eaters Were Renegades. The fifth misconception is that the term Tukudika, or "Sheep Eaters," referred less to any distinct group but was actually a cover term for a loose amalgam of ostracized members of different tribes who had only recently banded together in the mountains, a sort of Rocky Mountain version of the infamous Comancheros of the Texas Plains. In this incarnation the Sheep Eaters are seen as the flip side of retiring or timid; they are nasty savages who desire to wreak havoc on whites. This image of Sheep Eaters appears to have been prevalent in the

1870s, as a member of the William A. Jones expedition into northwestern Montana in the summer of 1873 reported about the stray bands of Sheep Eaters in the park:

There is very little, if any, danger from hostile Indians in the park at present. Small parties of Bannocks, Mountain Crow or Snakes, ('Sheep-eaters'), might try to steal something, but they are arrant cowards [Jones 1875:22].

While omitting the negative commentary, W. P. Clark also transmitted the notion of the Sheep Eaters as a polyglot group:

They were supposed by many authorities to be a separate tribe, differing in language, habits, and physical peculiarities from all the tribes which surrounded them, while others claimed that they were offshoots from the Shoshones, Bannocks, Flatheads, Pend d' Oreilles, Nez Perces, Crows, and Blackfoot, and that their poverty alone forced them to this peculiar life apart from their tribe [Clark 1885:334].

Of much the same mind was the fur trader Alexander Ross:

The Ban-at-tees, or mountain Snakes, live a predatory and wandering life in the recesses of the mountains, and are to be found in small bands or single wigwams among the caverns and rocks. They are looked upon by the real Sho-Sho-nes themselves as outlaws, their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them. They live chiefly by plunder. Friends and foes are alike to them [Ross 1855:240-241].

These comments seem to forecast the general characterization, if not the specific misnomer, expressed by Chief Washakie of the Wind River Shoshone in 1879, who was quoted by the Shoshone Indian agent as complaining about the same "good many bad Indians" whom the whites at the time were often lumping together as Sheep Eaters (James I. Patten, U.S. Indian Agency, Shoshone and Bannock Agency, to Hon. E. A. Hayt, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington D.C., June 11, 1879). This image of Sheep Eaters as a culture-less and lawless band of predators remained intact over the years and other writers continued to uncritically pass on the idea, as Daniels wrote in 1953, "The origin of the tribe is rather obscure. Some authorities believe them to have been renegades and undesirables who were ostracized from other tribes and ultimately took to the mountains where they banded together to form their own groups" (Daniels 1953:24).

But behind these negative and inconsistent characterizations seems to lie a case of mistaken identity. Each of the former writers or speakers appears to have been confusing two different groups of "Sheep Eaters." Instead of referring to the Wyoming *Tukudika*, the Sheep Eaters who are the main subject of this chapter, they appear to have been discussing a group along the Salmon River country in Idaho which resisted white domination. As this mistake was dissected by author Keith Barrette:

The Tukudika are often confused with a small polyglot group of Indians, numbering about 200, who once ranged the Salmon River Mountains of Idaho . . . The error began in the late 1860s when the Salmon River country was first beginning to be settled. To these early-day prospectors and settlers an Indian was an Indian. They dubbed the band made up of excommunicated Bannack, Shoshoni and Nez Perce as 'Renegade Sheepeaters' [Barrette 1963:330].

It was these "predatory" bands of so-called "Sheep Eaters" (whom one of Hultkrantz's Shoshone informants distinguished by the term tidibiano - Hultkrantz 1956:187), who contributed to the hostilities of 1877-1878 in the Salmon River district of Idaho. They appear to have been only distantly related to the Sheep Eaters of the Wind River and the Yellowstone Plateau. But the confusion between these two disparate groups may have been reinforced by the fact that the Idaho marauders were said to have appropriated Tukudika camps, from which they launched their horse-stealing raids and attacks on mining camps on the South Fork of the Salmon River. This led to the short-lived "Sheepeater War".

Whence Came the Sheep Eaters? - Competing Theories

The vast spread of bands and tribes who were related through their common use of the language stock we call Numic are not easy for outsiders to put into an understandable, cultural whole. They tend to irritate those who prefer to have their Indian tribes with fixed names and unchangeable identities, living within clear and distinct territorial boundaries, and exhibiting a life-style that fits neatly into predetermined categories of the classic "types" of Indian culture. The Sheep Eaters, for instance, do not seem at all like Plains Indians, and their reputation has suffered by comparison. Nor are they really Plateau Indians, although they do share numerous traits of those river-dwelling and root-gathering peoples. And some of their representatives on the fringe of the Numic-speaking world, like these Sheep Eaters, do not even exhibit many of the traits that would seem to grant them a Great Basin identity.

To discover just "what kind of Indian" these Sheep Eaters were, we might begin by asking how they became so. And to investigate that question we must delve into one of the great conundrums in American prehistory: the spread of the peoples who spoke branch dialects of the Numic language family. There are few open questions that are more intensely debated by American archaeologists, linguists, and anthropologists, and entire conferences have been devoted to this subject. A proliferating series of scenarios have been put forth for the prehistoric migrations of Shoshonean peoples throughout western North America (see Madsen and Rhode 1994). Narrowing this broad area of inquiry to the matter of the western and eastern Shoshone Indians proper, and to our Sheep Eaters in particular, we will try and simplify the prevailing arguments into the following four hypotheses, each with its own proponents:

(1) A Great Basin Source - Recent Origins

The theory which argues that Shoshoneans have lived in the north for a relatively brief length of time has been advanced by archaeologists B. Robert Butler and Gary Wright. They argue that an A.D. 1300 date for the arrival of the Shoshone is about twice too old. Citing data from archaeological work in the Teton Mountains on the Wyoming/Idaho border, Wright (1978) believes the Eastern Shoshone did not arrive until the historic period, while for his part Butler is reluctant to accept any more than a few centuries of time-depth for the Shoshone occupation of Idaho (Butler 1981).

To make his case, Butler points out that some offshoots of the southwestern maize-cultivating culture of prehistory, which scholars term the "northern Fremont," lived in southern Idaho. Based upon ceramic evidence, they also appear to be related to a Fremont division found around the Great Salt Lake. But the Idaho Fremont are believed to have persisted longer than their southern counterparts, based on analysis of Great Salt Lake Fremont ceramics which turned up in Wilson Butte Cave and were dated at AD 1525 \pm 150 (Butler 1986:131-133). Therefore Butler has concluded that the Shoshone, who presumably replaced the Fremont, must post-date this later time period. In this theory the time-depth for the presence of Shoshone peoples in the north could not be any greater than 300 to 400 years ago.

(2) A Great Basin Source - Older Origins

A second theory, which pushes the origins for the Northern Shoshone somewhat deeper into the past, has been supported by several well-known archaeologists but is actually premised upon advances in another discipline, the historical study of language development. To determine the relative age of the various branches of the Numic language stock, this approach borrows from the careful analysis of rates of change in small elements of a spoken language. This linguistic dating technique is called "glottochronology," and develops a rate of word loss for a language that has separated from its parent stock. Adapting this hypothesis to the Numic languages, linguists have proposed that their center or core lay in the southern Great Basin along the California and Nevada border. From this heartland the various Numic-speaking peoples expanded outward into their present-day homelands.

One principal group of these dispersing peoples spoke dialects of Shoshone proper, and their descendants now live on both the Fort Hall and Wind River Reservations (Miller 1986). From the study of their changing vocabulary, their migration is believed to have been launched around A.D. 1000, and their constituent tribes are thought to have reached Idaho and Wyoming ca. A.D. 1300 to A.D. 1400. In this popular theory, the presence of the Shoshone people in the north could not have exceeded 750 to 800 years. The approach is often termed the "Lamb hypothesis", after Sydney Lamb, the linguist who developed it (Lamb 1958).

(3) A Great Basin Source - Archaic Origins

A third group of archaeologists believe that the foregoing ideas about the origin of the Shoshone in Idaho and Wyoming are erroneous. They envision a much longer occupation for Numic-speaking

groups in the north. Originally proposed by Earl Swanson and strongly supported by Wilfred Husted, their case is premised on findings from deeply-stratified caves and rockshelters that contain artifacts like those used by the Shoshone in the Great Basin for thousands of years.

Among the key archaeological sites which gave birth to this argument are Birch Creek Cave in Idaho (Swanson 1972), and Mummy Cave in Wyoming (Husted and Edgar n.d. ca. 1978). Both of these long-inhabited rockshelters yielded perishable artifacts such as basketry, arrow shafts and cord netting that are quite similar to those found in Great Basin caves. Included with more durable pieces of worked stone, such as net-sinkers and milling rocks, the entire assemblages strongly suggest a plant gathering and fishing style of life that was practiced in parts of the Great Basin for millennia. Furthermore, these artifacts and associated types of projectile points were repeatedly found at continuous levels of the excavations. This bolsters their case that there were few if any interruptions in the long occupation by a relatively stable cultural group, and that therefore the Shoshoneans had made the north their home for 8000 to 9000 years.

(4) A "Middle Range" Hypothesis

A fourth and more recent hypothesis for the antiquity of Shoshonean appearance in the north falls somewhere between the extremes proposed by Wright-Butler and Swanson-Husted. This "middle range" assessment for the dates of Numic origins in the region stems from the work of Richard Holmer, who excavated a series of archaeological sites in the vicinity of the Fort Hall, Idaho (Holmer 1990; 1994) in the late 1980s and early 90s. Holmer's advantage, of course, lay in having the three existing hypotheses arrayed before him and testing them through a tried and true archaeological method - the "direct historical approach."

This approach involves selecting an archaeological site which is certain to contain evidence of human manufacture and use from the recent past, and which also was occupied by a specific cultural group. First, one excavates the uppermost, recent strata to reveal a diagnostic assemblage of artifacts for that particular group, such as the weight, size and shape of a stone projectile point, the hafting attributes of a chopping tool, the presence of a root-digging implement, and/or the decorative characteristics of pottery. As the work of peeling back layers of sediment, debris and cultural materials sinks into deeper strata, however, one discovers whether the new artifacts coming to light are the same as those above, whether they are appearing in markedly different shapes, or if altogether new tools are showing up which might be grouped in unfamiliar assemblages. If the artifacts do remain similar through successive strata, the archaeologist has good reason to suspect that generations of the same cultural group must have occupied the site over time.

The site which Holmer selected lay in the bottomlands of today's Fort Hall Reservation; he named it Wahmuza, from the Shoshone words wah'-muza, meaning "cedar point". The location was chosen advisedly, for it represented a Shoshonean occupation known to have been utilized in the historic period. As might have been predicted, the uppermost layers yielded glass trade beads, musket balls, and other objects traded to the Shoshone inhabitants by Euroamericans (Holmer

1990:45). As the excavations penetrated down through deeper levels, they found some variation in artifacts, but their recognizable consistency suggested the presence of a single tradition over time.

At the Wahmuza site, Holmer's crew discovered that one distinctive type of lanceolate-shaped spear appeared along with cooking hearths in the topmost levels, and also within each successive strata all the way down to the floor of the site. They identified this diagnostic artifact as a lance point used by Shoshone men on a short, thrusting spear (to be discussed in the Stone Tools section below). Whereas these so-called "Wahmuza" spear points near the surface were only a few hundred years old, those found in the lower levels were chipped more than 3000 years ago.

Trying to learn more about the geographical range of such distinctively Shoshonean artifacts, Holmer next excavated a site on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River known as Dagger Falls. His crew recovered 1400 projectile points, 2000 complete and broken biface tools, 400 scraping tools, 125 drills, 40 gravers, and approximately 3300 utilized flake tools (Holmer 1990:48). Once again

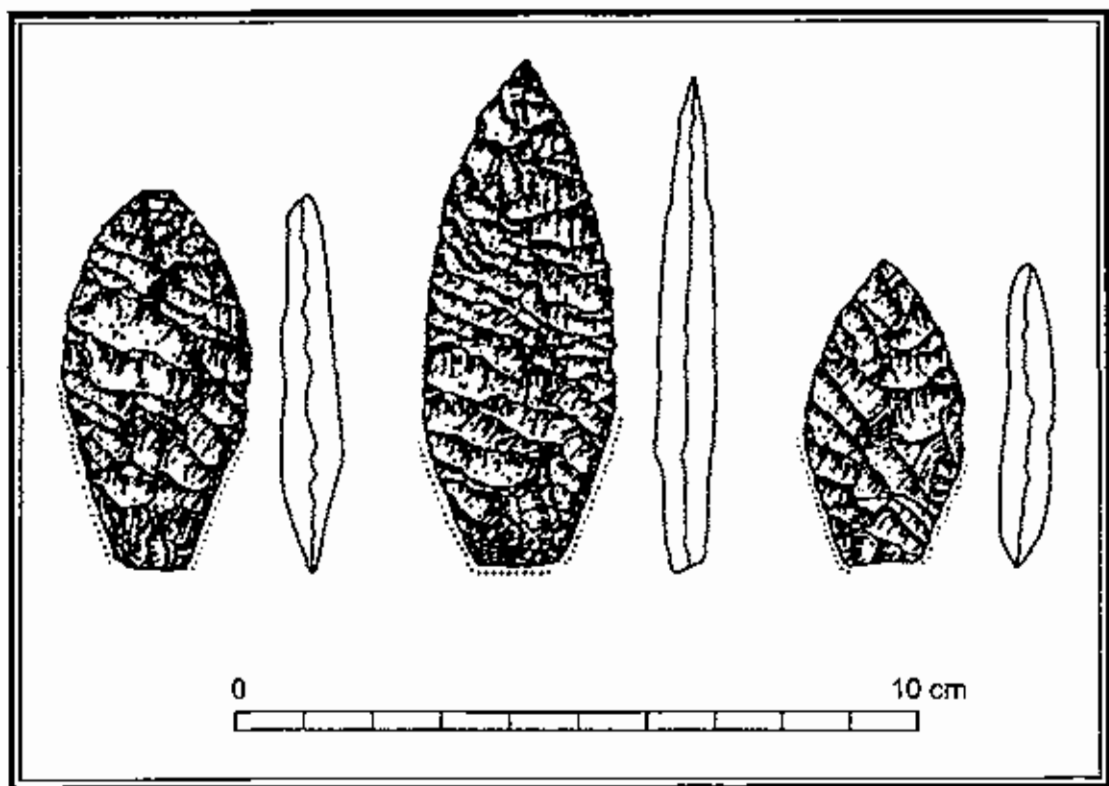


Figure 3.2. Lanceolate blades from the Wahmuza site in eastern Idaho (reproduced in Woods 1987:147-48). These range in age from 300 to 3000 years before the present.

the characteristic Wahmuza spear points were found at all levels, along with more than 200 potsherds, crafted much like the ceramics at Wahmuza and representing a continuous time-span of 1200 years. Such evidence made Holmer confident that the same Shoshoneans who occupied the

Wahmuza site were also living at the Dagger Falls site. Summarizing his results, Holmer wrote in words that seemed to echo what we have already heard concerning small, hunting and gathering band-based societies:

What we have learned during this exercise is that the Northern Shoshone persisted in what is now eastern Idaho for millennia, perhaps as long as four thousand years. Their tremendous longevity is a direct product of their technological and social flexibility, being able to respond to rapidly changing and unpredictable situations. For thousands of years they effectively adapted to changing environmental and social conditions without the loss of their cultural identity [Holmer 1990:57, emphasis ours].

To a degree Holmer's work backs up the earlier revelations from the more deeply-stratified cave sites like Birch Creek, Idaho and Mummy Cave, Wyoming. But whereas those excavations indicated Shoshoneans lived in the north for 8000 to 9000 years, Holmer's dates only confirm use of the region for 3000 to 4000 years by Shoshoneans. In time the continuing research of Holmer and others may add years to the longevity in the north, or support the belief that the original Shoshone migrations took place about 3500 years ago [Holmer 1990:453].

Other recent research, focused within a restricted area of Wyoming and associated with rock art that is unquestionably of Shoshonean origin, supports Holmer's case for a Shoshone antiquity of more than 3000 years. This work involves the Dinwoody Style of petroglyphs, which have been subjected to new dating methods for rock art. These studies indicate that some of the Dinwoody panels were engraved more than 3000 years before the present (Francis et al 1994). Because not all researchers accept the validity of the experimental dating methods used to arrive at these age estimates, it is important to recognize there are also traditional radiocarbon dates for cultural deposits in stratified levels that were partially covering a Dinwoody style petroglyph at the Legend Rock site. These traditional dates verify the age of the Legend Rock petroglyph, for instance, at 2000 years ago (Walker and Francis 1989) and therefore offer considerable credibility to the experimental dates for Dinwoody rock art a thousand years earlier.

(5) A Possible Reconciliation

Lastly we would like to simply suggest yet another approach to the fascinating if intractable question of Sheep Eater origins. Although almost impossible to test without finer-grained markers for the identities of ethnic sub-groups within the greater Shoshonean brotherhood, this approach might begin to reconcile some of this wide temporal range between competing hypotheses for the Numic expansion. This is the supposition that there were ebbs and flows of Shoshonean migration, that overlapping of groups already known to have been highly mobile and singularly adaptive might have taken place, and that a non-aggressive succession of abandonments and reoccupations might

have occurred in sites by peoples who were perhaps only ethnically-distinct in non-material aspects of life such as their language dialects, belief-systems or forms of social organization.

To some extent this idea has already been put forth by Aikens and Witherspoon (1984) who have suggested that in the distant past, expansion and contraction of Numic peoples out of and back into the Great Basin might have transpired on more than one occasion. In the accommodation put forth here, we believe the Sheep Eaters could have continued to live in the north after an early expansion that took place by at least 3500 years ago. Successive spreads of Numic speaking groups continued to occur, but they were possibly reoccupations of the territory of their former brethren. The most recent of these overlays may have taken place about the time the horse was introduced, and would thus explain the theory of Wright and Butler. Another may have started ca. A.D. 1000 when the linguistic data suggest it should have taken place. In this scenario, the Sheep Eaters who had been living in the mountains for millennia would have been joined by linguistic relatives from the Great Basin from time to time.

Similar schemes exist for most of the migrations that are known for other Indian groups in the American west. The Crow, for example, moved in at least two successive waves, the second several centuries after the first (Hoxie 1995). The Athapaskan speakers of the American Southwest are also thought to have moved from north to south, through what is today Montana and Wyoming, at distinctly different time periods (Biddle quoted in Opler 1983). As our reconstructions of population movements throughout the world grow more sophisticated we are learning that the collective migrations are not necessarily fixed events. Instead, they are often "time transgressive events" that occur in a much more layered or haphazard fashion than the linguistic approach might lead us to believe.

To summarize, we find the archaeological research by Richard Holmer and his colleagues at sites used by the northern Shoshone in Idaho to be persuasive in suggesting the continued use of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem by Shoshonean peoples for at least 3500 years. Furthermore, we believe it quite possible that this mountainous region remained more pristine and the cultures living within it relatively unaltered over that period of time. The area of central Montana and Wyoming was more dynamic and changing with the Athapaskan tribes spending several centuries there before moving out in successive migrations toward the American Southwest. Therefore it seems plausible that the people historically known as Sheep Eaters could have lived in the Yellowstone National Park region and the upper reaches of the Wind and Shoshone Rivers for at least 3500 years.

Diagnostic Features of Sheep Eater Material Culture

Now we are ready to address the material world used by at least the Yellowstone-connected branch of Sheep Eaters in their mountain habitat. Throughout the glimpses of Sheep Eater lifeways which can be gleaned from ethnohistorical, archaeological and ethnographic sources, certain characteristics appear again and again. As we pull away from an historical approach to look at

culture, the following discussion will fill out a "laundry list" of the most tangible markers of Sheep Eater identity.

(a) Dogs. During a recent visit to Yellowstone National Park in 1994 Åke Hultkrantz was asked what in his opinion might differentiate Sheep Eaters from other tribal groups. Without hesitation he responded, "The way they packed their dogs". In their uneven, rocky setting, Hultkrantz explained, a dog dragging travois was not as efficient as one wearing side packs. Those pack dogs had to be large and sturdy, and he remembered being told that Sheep Eater dogs were noted for "white spots across their chests". Supporting information for the intimate working relationship between Sheep Eaters and their canine companions comes from the ethnographer Demitri Shimkin, who was told at Wind River that the Sheep Eaters were well known for their dogs. From his key informant, Dick Washakic, son of the well-known chief of the Eastern Shoshone, he learned that the personal names for dogs often derived from their coloring (Shimkin 1937). But Shimkin was also told that the animals were used to both drag travois as well as to carry packs:

The Mountain Sheep Eaters used dog transport both with parfleche-type packs and with the travois, in which a rawhide case or basket of willow was seated. Food and goods but not children were carried. The dog's harness, it may be noted, was primarily a cinch around the chest, secured by breast and hindquarters straps. There was no leash, the dog being directed entirely by voice [Shimkin 1986:320].

This close association between Sheep Eaters and their beasts of burden has a solid ethnohistorical basis as well. When Osborne Russell encountered his aforementioned group of Sheep Eaters (6 men, 7 women and 8 or 10 children) in the Lamar Valley in July 1834, he counted about 30 dogs "on which they carried their skins, clothing, provisions etc on their hunting excursions" (Russell 1965:26). Russell does not elaborate on their appearance but we are fortunate to have archaeological suggestion that the bond between Yellowstone National Park's Indians and their dogs was intended to continue even into the afterlife. The only human burials reported in the Park, both found near Fishing Bridge, had dogs interred with them (Willey and Key 1992). Workmen digging a sewer line on the Fishing Bridge peninsula of the lake near the outlet for the Yellowstone River first found one of the burials in August, 1941. It was an adult male, 161.76 cm to 165 cm (5' 4" to 5' 5") in height and between 35 and 45 years of age (Willey and Key 1992:17). Two adult dogs were interred with him. Discovered in the Fishing Bridge Campground in July, 1956, another burial contained a female, 152 cm to 155 cm (5' to 5' 1") in height and 40 to 50 years of age (Willey and Key 1992:22). Two fragments of a single right rib of a human infant were recovered with the adult female skeleton. A single sub-adult dog accompanied their burial. While there is no assurance these burials are the remains of Sheep Eaters, the dogs were certainly the same species as those kept by the Sheep Eaters.

The dogs were short to medium stature, with blunt muzzles and relatively broad heads. Comparing their jaws to those of a coyote and wolf, Condon learned that the dogs from the first internment were shorter than a coyote and wolf, but their breadth was equal to that of a wolf (Condon 1948). These dogs were studied by William Haag, an authority on American Indian dogs, who stated that their measurements fall within the range of a "group of Siberian-like dogs recovered from archaeological sites on St. Lawrence Island and from parts of the Asiatic mainland" (Haag 1956:1-2). Haag went on to state that the dogs were smaller than the Alaskan Husky and considerably smaller than Plains Indian dogs which approximated and sometimes exceeded wolves in size. Haag did not have radiocarbon dates available, but based on the morphological characteristics of the dogs from the Yellowstone burials he suggested they likely dated about A.D. 1000 (Haag 1956:4). In a more recent study Cannon had

these dog bones measured by Danny Walker at the University of Wyoming. Walker found the measurements and observations of Haag to be in line with his own. But he detected some grinding modification on the teeth, presumably inflicted by their owners to keep them from chewing through leather trappings (Kenneth Cannon letter to Larry Locendorf September 2, 1996).

(b) Stone Tools. For many years artifact collectors and archaeologists in Wyoming and southern Montana have been able to single out a distinctive chipped-stone tool, which is popularly called the "Shoshone knife". Shaped like a willow leaf, these artifacts measure from 7 cm to 12 cm (3.5" to 5") in length and from 3 cm to 3.5 cm in width (1.25" to 1.5") in width. They are long and narrow and



Figure 3.3. Though Assiniboine rather than Sheep Eater, this photo suggests how dogs were used by high plains Indian hunters (From E.S. Curtis, The American Indian, folio 18, plate 630, reproduction courtesy of Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wy.).

are noted for intensive resharpening of their blades; examples which demonstrate such extensive use are generally worn away into a pointed shape with a wide base. Frequently the resharpening occurred only along one side of the blade edge, much as an old skinning knife was sharpened along one side. Indeed, studies into the wear patterns on Shoshone knives suggest that toward the end of their lives they likely served for drilling. But when they were in prime condition they were an all-purpose cutting, sawing, and piercing tool.

Once again we have to thank Dick Washakie, Demitri Shimkin's key consultant, for enlightening us about these important items in the Sheep Eater tool kit. In 1937 he told Shimkin that these knives were usually made of white flint but occasionally of bone. Examples recovered from archaeological sites in Wyoming and Idaho are frequently chipped from obsidian as well (Larson and Kornfeld 1994:202-203; Holmer 1994:184). Washakie also described how the knives were wrapped with sinew around the basal end to protect the user's hand, and he demonstrated how they were held in the palm of the right hand, with the point upward, between the thumb and four fingers. At meal times the knives were used by a server to cut cooked meat into large chunks which were laid upon rawhide plates.

We have already been introduced to what was probably another important Sheep Eater artifact, the chipped stone Wahmuza Lanceolate point, which tipped the Shoshone lance. Lances are described by Julian Steward (1943:314) as a distinctively Shoshone tool, but they are best known from archaeological contexts. Relying on the research of Richard Holmer (1989, 1990; Holmer and Ringe 1986; summarized in Holmer 1994 and Torgler 1995), these well made stone points exhibit grinding to smooth the base and lower lateral edges. Presumably this prevented the stone from cutting through the ties of leather or plant fiber which fastened it to the haft. As Torgler notes:

Many of the Wahmuza Lanceolates are missing blades that have snapped off perpendicular to the length of the point near the point base. ...Typically Wahmuza Lanceolates are made of obsidian and have a distinctive form with parallel oblique flaking on the blades and contracting narrow bases [Torgler 1995:87].

Fashioned for balance and durability, many of the surviving points show signs of retouching and sharpening to keep them in use, and probably represent items that were prized and safeguarded. They were used to tip lances or short-spears which stretched from 200 cm. to 225 cm. (5' to 7') in length, that were made from hardwood and decorated with feathers (Shimkin 1937). These lances would have been efficient for defense in face to face encounters, but their most common use was most likely for dispatching game already gathered into traps (Dominick 1964:156).

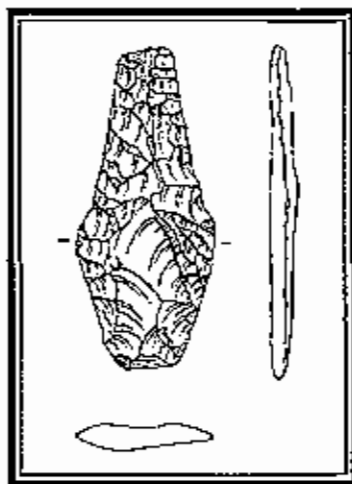


Figure 3.4. Shoshone knife found on the surface of Yellowstone National Park. Tip is broken but the tool displays the re-sharpening that characterizes these artifacts. Shown at approximately 1/2 actual size. Artifact #6527.

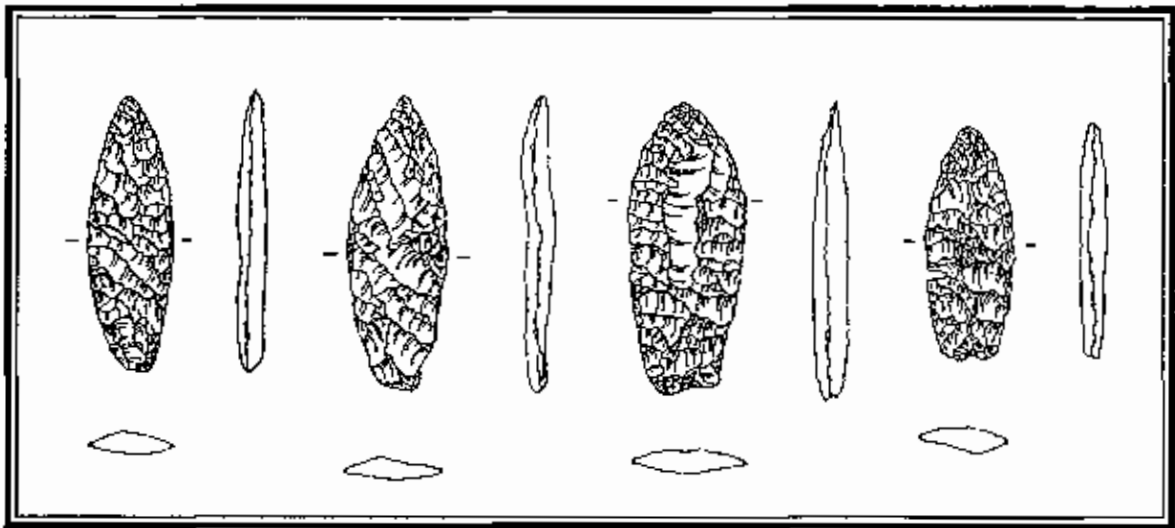


Figure 3.5. Examples of possible Wahmuza lanceolates found on the surface of Yellowstone National Park. Shown at approximately 1/2 actual size. Left to right artifact #'s 6626, 6630, 9494 and 7044.

Although no Wahmuza-style Lanceolate points have been reported from excavated archaeological sites inside Yellowstone National Park, Torgler (1995:91-92) notes that they appear in the Carbella site to the north near Gardiner, Montana, and also in a site near Jackson Lake to the south in Wyoming. However, many lanceolate projectile points have turned up in the Park (Hoffman 1961; Taylor et al. 1964) and in nearby areas (Haines 1964).

The remaining inventory of chipped stone tools used by the Sheep Eaters included arrowpoints - usually of obsidian. Unlike the Indians of surrounding areas, the Sheep Eaters seem to have been quite eclectic in their choice of stone point styles. In earlier phases they employed an array of such forms identified by archaeologists as Rose Spring as well as the points known as Elko-eared in Nevada, Utah, and Idaho which are better suited for the short darts used with atlatls. Interestingly, these larger types continued to be used throughout later phases when the side-notched points, usually connected with an earlier era and similar to the Desert Side-notch varieties, served as arrowpoints (Torgler 1995:98; Holmer 1995:119).

With such a diverse assembly of piercing and cutting tools we might wonder why the Sheep Eaters needed the larger points, and hypothesize that they and their Salmon Eater neighbors may have actually collected and curated old points, as they presumably did with their knives. While most tribes on the Plains and the Plateau are thought to have abandoned atlatls when the bow and arrow

was developed, the Sheep Eaters could have kept theirs, using them with the short darts. Because atlatls offer such great penetrating power, they were considered more effective for hunting bear. An occasional ground stone atlatl weight does turn up in Yellowstone National Park archaeological sites, but unfortunately they originate from poorly identified surface collections and could represent almost any time period.

Found in the most recent period of Sheep Eater occupation, however, a point type known as Cottonwood has been frequently associated with the Shoshoneans of Idaho and the Great Basin. Some have suggested that these small triangular points were "preforms" for notched points rather than actual arrowpoints. But a recent microscopic study of unwashed Cottonwood points in Idaho revealed sinew strips wrapped around the base, indicating they were clearly hafted and used on arrows. Some of the sinew strips were also stained with red ochre, suggesting the arrows may have been identified as to their owners (Torgler 1995:82-83).

Other chipped-stone artifacts used by the Sheep Eaters include drills for putting holes in wood and bone, and pointed stone slivers that served as sewing awls. But the usually typical and abundant scrapers, known as "plano-convex" scrapers by archaeologists and "turtle-backs" by many artifact collectors, are strangely lacking. The absence of these tools at Mummy Cave was immediately recognized by its archaeologists, and although they do appear in Yellowstone National Park, they are not abundant. Their primary purpose was to remove fat and tissue from hides. When hafted in a bent antler handle, these scrapers were used as a pull tool; but chipped with an angular front edge and stuck into a straight antler handle they functioned as a push tool. Since the Sheep Eaters obviously had a need for such tools to clean hides, the absence of these scrapers suggests that they accomplished the task with obsidian flakes, using spalls with no defined pattern. Captain Jones did note such a tool in use by the Shoshone in 1873, and possibly it was being employed in lieu of the turtle-back scrapers more commonly found on the Plains:

The Shoshones, though mostly provided with tools of iron and steel of approved patterns, are still to be seen employing, as a scraper in the dressing of skins, a mere "tchshoa," consisting of a small worn boulder, thinner at one end, split through the middle in such a manner as to furnish a rough cutting-edge at one side. There seems to be a considerable advantage in this over any form of knife or other tool which has yet reached them from without, and it is probable that it will be retained so long as their present method of preparing hides is in vogue [Jones 1873:261].

(c) Steatite. Perhaps no class of artifacts were more unique to Sheep Eater culture than the pots and bowls which they carved out of the soft stone known popularly as "soapstone," "talc" or "pipestone," also known as steatite. Although there are approximately 20 minerals that fall under this designation, steatite is a common term for a white to green metamorphic rock that is soft enough to be scratched with a finger nail (Adams 1992:20). The mineral is formed through pressure and heat under the oceans and then in the uplifting of mountains and subsequent erosion, it is exposed in Precambrian metamorphic rocks in the Yellowstone National Park region. Because steatite not only

heats quickly but also retains its heat extremely well, in recent years it has been exploited for a half dozen different products associated with energy conservation, such as stoves and baking griddles. In an experimental effort to learn more about the function of Sheep Eater steatite cooking pots, a graduate student from the University of Wyoming named Richard Adams (1992:152-153) made such a pot and followed through by cooking in it. From a chunk of steatite obtained from Wyoming it took Adams about three and one half hours to hollow out a vessel that held 618 cc. or somewhat less than a quart of liquid. Placing the pot in some red-hot coals he was able to boil water in eight minutes (Adams 1992:153-154), and the water continued churning for four minutes after removing it from the fire. It took only twice that long to heat and cook a double handful of cubed venison (Adams 1992:153-154).

This unusual and effective cooking ware quickly caught the attention of early trappers and explorers. For example, Francis Antoine Larocque, the French trapper and trader and the first Euroamerican to leave a journal with details about the Yellowstone region in 1805, describes a Shoshonean stone pot:

I traded eight Beavers with the Snake Indians in whose possession I saw a kettle or Pot hewn out of solid stone. It was about 1 ½" thick and contained 6 or 8 quarts [Wood and Thiessen 1985:185].

Lewis and Clark were also struck by the presence of these stone containers among the Lemhi Shoshone:

...their culinary utensils exclusive of the brass kettle before mentioned consist of pots in the form of a jar made either of earth, or of a soft white stone which becomes black and very hard by burning, and is found in the hills near the three forks of the Missouri between Madison's and Gallatin's rivers [Thwaites 1904-5:19].

Almost certainly this "soft white stone" which hardens and darkens under fire is steatite. The Lewis and Clark identification of a well-known source for the material near Dillon, Montana - also identified as the "green pipestone" river by Jim Bridger on a map he made in 1851 - was probably an important source of steatite for the Sheep Eaters. Several other sources west and northwest of the Park have recently been described by Ken Feyhl (1997).

In Wyoming, however, research on steatite sources is further along, and upwards of twenty quarries have been identified (Frison 1982; Adams 1992). While none are known in Yellowstone National Park, a dozen or so lie within a 100 kilometer radius of the Park. Numerous smaller quarries or secondary deposits of steatite, sometimes only a few meters across, are found in western Wyoming (Adams 1992:33). Dick Washakie told Shinkin (1937 interview) that the pots he knew about were made from a stone that was obtained in the mountains, two days travel to the west of his Wind River Shoshone Reservation. According to Adams, place names in the Wind River Mountains immediately south of Yellowstone National Park "read like a Who's who of steatite: Soapstone Lake, Soapstone Basin, Pipestone Lake, Dish Lake, Soapstone Creek" (Adams 1992:33).

Through direct mining or local trade, it is obvious that steatite was readily available to Sheep Eaters, and the historical record testifies to their taking full advantage of it. Nathaniel Wyeth (Schoolcraft 1851:211) described "a stone pot, holding about two quarts" among the Indians along the Snake River in Idaho. Osborne Russell (1965:26) mentions the "Small stone pot" in use by the Sheep Eaters he encountered in 1835 in the Lamar Valley of Yellowstone National Park. In addition he describes a pot which he found while exploring on the headwaters of the Shoshone River to the northeast of Yellowstone Lake:

Near the foot of this defile we found a stone jar which would contain 3 gallons neatly cut from a piece of granite well shaped and smooth [Russell 1965:23].

Since granite can easily resemble steatite, Russell is probably mistaken about the material, but his estimation of its volume suggests an unusually large size for these Sheep Eater vessels. As noted above, Larocque saw Snake Indians using one pot that held 1.5 to 2 gallons. Unfortunately we find none of these large pots in museum collections today. Instead, the average steatite pot holds about a 1000 to 2000 cubic centimeters or about one to two quarts (Adams 1992:99).

Because steatite is resistant to disintegration and decay, vessels shaped from it preserve better than those fashioned from fired clay. What might be called the "classic" form of Sheep Eater steatite pot is often described as looking like the standard flower pot. There is the distinguishing flat-bottom, straight to outward flaring sides, and rounded lips on undecorated rims. Some may have slightly flanged bases, and none feature any other decoration. These classic pots stand 10 to 12 inches in height and frequently have more oval than round shapes that measure from 7 inches to 11 inches across. After a statistical study of several dozen steatite vessels, Adams states: "Many types of vessels have been found in Wyoming, but the above statistics support the idea of a "standard" flowerpot shape (1992:108)". While our information on Sheep Eater aesthetics is practically non-existent, it may be worth mentioning that steatite consolidates when heated to become almost porcelain hard and can acquire a shiny luster. Add smoke or soot from fires onto the external surfaces of these pots and their dark, burnished patina becomes quite attractive.

The concentration of this unique ware in and around Yellowstone National Park seems to identify them as an index of Sheep Eater ethnicity. While steatite pots are found throughout the northwestern Plains they are most concentrated in the mountainous region of western Wyoming. Marceau (quoted in Adams 1992:91) suggests that steatite vessels are tightly clustered within an area of 80 km of Two Ocean Pass. Adams is critical of this statistic because Marceau used faulty reasoning in his inquiry. But regardless of whether his study is flawed or not, there is an obvious concentration of steatite vessels in northwestern Wyoming, a distribution which overlaps the traditional territory of the Sheep Eaters. Frison (1982:285) even suggests that the area of sheep hunting traps and steatite vessels is comparable. The discovery of at least three steatite pots in the past three years in the Wind River Mountains, in the center of the largest concentration of sheep hunting traps, underscores his assumption.

A number of these vessels have wound up in museums where they can be inspected close up. Three steatite pots were collected by Superintendent Philerus Norris in Yellowstone National Park and sent to the National Museum where they are currently curated (Norris 1881b:32-34). Of the several "classic" examples of stoneware reported by Wedel (1954:407) from Yellowstone National Park or near it, one was collected at Mammoth by Charles Hunter in 1897 and another was found in the Devil's Slide area, immediately north of the Park. In height these pots measure 19.7 cm (6") and 23 cm (7"), respectively (Fehyl 1997).

As for the Park's own collections at Mammoth Hot Springs, there are five steatite vessels and two vessel fragments that were found in or adjacent to Yellowstone National Park. The smallest has a pedestal base while another features a rawhide strap around the exterior perimeter, but since both were on display it was not possible to measure them. Both are well-made with what appear to be scoring from metal files or chisels. Of the pots in storage, one is roughly formed with stone tool marks. It measures about 14.8 cm across its interior diameter and 10 cm in outside height. Another more finished pot measures 14.1 cm across its inside diameter and 8.8 cm in outside height. The other pieces are broken and although one has been reused, measurements were not taken.

To the south of the Park, Adams reports eleven steatite pots, several in the "flowerpot" category, that were found near Jackson Lake and now are curated in the Jackson Hole Museum. The majority of the half-dozen new vessels which have been turning up to the southeast of the Park, in the Dubois, Wyoming region, where bighorn sheep traps are also abundant, are within the range size that hold one to two quarts.



Figure 3.6. Yellowstone National Park historian Aubrey Haines, on the left, inspecting a steatite bowl with Lemuel Garrison, Yellowstone National Park superintendent. Photograph 1961 (Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives, Catalog #YELL 37847-2).

Another group of steatite containers might be more correctly identified as "cups". At least one of these from Yellowstone National Park had a handle much like a modern coffee mug, while others resemble small bowls. One very small steatite cup was found by an assistant ranger on United States Forest Service land near Cutler Lake to the north of the Park in 1963 and reported to Aubrey Haines. It measured 2 to 2 3/8" high by 2 3/8 to 2 5/8" in diameter with a bottom diameter of 1 1/8". The outer form was rounded around the bottom while it was flat inside. Small incised lines were found around the perimeter of the finely-made pot.

As to this variability in size for steatite vessels there are at least three explanations. For one thing, we believe that seams or chunks of large steatite are not as easy to obtain as smaller ones, and this could be reflected in the size of the pots. A second reason may be that blanks for smaller pots were salvaged from the bases of larger broken vessels. But thirdly, size differences might also relate to function. From Moses Tassitie, a Plains Shoshone, Shimkin learned that glue was mixed in stone pots (1937:6). Especially important to the manufacture of sheep horn bows, it is conceivable that the smaller pots were used for heating and preparing their sticky concoctions of boiled hide scrapings.

Apparently the manufacture of steatite vessels was easier if one could work directly in the quarry outcrop. This technique, used throughout the world in making stone pots, conveniently anchors the pot like a vise in the parent rock while it is taking form (Ball 1941:47). Blank areas in steatite outcrops reveal where pots have been partially manufactured and then cut loose (Schoen and Vlcek 1991), while at other quarry sites there are partially completed vessels that apparently broke during the carving process (Frison 1982:278-280).

Through these latter fragments George Frison was able to reconstruct just how steatite vessels were shaped and made. At one quarry site, he recovered 28 chopper/chopping tools made of quartzite, granite, and conglomerate. The assemblage also included pick-like and cleaver-like tools of various sizes, that seemed to have been unifacially prepared with a flat side to accommodate the need to fit the side wall of the pot. Frison (1982:278) believes these tools were used like a chisel and if so their illustration (Frison 1982:278; fig. 4) suggests they would have dulled easily. This should not be surprising because individuals who have made steatite pots with metal tools complain about the same problem (Adams 1992:152).

According to Frison (1982:279), removing the pot from the natural rock was accomplished by one of two ways. One method was to begin near the center and gouge a starter hole that increased in size until the interior was excavated. Another way was to drive a pick or chisel around the inner perimeter and remove large chunks of the steatite as the pot insides are excavated. Frison also discovered scraping tools that were apparently used to remove the larger scars from both the exterior and interior of the pots. Although grinding tools were not recovered, Frison believed they might have helped to smoothen the pot walls.

Since very few steatite vessels have been recovered from excavated contexts their time-depth is poorly documented. Frison (1982:284) suggests they are most common in the historic and protohistoric periods, while Adams (1992:114) notes the telltale steel hatchet and iron tool marks

on vessels which firmly identify them within those time periods. Underscoring the probable recency of these vessels is also the fact that our sole radiocarbon date, taken from sooty residue on the inside of one steatite vessel, is A.D. 1848 (Adams 1992:116).

At the same time it should be kept in mind that any residue inside the pot only dates its last use, and not the moments of its original manufacture. There is some evidence indicating that these pots were prized heirlooms among the Sheep Eaters and other Shoshone groups, to be passed on from generation to generation:

The pots were inherited by the daughter of the family, if there were no daughter a son might get one. They were family property. They were never traded [Shimkin 1937; Dick Washakie interview].

This suggests that as long as the pots remained whole, they would have been used for many years, which might also be an explanation for why they are not commonly recovered in prehistoric contexts. While Adams (1992:120) has suggested that the pots may have been stashed at campsites, to be used by any traveler who frequented the site, this seems doubtful, given their personal value as suggested by Dick Washakie. What seems more likely is that these pots, especially the classic ones that could hold one to two quarts, were treasured and used by families over a great many years.

Other important objects were also made of steatite. In the Dubois Museum is a "platter" with a rectangular outline and slightly-raised lip around its perimeter which was recently found in the Wind River region, part of an inventory of griddle-like creations fashioned from steatite (Adams 1992:145-147). Others examples are round in outline with raised lip perimeters. We have no direct evidence as to how these flat platters were used, although they would have served well for baking flat camas cakes.

We also find steatite beads of various shapes and sizes. One of these stone beads was recovered at the Split Rock site, a pit house in southwestern Wyoming, in feature fill that was dated at 5500 B.P. (Eakin et al. 1997). Beads have also been found in precontact contexts; at Mummy Cave, for instance, there were steatite beads and pendants dated at A.D. 734 (Husted and Edgar n.d. ca. 1968:204-205). Other artifacts that indicate a definite use of steatite in prehistoric contexts include atlatl weights (Adams 1992:143-144). It is worth noting that while these artifacts are scattered across the state, only in the greater Yellowstone region do we find such a concentration of stone pots.

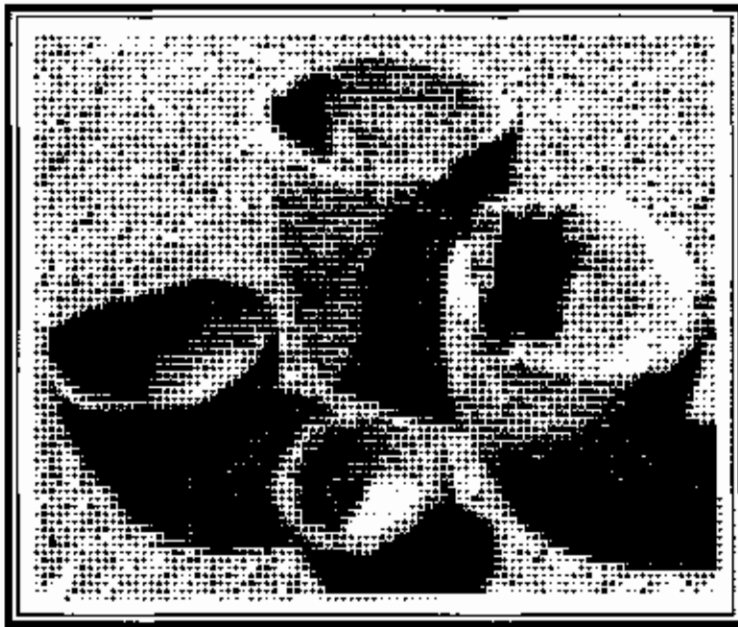


Figure 3.7. Collection of steatite bowls in Sheep Eater country, Wind River Mountains. Photograph 1995 (Collection of Dubois Museum, Dubois, Wyoming).

One last category of steatite artifacts is the perhaps the most intriguing. These are the tubular pipes and sucking tubes which are carefully cored and smoothed from the workable stone. For Rocky Mountain archaeologists, these cultural items are so prominent among the Shoshone that they have become a diagnostic artifact for archaeological assemblages (Malouf 1968:7). Some may have been smoked, but in a surprising recent analysis of 40 tubular steatite tubes in Wyoming, none betrayed evidence of tobacco use (Adams 1992). This suggests they were more commonly used for sucking or blowing functions, quite possibly in rituals of healing, divination or sorcery. In their report on a cache of tubular

pipes from Coal Draw, George Frison and Zola Van Norman (1993) reported that they were uncovered directly in front of a large petroglyph that depicts an anthropomorphic figure holding a bow. Eight pipes are represented in the cache, one with an incised petroglyph of a goose or crane-like water bird carved into it, which almost certainly represented the supernatural tool kit of a Shoshone shaman.

The Sheep Eaters believed in several categories of ghosts and spirits that lived both on the land and in the water. These spirits (especially the pan dzoavits) are known to carry a bow and invisible arrows that they shoot into their victims (Shumkin 1986:325; Hultkrantz 1987:48). It is highly likely that Sheep Eater shamans used their stone sucking tubes to remove the invisible missiles that were often considered to be the cause of human ailments.

(d) Obsidian. Another important mineral to the Sheep Eaters was found in abundance in the heart of Yellowstone National Park. This is the volcanic glass known as obsidian, whose most famous source is the site popularly known as Obsidian Cliff.

It was a Sheep Eater narrator named Rupert Weeks who provided a Shoshone story for the origin of obsidian arrowheads. His narrative opens with a smoking contest between E Zhupa, or Coyote and Beva Ish, the Wolf. Initially Wolf continually loses a number of rounds at the pipe, having passed

out from the heavy smoking and being revived by Coyote. In this particular story the multi-faceted, ambivalent character of Coyote is portrayed in his customary role as culture-giver, on the alert for any tips that will assist human beings and ready to put his cunning at their service. As we will see in the section on Sheep Eater religion, the "whirlwind" in the following story is very likely a malevolent spirit of the dead, or a "ghost."

In the tepee, the coyote saw black-colored objects lying behind the wolf, who had been fashioning arrowheads.

Said E Zhupa, the coyote, "My cousin, who has lost the smoking contest very nobly, let us try another. We will see who can make the most arrows from your obsidian before the whirlwind comes around."

E Zhupa, the coyote, had no knowledge of how to make arrowheads; he wanted to see the wolf make them so that he could learn the technique. The wolf agreed to this contest, for he was ashamed of his defeat in the smoking contest.

He worked feverishly, piling arrowheads beside him in many heaps. The cunning E Zhupa, the coyote, made a great show of working, but all the time he was watching the wolf out of the corners of his eyes. As soon as he was sure he knew the art of making arrowheads, he wished for a whirlwind. The wind blew up the powder from the chipped obsidian that was piled above the wolf's knee, causing him momentary blindness. Putting on the wings he had borrowed from the eagle, Beya Qee Na, the coyote flew back to the home of his nephews, the Shoshones, and taught them the fine art of making arrowheads from obsidian [Weeks 1981:27].

In this story we have a reflection of a broader theme in American Indian oral tradition, in which key elements of human culture, such as the use of fire or the knowledge of chipping stone, must be wrested from their former ownership by a world of supernatural beings. The narrative also features a prototype for the "shamanic contest," which sees Wolf's power to work stone pitted against Coyote's power to control the world of ghosts, represented by the whirlwind - possibly his own supernatural helper or guardian - who performs at his command. Shoshone individuals with powerful spirit helpers would sometimes compete in displays of supernatural power.

The story also makes a curious connection between obsidian and eyesight. However, one of our consultants inverted this link between them. Within a general discussion on the medicinal use of obsidian with several consultants from both the Wind River and Fort Hall Reservations, we learned that a common use of razor-sharp obsidian chips was in bleeding to release blood pressure when a person has a bad headache. But one Sheep Eater woman, born in a tipi on the old Ross Fork Agency before it was moved to Fort Hall, remembered the use by her mother of finely-ground obsidian mixed with rye grass to treat the onset of blindness from trachoma.

Earlier ethnographers also obtained hints of the tie between obsidian and the spirit world. As described above, both Hultkrantz (1987:49) and Shimkin (1986:325) learned about the class of spirits known as *pan dzoavits*. Among them is a very dangerous, solitary spirit known as "water ghost woman" (*pa:waaip*). The Shoshone told Shimkin that they always know she is around by obsidian flakes found on the ground which represent broken fragments of her body (Shimkin 1947c:334).

Shoshone consultants to this project added that the Sheep Eaters especially prized obsidian for their arrowpoints because it was sharp and it was easier to chip and shape "in the way they wanted it". When queried about Obsidian Cliff one Sheep Eater descendant replied:

Just like when you go there to get some of the obsidian then its like a sacrifice, you leave something there, an offering when you get it. It also would be considered a sacred site. Because their prayers were left there with whatever they left there. They would offer, like we say now, we give them tobacco, or we leave something there for the spirits to give a blessing for taking it [PK Interview February 4, 1996].

The respondent went on to say that obsidian could not be obtained on the Wind River Reservation. Another consultant told us that obsidian scrapers were prized for cleaning hides, and from her description, it seemed that she was referring to the Shoshone split cobble scraping tools (Jones 1875:261). The significance of obsidian was also noted by Polly Shoyo, a consultant for Demitri Shimkin in 1937 who told him about the drudgery of getting wood:

After breakfast, the woman would take a rawhide rope , and go to the brush to get wood. She'd pick up branches, or use an obsidian ax to hack them. It was very painful work [Shimkin 1947b:318].

Yet another respondent to this project, a great-granddaughter of Togwootee who once had accompanied him by stagecoach to Yellowstone National Park, recognized the importance of the black obsidian for arrow points. She also updated the spiritual role of the stone to contemporary Shoshoneans by revealing that red obsidian from Yellowstone National Park was used "by peyote people in making the head of water birds", a primary symbol associated with the Native American Church.

Largely due to the dramatic volcanic abutment of Obsidian Cliff, this mineral has enjoyed high visibility in the geological and cultural history of the Park. "There is enough obsidian in sight in the Park region to cover the whole of New England, one foot in depth," claimed Orrin Bonney and Lorraine Bonney (1970:485). Although this may be a bit of an overstatement, it is certain that the Yellowstone National Park region contains abundant obsidian and Obsidian Cliff is without question the best known archaeological resource in the Park.

Since the earliest explorations of Yellowstone National Park, Obsidian Cliff was carefully examined by geologists who were particularly interested in its mineral formation and any

relationship to the Park's volcanoes. They were encouraged by the work of John Wesley Powell, founding father of the Bureau of American Ethnology and culture hero to 19th century American scholars and adventurers. Any scientists accompanying early expeditions to Yellowstone National Park would probably have been familiar with Powell's description of chipping an obsidian stone tool:

The obsidian or other stone of which the implement is to be made is first selected by breaking up larger masses of the rock and choosing those which exhibit the fracture desired and which are free of flaws; then these pieces are baked or steamed, perhaps I might say annealed, by placing them in damp earth covered with a brisk fire for twenty-four hours, then with sharp blows they are still further broken into flakes approximating the shape and size desired. For the more complete fashioning of the implement a tool of horn, usually of the mountain sheep, but sometimes of the deer or antelope, is used. The flake of stone is held in one hand, placed on a little cushion made of untanned skin of some animal, to protect the hand from the flakes which are to be chipped off, and with a sudden pressure of the bone-tool the proper shape is given. They acquire great skill in this, and the art seems to be confined to but few persons, who manufacture them and exchange them for other articles [Powell 1875:27-28].

The famous geologist and artist, W.H. Holmes, was well versed in Indian stone tool manufacture and paid an early visit to Obsidian Cliff. Noting its importance for stone tools (Holmes 1879), Holmes went on to describe Yellowstone National Park obsidian in the *Handbook of American Indians* (1910), and later wrote what many still consider an indispensable study on native tool-making (1919). Geologists and chroniclers accompanying other early expeditions also visited and reported on Obsidian Cliff (Hayden 1883; Iddings 1888). Captain W. A. Jones, for example, described artifacts he and his group found along their travel route in 1873, the abundant obsidian near Obsidian Cliff, and an arrowpoint still attached to its shaft that was discovered by one of his men (Jones 1875:262). Since these visits occurred when America's scientific community was just accepting the fact that stone tools represented ancient cultures, a central discussion in the reports concerned this distinction between artifacts made by Indians and those items that were naturally formed.

Around the same period Superintendent Philetus Norris ordered his road-builders to keep a ready eye out for Indian artifacts which he then packaged and shipped to Washington's Smithsonian Institution. Norris indicates that he found "Obsidian Mountain" in 1878, and he reports that in the following year:

I ...traced the mountain of obsidian or volcanic glass from where I discovered it last year, at Beaver Lake, to a branch of the Gibbon, below Lake of the Woods, a distance of some eight miles ...a vast weapon and implement quarry for the ancient hermit Sheepeaters [Norris 1880a:16].

Norris included specimens collected at Obsidian Cliff in the materials he dispatched to the Smithsonian in 1879 (Norris 1880:7), and believed that this source produced obsidian which was "unrivaled in quantity, beauty, and variety of color" (Norris 1881a:15). Smaller fragments of obsidian found along the shores of Yellowstone Lake and Shoshone Lake were said by Norris to "sparkle like diamonds." One of Norris' astute observations, which was frequently overlooked in subsequent years by investigators into the distribution of obsidian, concerned other obsidian sources in Yellowstone National Park. Norris found that:

...large deposits of black and mottled obsidian at the Cascade or Crystal Falls, near the Falls of the Yellowstone, on the Continental Divide near Shoshone Lake, at the Lookout Cliffs, upon the new road over the Madison Plateau, and at other localities [Norris 1881a:15].

Several early tourist accounts of their trips to Yellowstone National Park include observations on Obsidian Cliff and obsidian in the Park (Gerrish 1887:196; Synge 1892:120; Dudley 1886:47; Kipling 1920:79). Usually these are simple descriptions and observations about the obsidian and its use for artifacts. Nonetheless, coupled with scientific accounts these popular stories led to the false impression that all the obsidian in North America, except on the west coast must have come from Yellowstone National Park. But as ably summarized by Davis et al. (1995:6-7), from the turn of the century until the 1960's archaeological manifestations from the Ohio mound builders to the Alberta buffalo hunters were indeed linked in the literature to Yellowstone National Park through the obsidian trade.

Concentrating on Yellowstone National Park as a source for all this obsidian, however, put archaeologists and historians in a dilemma. On the one hand, there was considerable evidence that Yellowstone National Park obsidian was scattered about the country. On the other, they continued to believe that most Indians, with the exception of the "reclusive" and "isolated" Sheep Eaters, were supposed to have avoided Yellowstone. How then could this obsidian have been obtained? If Indians held the Yellowstone region in taboo and were so terrified of its geysers or were incapable of traversing the high mountain passes, who quarried and transported all those rocks? One solution was to suggest:

...the material was merely quarried and roughly formed by the Sheepeaters who traded it in that condition with the surrounding tribes and by them taken away to be fashioned into final shape [Skinner 1926:191].

Because so few actual arrow heads or formed tools were found at Obsidian Cliff, this explanation had considerable support. While we have little evidence that Sheep Eaters controlled the Obsidian Cliff source area, the common method of collecting raw stone material is to quarry it, rough out

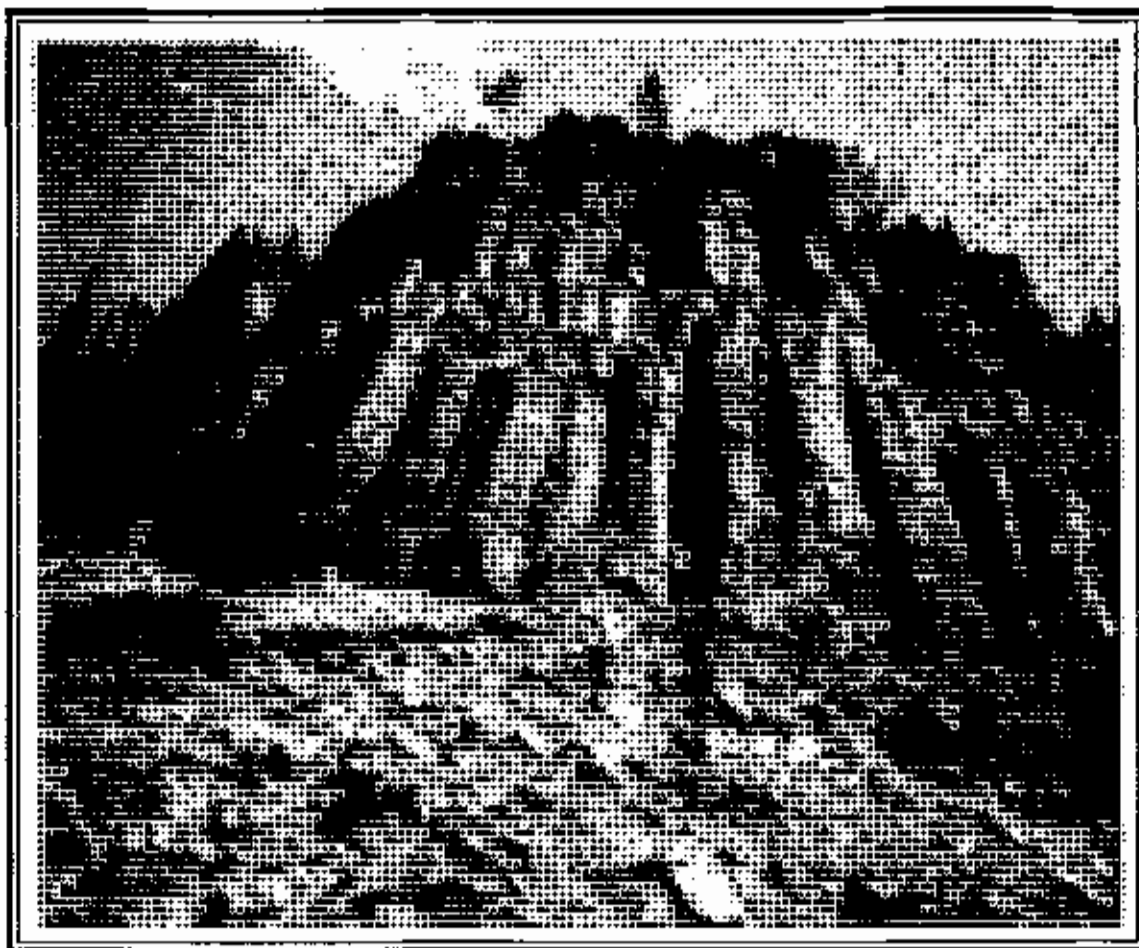


Figure 3.8. Obsidian Cliff, Yellowstone National Park. Photograph 1994.

blanks or preforms, and then transport them to other locations for the finishing work (Loendorf et al. 1984). Sometimes these locations are close by, but preforms are also carried hundreds of miles before being reduced to patterned tools.

Another explanation for how obsidian was obtained from Yellowstone National Park is the suggestion that Obsidian Cliff was "neutral ground" where brave men went, not to dally or hunt, but simply to get the obsidian they needed for their survival. In this view obsidian was seen as so important that its major quarry in the Park constituted a sort of neutral zone where, "in timorous truce [Sioux, Blackfoot, Crow and Bannock] made stores of arrowheads from the mountain of black obsidian which looms above the river near its golden gate" (Raftery 1943 [1907]: 102, emphasis ours),

or as another writer phrased it more simply, where tribes "resorted to temporary peace to make arrow-heads and stone axes" (Skinner 1926:190). What is interesting about this piece of unsubstantiated geographical folklore is that it is almost the exact reverse of the "geyser taboo" idea, suggesting a kind of approach-the-rocks but avoid-the-waters conceptual contradiction. Whereas Indians are presumed to have given the forbidden Park a wide berth because of their horror of its "demon-haunted fastnesses" (Raftery 1943 [1907]:102), here the region is said to have been protected by a kind of inter-tribal covenant as Indians were drawn to the Park for its obsidian. Possibly originating from Jim Bridger (Alter 1925:381), this notion was disseminated among tourists in early editions of the Haynes guidebooks to Yellowstone National Park, which maintained that "Obsidian Cliff was 'neutral ground' to all the Rocky Mountain Indians and undoubtedly as sacred to the various hostile tribes as the famed Pipestone country of Minnesota" (Guptill 1890:34). Before continuing this discussion, it should be noted that the primary use of catlinite, found at Minnesota's Pipestone National Monument, was to make sacred pipes while obsidian primarily went into utilitarian objects. To be sure, catlinite was sometimes used for non-ceremonial objects and obsidian was used to manufacture magnificent ritual bifaces in Ohio, California and elsewhere. But making religious objects from obsidian by Indians who lived in the region surrounding the Park was not the norm.

As for substantiating this general "neutral ground" hypothesis, there are other Plains Indian geographical contexts where the idea has been proposed. But as with the Obsidian Cliff case, too little hard data usually accompanies the assertion. In 1978 Canadian ethnohistorians attempted to assess contentions that the Cypress Hills, overlapping the provinces of southern Saskatchewan and Alberta, was a "neutral ground" or "no-man's land" which different tribes all agreed to avoid so as to protect its wild game. Finding no ethnography to support the idea, the researchers suggested that instead the Cypress Hills, a hunting grounds positioned between hostile tribes, were more aptly termed "any-man's-land," since it was generally understood among mutually-hostile hunting tribes that you first sought game in your own safe area which you protected against all comers, and only ventured out of it when you were willing to pay the price of constant vigilance and possible warfare (Bonnichsen and Baldwin 1978:35-39). Liljeblad heard of a similar sort of region in south-central Montana (Liljeblad 1957:63-65) which lay unclaimed between Crow and Blackfoot territories. Called by the Shoshones *kutsunambih*, or "the buffalo heart," it was said to serve much the same game park function imputed to the Cypress Hills, with the important difference being that over half-a-dozen tribes hunted here; "the effect was that the region was somewhat neutral," writes Janetski (1987:60). Yet another supposed neutral ground, described as a multi-tribal "Peace Valley," supposedly lay to the west of the Park and attracted some of its native residents. As Corless and Wells write:

The Valley where the Boise, Ohwyhee, Malheur, Payette, and Weiser rivers joined the Snake became a great "Peace Valley" in the Indian world. A legendary fair, or salmon festival, was a yearly intertribal gathering, or rendezvous, held in the summer. It would last for a month or more. Different tribes and bands [Bannock, Nez Perce, Umatilla, Cayuse, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Sheep Eater, Northern Paiute] from throughout the West would meet without fear in order to trade or make treaties and to celebrate the beginning of the fishing [Corless and Wells 1990:14].

For the Sweet Grass Hills of north-central Montana, the "neutral ground" claim has taken on a more explicitly spiritual, pacifistic cast. "Many of the tribes who used the Sweet Grass Hills were traditional enemies," contends Emily Cousins, "but the Hills comprised a neutral zone in which no one could be attacked" (Cousins 1996/97:505). But unfortunately we are provided with no ethnohistorical, ethnographic or archaeological evidence to support her assertion that "As long as people did not carry weapons on their journey to the Hills, it was clear they had come to pray" (Cousins 1996/97:505).

On the existence of such "neutral grounds" in the greater Yellowstone region or the Plains in general, therefore, the jury is still out. And when compared to catlinite, the more readily accessible nature of obsidian elsewhere would seem to weaken its role in any "neutral ground" theory in the Park. Nonetheless, and despite ample evidence of bloody skirmishing between Blackfeet and other tribes in the Park, the notion that Yellowstone was a zone of peace persists; indeed, researcher Joseph Weixelman was told by a Shoshone consultant that "as they came for purposes other than warfare, tribes did not fight each other here" (Weixelman 1992:59). Nez Perce historian Adeline Fredin reported to Weixelman much the same, that at Yellowstone "any hostility was forgotten, and left outside the area" (quoted in Weixelman 1992:59). And a Kootenai-Salish consultant contributed to this theme:

To my understanding, once they went to gather tools, that was kind of a place where they didn't war with each other. It was a common ground where they didn't fight when they were in there gathering their material that they needed for their tools, their projectile points. That is kind of an understanding that I had of that site. That was really special for me to make that positive connection again. To go back there and walk the same land that some of my ancestors walked [TT Interview, Pablo, Montana, August 22, 1995].

In so far as access to obsidian is concerned, it is significant that the mineral actually can be found at more than one source in and around Yellowstone National Park. In fact, Cannon and Hughes (1995) note that the literature on Yellowstone National Park contains references to nearly two dozen sources of obsidian within the boundaries of the Park and more importantly, chemical studies for 794 artifacts indicate they were made of obsidian from twelve different sources in and around the Park. It is true that about three-fourths of the artifacts were made from Obsidian Cliff obsidian, but this is clearly not the only source. Eighteen percent of the sample is from Idaho obsidian while six percent is from obsidian sources in Jackson Hole (Cannon and Hughes 1995). As Holmer has stated, "...[In] my recent study on obsidian use in the Upper Snake River Basin ...Obsidian Cliff from Yellowstone is not heavily represented. However, there has been very little work done in the counties nearer to Yellowstone so I suspect the low numbers reflect the nature of the data base more than prehistoric use of the resource" (personal communication, Richard N. Holmer to Peter Nabokov, February 27, 1997).

Curiously, the attention paid by scientists to Obsidian Cliff shortly after its discovery was followed by a period when the site was largely ignored. During the extensive Work Project

Administration projects at archaeological sites across the United States, other locations in the region were investigated, such as Pictograph Cave, along the Yellowstone River in Montana (Mulloy 1958) and Dinwoody Cave, on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming (Sowers 1941). Perhaps no work was attempted at Obsidian Cliff because its location inside Yellowstone National Park made it off limits, yet that was not the case in other national parks. Furthermore, this period of neglect was given a scholarly justification with a thesis by Jake Hoffman, a graduate student at Montana State University (Missoula) who served as crew chief for the first sponsored archaeological survey in the Park in 1958 -59. Visiting Obsidian Cliff with his crews, he found no artifacts around the outcrop and declared that any claims for the use of Obsidian Cliff by prehistoric cultures were grossly overrated.

Probably with good reason Hoffman surmised that whatever artifacts had once been there were likely picked up by tourists. In their diaries dozens of tourists have suggested that collecting obsidian was a common practice in the Park. Take for example, the following 1884 account of a journey through the Yellowstone "Wonderland":

At three o'clock off we go--a pull of fifty-five minutes lands us at top of the long hill. The only "object of interest" being an old Indian tepee, old, ugly and empty, first and only sign of Indians seen in the Park. We stop at the glass mountain and fill up odd corners--of the ambulances with obsidian--[Anonymous 1884:13th day].

In this description insult is added to Indians at two levels. First their house remains are labeled ugly and second their prized obsidian is stolen as curio. It is these sorts of accounts that led Hoffman to believe that Obsidian Cliff was corrupted as a viable archaeological site:

My observation of curious tourists at Obsidian Cliff suggest that it a rare person who doesn't pick up or knock off a few chips. Projecting this suggestion over ninety years and several million tourists, the extensive quarrying marks on Obsidian Cliff lose archaeological significance. Many of the quarrying marks are due to sampling by U.S.G.S. geologists (Clarke 1896, 1900; Hague 1887, 1899; Iddings 1885) who probably took many samples from random areas of the Cliff [Hoffman 1961:101-102].

What is unfortunate is that Hoffman and his crews did not explore the upland plateau above Obsidian Cliff where extensive pits and mines still remain as evidence to the thousands of hours of work that went into quarrying the obsidian. Nor was this portion of the site studied in detail until after the 1988 fires when the National Park Service assessed the damage to Yellowstone's cultural resources. Fortunately the fires did not badly impact on the buried obsidian or the quarry pits, and this research resulted in an excellent study and compilation of information on Obsidian Cliff (Davis et al. 1995).

What caused Obsidian Cliff to regain its earlier prominence in scientific circles were the neutron activation studies which allowed geochemists to source the mineral. Early in these experiments,

James Griffin, a world-renowned archaeologist from the University of Michigan and a founder of obsidian studies, gave an invited lecture at the University of Montana in which he used the analogy of making an angel food cake to describe how obsidian was originally formed. On one occasion, he explained, a cook might whip a dozen large egg whites, fold in slightly less than one cup of flour, a bit more sugar, a full teaspoon of cream of tartar, and less than a teaspoon of vanilla while the next time the egg whites might be from extra large eggs, and the cook might fold in slightly less flour, a bit more sugar, slightly less cream of tartar, and more vanilla. While on both occasions the result was recognized as Angel Food cake, Dr. Griffin explained that the ingredients differed slightly.

Returning to his example of obsidian formation, Dr. Griffin said that when volcanoes supplied the original heat for melting and fusing the sand at Obsidian Cliff, the ingredients contained trace amounts of barium, strontium, and zirconium. If another batch of sand in a different location was heated, it also produced a mineral that was recognizably "obsidian" but the trace elements in its constitution were slightly different. Using precise data on such differences, it has therefore become possible to "fingerprint" obsidian found in various archaeological sites, and the first amazing fact discovered by this process was that the obsidian from the high status burials in the Hopewell culture of Ohio had been quarried from Obsidian Cliff. Although this idea had been put forward in earlier years, it was this definite proof from Yellowstone which excited archaeologists about the wider potential for identifying obsidian sources in their research. Geochemists can now use x-ray fluorescence, "a non-destructive technique in which the obsidian is bombarded with x-rays, allowing rare radioactive elements to be counted in parts per million. Most obsidian contains the same elements; what x-ray fluorescence tells us is the relative proportions of those elements in each sample" (Cannon 1993:8). Coupled with these methods for studying the ingredients in each batch of obsidian, scientists discovered that obsidian forms a hydration rind on its surface that thickens through time (Friedman and Smith 1960; Davis 1972). Measurements of these rinds allow for estimates as to the age of the artifacts on which they are found and, although there are many problems with the method, improvements continue to be made (Friedman and Cannon 1995).

Once again, we need not duplicate here recent compilation of information on Obsidian Cliff (Davis et al 1995). For this chapter, however, the subject of obsidian has allowed us to reinvestigate the role that the stone material and its famous Cliff played in the lives of the Sheep Eaters.

(e) Bows. Another intriguing artifact associated with the Sheep Eaters is the bow fashioned from mountain sheep horn or elk antlers. The notion of an extremely powerful killing machine crafted from the strong, curved crown of the very creature it was designed to bring down has fascinated anthropologists and do-it-yourself artisans for years.

Horn bows appear to have been prized by all the Plains tribes and used in ceremonial dances as well as for everyday hunting. One appears as a mark of warrior insignia in the famous painting by Karl Bodmer of Pehriska-Ruhpa, a Hidatsa Indian who posed for the artist in his Dog Society costume. It is not known if this bow was made by the Hidatsa or if it was traded to the Hidatsa from the Sheep Eaters or made by another group such as the Crow, and traded to the Hidatsa. Once again

our first glimpse of this centerpiece of Sheep Eater hunting paraphernalia comes from Osborne Russell. After his visit on July 29, 1835, with the same Lamar Valley group of Indians mentioned earlier, Russell provided this memorable image:

They were well armed with bows and arrows pointed with obsidian. The bows were beautifully wrought from Sheep, Buffalo and Elk horns secured with Deer and Elk sinews and ornamented with porcupine quills and generally about 3 feet long [Russell 1965:26-27].

Usually these bows were made from highhorn sheep horns or elk antlers, since bison horns did not reach lengths sufficient for bows. However, Lowie indicates that three pieces of bison horn might be laminated into bows with the help of sinew wrapping (1924:246). Modern-day bow makers who have worked with elk antlers indicate it is difficult to remove the branch points, and that their quality varies according to the time of the year they were acquired (Anonymous 1991:6). But the best quality horn bows appear to be crafted from bighorn sheep horns.

Currently on exhibit in the Museum of the Mountain Man of the Sublette County History Society, located in Pinedale, Wyoming, one of these horn bows was originally recovered from a cave high in the Gros Ventre Mountains of western Wyoming (Frison 1980:173). These slopes are certainly within Sheep Eater territory, and this bow is obviously an authentic example of old horn manufacture. Donated to the Museum by Gene Chapman and estimated, on the museum label, to date from the 1800-1850 period, its two basic halves are formed from two Bighorn sheep horns, very likely from a matched pair belonging to one animal. While it is currently missing, the joint was apparently strengthened by another piece of horn that was shaped and glued across it. All the rough outer horn has been removed, and the horns somehow shaped with shaving tools to create the bow. The bow was then backed with continuous pieces of sinew which were glued all down its back length. Sinew fragments are evident at the ends, and it was also sinew-wrapped where the center joint piece is missing. The entire length measures 83 cm., or about 33 inches.

Recently Tom Lucas, an archer and sheep horn bow enthusiast from Lander, Wyoming, has experimented with making these weapons. Although Lucas has neither seen a native-made sheep horn bow nor read any instructions on how to make them, he learned a lot from his trial-and-error approach to fashioning a horn bow. First he removed the horns from the skull and softened them by plunging them into hot water. According to Lucas, the hotter the water the faster the horn softens, but moderately hot water will also work, only more slowly. Following the outline of the curl, he then cut a strip from each horn which retained the outer casing of the horn that would be removed later. To straighten out each end, he dunked them back in hot water, and when they were pliable, clamped them between two boards. The ensuing drying process in this clamp took 7 to 10 days.

Shaping began while the straightened horn was still damp, and if needed, it was redipped into hot water. While Lucas fashioned the horn with knife and rasp, he boiled the shavings into glue. In this shaping process, Lucas worked the pliable bow sides with his hands to take out any side curves. When this work was nearly complete, he beveled the butt ends until they fit tightly together prior to

gluing. For this Lucas first put two small pegs through the butt ends to hold them for the glue. Next he fit two additional pieces of shaped horn over the joint, gluing one on the belly and another

For his information on Sheep Eaters, Ake Hultkrantz relied on a kin cluster of four or five, interrelated "bearers of the Sheepeater tradition" who lived in the Sage Creek area (See page 330 of this document for portraits of some of these individuals). In his view, these were the only remaining "core group of mountain Indians" who could speak authoritatively about the pre-reservation Sheep Eater way of life. Prominent among them was the elderly woman named Pawagap (left, photo courtesy of Ake Hultkrantz), meaning "Water Bush," who was locally known as Pearl Cody. She told Hultkrantz that she was a baby "long ago: when the buffaloes ran around among the mountains." Actually born in the mountains, where she spent her childhood, with her father, a man named Wandziatsi, or "Antelope Horn." Although the Wind River Reservation Agency gave her birth date as 1871, in 1948 Hultkrantz heard that she was 90 years old, while in 1955 her age was given as 100.

According to Hultkrantz, her first husband was the story-teller Pandzofa:ygo, meaning "Bare Spot," whose nickname was Tonoway gare, meaning "Sits on a Grease-wood." Her second husband was Tojandisona?, which means "He Uses a Dirty Plate." A medicine man and rain magician, her third husband was known by many names, Nazaha?ni, "He Drives (a horse) for Himself," but in English he was called Valentine Cody. However, he also used the nicknames Pa:congu:?, "Purple Bull" and Mumbic, meaning "Owl."

In 1948 Hultkrantz regarded this woman as one of his key consultants. Even though by the time of his later visits in 1955 and 1958 she had become enfeebled, she still possessed "direct experience of the old Sheepeater pre-reservation life." Much of her information had come from her father, who had passed on his knowledge of Sheep Eater religion, and customs such as the fact that "my father told me that we never ate dogs or horses." When Hultkrantz knew her she was stooped and walked with a stick. At his last visit to Wind River she was living alone in a cloth tent "that only contained her simple bed and a small table at the entrance" (Information from Ake Hultkrantz, *Sheep Eater Manuscript*, N.D., pp. 54-61).



on the back of the bow. To add tensile strength for the pull he made sure, of course, that the back of the bow was actually the inside of the horn's natural curl.

Then he glued sinew all down the back of the bow, allowing it to dry before layering on additional strips of sinew. Lucas allowed up to 30 days for this important process. Finally, more strips of wet sinew were wrapped around the stock to form the grip and to strengthen the all-important center joint. When complete and strung with a twined sinew cord, these efficient, short bows possessed an estimated 60 to 70 pound pull.

In its basic steps, Lucas' trial-and-error process of bow-making appears to be essentially the same as that found in the ethnographic literature. From an independent rancher/researcher named Jack Contor, who interviewed Indians living at Fort Hall, Idaho, David Dominick (1964:155) obtained an unpublished account of the making of a Sheep Eater bow. The process was said to take two months to complete. His description goes as follows:

These bows were made from the thick ridge of the upper side of the ram's horn. The horn is heated over the coals to soften it and then the naturally curving horn was straightened. Unwanted portions of the horn were whittled away, and the remaining solid piece was 18 to 24 inches long and one inch thick at the butt. Heat was again applied, making the horn semi-plastic, and it was smoothed and shaped by pounding with a round stone. The end result was a very smooth and evenly tapered piece which was oval-shaped in cross section. A duplicate of this was made for the other ram's horn, and the two pieces were beveled at their butt ends and fitted together. A separate piece of horn about five inches long and as wide as the butt end was placed at their junction. Wet rawhide was then wrapped around the three pieces. When it dried, this made a very firm joint. Sinew strips which came from the neck and back of large animals were glued to the back of the bow to give it added strength [Dominick 1964:155].

But there are also some interesting differences between the bow-making processes described by Lucas and Contor: a) the Indians' use of coals to heat the horn, rather than water; b) their pounding the bow into shape with a round stone; c) the application of "rawhide" to bind the joint; and d) the absence of glue or pegs in the joint. It should be noted that Contor did not watch someone make a bow, and details could be misconstrued through second-hand description, so the "rawhide" could actually be sinew, and some sort of additional fastening must have strengthened the joint where these creations are most vulnerable. Furthermore, there was possibly more than one way to manufacture a horn bow (see [Appendix D](#) for another modern-day experiment with horn bow-making together with a list of Indian-made horn bows in American museums, kindly provided by Bill Holm, world-renowned expert on Indian arts, master craftsman, and professor emeritus of University of Washington's Thomas Burke Memorial Washington State Museum).

Another interesting mention of horn bow manufacture among the Shoshone comes from Elijah Nicholas Wilson (affectionately known as "Uncle Nick"), who lived with the Shoshone, as a boy,

in the 1850's (Wilson 1985:vi). Wilson wrote his memoirs some sixty years later, thus the account is from his memory:

The bows were sometimes made of mountain sheep horns, which have been thrown into some hot spring and left there until they were pliable. Then they were shaped, and a strip of sinew was stuck on the back with some kind of balsam gum that was about as good as glue. This made a powerful bow [Wilson 1985:107, emphasis ours].

While this account lacks detail, it tends to confirm parts of the Lucas bow-making method -- the use of hot water and glue, although the mention of balsam gum is confusing because it could not have been obtained in the region. What is most striking, however, is that it offers testimony that Indians took advantage of thermal pools for softening the horns. Considering the availability of hot water in Yellowstone National Park, this exploitation of hot springs seems a significant element in the Wilson description. Yet another fragment of horn bow lore comes from the meticulous fieldworker, Robert Lowie, who worked among the Northern Shoshone even before he began his long-term coverage of the Crow. Lowie noted that their elk horn bows were constructed from a single piece of the horn, backed with sinew and decorated with porcupine quills that were wrapped around the bow limbs. But Lowie also described sheep horn bows:

Of a different type were the compound bighorn bows, consisting of two parts spliced at the center with sturgeon glue made from boiling rendered fish parts and with deer-sinews wound around the splice and secured by their butt-ends, the small ends bending outward at the ends of the bow. Sometimes the sinews covered the whole width of the back. For ornament, the skin of a snake was glued to the bow [Lowie 1909:192].

Lowie's description of the ends as bending outward suggests that this was a recurve bow, pulled against the natural curl of the horn, much as Lucas described. Several authors mention decoration with flattened and wrapped porcupine quills, but Lowie's addition of snake skin sounds novel. Taking two to three months to complete, these bows were highly-valued and extensively-traded with other tribes. In fact a well-made northern Shoshone horn bow was said to go for no less than five to ten horses (Fowler and Liljeblad 1986:439; Dominick 1964:156).

(f) Arrows. As for the missiles shot by these bows we do have some interesting archaeological evidence. From the excavations at Wickiup Cave, a Sheep Eater campsite about 30 miles west of Yellowstone National Park, wooden arrows shafts were recovered which exhibit tenons or ends that are carved to a narrower diameter than the remainder of the shaft. The Sheep Eaters seem to have used compound arrows, which were about 2.5 feet in length, in which the tenon was inserted into the hollow end of the arrow's foreshaft - although Jack Contor was told they were crafted in three sections (Dominick 1964:156). Their wooden bodies were used again and again, while the reed foreshafts with their stone points might be replaced whenever they snapped off.

These foreshafts were often manufactured from horse grass (*Equisetum spp.*) and sinew-bound to the fennon. As for the main shafts, there was a choice of woods. The arrows at Wickiup Cave were identified as elm and cottonwood, but Jack Contor was told that the Idaho Sheep Eaters preferred dogwood and mock orange, while Lowie (1909:192) indicates that greasewood was a favorite choice and the field specimens examined by Murphy and Murphy were merely identified as "hardwood" (Murphy and Murphy 1986:301). Elsewhere, Lowie (1924:246) has described the Shoshone using service berry wood that they first dried and cured for a year. Stripped of their bark, all these raw rods required working out their slight kinks with the aid of a wrench - a hole drilled in an animal rib bone - and possibly limbering over a fire. They were further smoothed by grinding them against sandstone before attaching the feathers, leaving groove marks which can still be seen at some Montana and Wyoming sites.

The fleching on the Wickiup Cave arrows was fastened about five inches beyond the nock end of the shaft, a long style which is associated with northern Shoshone arrows (Lowie 1909:192). Although Dominick (1964:156) indicates that Sheep Eaters preferred owl or eagle feathers because they would not absorb blood, the feather pieces from Wickiup Cave were identified as grouse. Several arrows collected from the northern Shoshone before 1869 are fleched with feathers from a red tailed hawk (Murphy and Murphy 1986:301). As with their arrow woods, the Sheep Eaters apparently had considerable leeway in their choice of arrow feathers. Also, their tips might be steeped in a deadly poison compound made from animal spleen mixed with crushed red ants (Lowie 1909:192 quoting Lewis and Clark), although we are not aware if this was used in hunting as well as warfare.

The Food Quest I - Hunting the Mountain Sheep

We must never forget that the bison-hunting and horse-riding Indians of the Great Plains whose imagery caught the world's fancy in the 19th century - and against whose culture the Sheep Eaters were negatively assessed - only represent the thinnest slice of human occupancy of the greater Yellowstone region. While this does not diminish our interest in their uses of the Yellowstone Plateau for hunting, vision-questing, short-cuts during long-distance travels, or the place it held in their world-views, it does make us appreciate more fully the uniquely mountain lifeways which developed over thousands of years that supported the Sheep Eaters. To the uninitiated the high mountains appear impassable and harsh, but to people willing to move around and adjust to changing seasonal and climactic realities they could become a storehouse, a church and a home. For the well-trained forager the plant and animal bounties of the highlands were especially available in spring and summertime. This is because "Mountains have one feature which the plains can never claim," write Dale and Lynn Fredlund, "a fantastic diversity of ecological zones within a relatively small area". As they elaborate on the benefits of this diversity:

Specific vegetable resources seem to last forever in the mountains. For example, huckleberries begin to bear fruit about the first week of July in sunny areas at low elevations and are finished by the end of that month; but at higher elevations they can

still be found at the end of August or the first of September [Fredlund and Fredlund 1971:48].

Of the animals that can be found year-round in the Rocky Mountain uplands one of the most easily-hunted are the mountain sheep. As their ethnic name suggests, the peregrinations of the Sheep Eaters were symbiotically bound up with the primary food source, Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep (*Ovis Canadensis*). It is possible to generally plot the locations of the Sheep Eaters at various times during the year by examining the migration patterns of these animals. In the late 1800's, before Euroamericans altered the patterns of bighorn sheep, the herds appear to have followed several migration patterns. According to early census data, some herds (or portions of herds) stayed in the Park throughout the year, wintering in the vicinity of Mount Everts (Caslick 1993:6). Other herds in the vicinity of Yellowstone National Park apparently moved from one part of their habitat to another during the year in a migration pattern that was affected by the weather and snow depths. Some sheep herds appear to have moved to lower elevations during the winter where there was less snow cover and back to higher elevations during the spring and summer.

Whatever their movements we can expect the Sheep Eaters to be somewhere nearby throughout these annual migrations. Their namesake and main staff of life, the species of mountain creatures on which the Sheep Eaters depended were actually not that hard to kill. But stalking the bighorn sheep efficiently did probably require the development of techniques based upon close observation of their habits. For instance, the Shoshone must have learned early on that Bighorns can be approached quite closely and in plain sight so long as hunters positioned themselves on the slopes below the sheep. Hence the hunters climbed towards the animals quietly and steadily, ascending in a zigzag pattern with the sheep watching them all the while, until they were within arrow range (Barrette 1963:22). According to Dick Washakie, during the winter and early spring, solitary hunters or small groups wearing snowshoes and using dogs drove the animals into deep snow. Floundering through the drifts, the sheep were sufficiently slowed down to make them easy prey (Shimkin notes 1937).

A second hunting method was also premised on familiarity with sheep behavior. To escape from danger the Shoshone knew that Bighorn sheep usually retreated from their meadow pasturage by leaping up to rocky precipices and higher outcrops where their sure, quick hooves allowed them to skip rapidly across rough terrain. Hunting in the late winter or early spring, the native hunters searched for animals who were grazing in meadows below basalt crags and other dark-colored rocks. Warned by the sun, snow on these rocks and talus slopes melted well before the drifts on the flatter slopes. Preparing for this hunting event, the natives would have scooped out hiding blinds from the rocky talus, producing circular pits about 1.5 meters or five feet in diameter and 1 meter or three feet in depth. Examples of these blinds still can be found inside of Yellowstone National Park and the surrounding ranges. On a remote spot high on Mount Everts, for instance, a backpacker friend of Park historian Lee Whittlesey told him of U-and-circular shaped circles of rocks and logs which sound much like pits seen on slopes opposite the Gardiner River from Electric Peak (Whittlesey to Laura Joss, personal communication, n.d.). While a portion of the men concealed themselves here, their comrades got into position just below the grazing sheep. At a signal the drivers and their dogs

broke out into yells and barking (Lowie 1909:185; Steward 1938:37). According to Alexander Ross, the Sheep Eaters were:

...complete masters of what is called the cabalistic language of birds and beasts, and can imitate to the utmost perfection the singing of birds, the howling of wolves, and the neighing of horses, by which means they can approach, by day and night, all travelers [Ross 1924:241].

And the European scholar Bengt Anell describes the use by Western American hunters of yells and calls to drive game into traps, specifically the imitation of wolf howls:

...the beaters did their utmost to give a faithful imitation of howling wolves, a trick which in areas where the quarry was torn to pieces by wolves did not fail to produce an effect [Anell 1969:116-117].

In this wolf habitat it is not impossible to imagine that the Sheep Eaters driving the quarry ever upwards were conceivably howling like wolves. Frightened by the imminent danger, the alarmed sheep rapidly scaled the heights to the talus grade as they sought to escape. The hunters hidden in the pits close by waited until the sheep were within range, and then fired arrows at their white bodies which would have been clearly outlined targets against the darker rocks.

More labor intensive was the old Shoshonean technique for hunting bighorns known as the "drive." This called for constructing long fences and corrals from deadfall timber. Still existing in Montana and Wyoming are the remains of fifteen to twenty of these sheep drive sites. Although most of the wood remains of these drives within Yellowstone National Park have disintegrated from decay or wildfire, according to Aubrey Haines one of them stretched up a hillside across the stream from today's Golden Gate canyon road. He also knew of another to the east of the Gardiner River in the area where an old "elk drive" line was also located, near the Gardiner-to-Jardine road. A third stood in the vicinity of Mammoth Hot Springs (Stuart Conner letter to Bonnie Hogan, 12/9/73). If Superintendent Philetus Norris' comments in his 1881 annual report are any indication, at one time these sheep drives must have been fairly common in the Park, even though he apparently mistakes them all for circular breastworks:

Four of these were discovered during this season, viz., one beside our camp, in a grove north of the crossing of Willow Creek, some three miles below Mary's Lake... It is about thirty feet long by twenty wide, and constructed of fragments of logs, stumps, poles, and stones, with ingenuity and skill proverbial to the beaver; nearly weather, wind, and bullet proof; about breast high, which is certainly less than when built, and situated, as usual, in a wind-fall then screened by a thicket of small pines, which are now large enough for bridge or building timber [Norris 1881b:36].

In the same report Norris locates three other drives he found in 1881. One lay east of Yellowstone Lake in the Stinkingwater drainage, another was found near Bridger's Lake, and the

third stood on a branch of Barlow Fork of the Snake River. Since these do not correlate with any of the drives known historically in the Mammoth area, we get the impression that these sheep drive lines and corrals were not rare in the Park. Thus when the authors of this study ran across Norris' mention that his artist companion, Albert Bierstadt, sketched an Indian deadfall corral and breastwork near Mary's Lake, we made every effort to pursue the illustration for this document.

We learned that Bierstadt's Yellowstone sketchbook had "surfaced briefly in 1965 and has been unlocated since. A single note concerning it, 'Yellowstone Camp, August 1881,' is all that remains a part of recorded history" (Hendricks 1974:270). However our further inquiries revealed that a dealer in western art, William Bertsche, then of Great Falls, Montana, had written the New York Public Library on June 25, 1965 to ask for background information about "two sketch books that were found among some paintings of Albert Bierstadt" which were now in his possession. As Bertsche described their contents: "There are sketches of the Madison River in Montana, Yellowstone Lake, geysers, buffalo, elk and mountain scenes. One sketch is dated 'Yellowstone Camp, August, 1881'" (Bertsche to New York Public Library, June 25, 1965). Two weeks later the library responded to Bertsche with "only rather negative evidence concerning the date of Bierstadt's visit to Yellowstone", although it did turn up one reference to a dated Bierstadt painting, "Geysers, 1883" (New York Public Library, Art and Architecture Division to Bertsche, July 6, 1965). In the October 28, 1881 edition of The New York Express, an interview with Bierstadt briefly describes his Yellowstone experiences, but there is no mention of these Indian structures or artifacts. Before Mr. Bertsche's death in a Kalispell rest home in 1996 he personally informed Tom Minckler, a western art and rare book dealer in Billings, Montana - at the express request of our Yellowstone project - that he had turned over Bierstadt's Yellowstone sketchbooks to the Montana Historical Society (Personal Conversation August 24, 1995). We then asked Peter H. Hassrick of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center to make a formal query to the Society, but he was notified by Society Registrar Janet Sperry that their review of the "maps, manuscripts and diaries" which Bertsche had donated in 1976 to their archives did not turn up the elusive Bierstadt Yellowstone sketchbook(s) (Sperry to Hassrick, January 30, 1996). Though extremely desirous of obtaining the Bierstadt sketch for this document, time constraints forced us to halt further investigation at this point.

Back to sheep traps, it is certainly possible that some of the man-made structures described by Norris had not served that purpose. Fortifications, corrals and other types of deadfall timber structures are known throughout the mountain west. Although there have been numerous archaeological projects in Yellowstone National Park over the past thirty years, it is a lamentable oversight that these corrals, breastworks or fortifications were not mapped and recorded. While photographs of the wickiups (tipi-shaped pole lodges) are fairly common, drawings and photos for other man-made timber remains are rare. One photograph of some decayed drive lines across from Golden Gate Canyon was taken by Hidtkrantz in the 1960s, but the ground scrap was so scanty as to be nearly meaningless.

Fortunately, however, old sheep traps of the same general style are fairly well-represented in the mountainous regions adjoining Yellowstone National Park. About a dozen were recorded by George Frison in the Absaroka and Wind River ranges, which still lie well within Sheep Eater territory

(Frison et al. 1990; Frison 1991). Another sheep trap found a few miles west of the Park was protected by local outfitters during the 1988 forest fires (Frison 1991:257), while more have been identified in the Bighorn Mountains, Wyoming (Frost 1941), the Lemhi Mountains, Idaho (Barrette 1963) and in the Bitterroot Mountains of southwestern Montana (Hogan 1974). In the sites for these traps we see additional evidence of the keen observation by Sheep Eaters of animal behavior, for the great majority of them are constructed near sheep-bedding grounds (Frison et al. 1990:251). When the animals congregate in late November during the rutting season and throughout the following winter months, the Bighorns prefer to bed on open, bare ridges where they can see long distances. If frightened, they will usually dart a short distance down slope before veering uphill to escape. The lengthy, V-shaped drive fences, which were stacked from deadfall with intermittent rock cairns filling the gaps, were laid so that these escape routes funneled between the fencing. Once inside the drive lines the sheep were chased into catch-pens and easily killed with clubs or spears.

Among the six sheep traps located adjacent to a major sheep-bedding area on the Wiggins Fork of the Wind River, Frison distinguished two distinct types. The simplest variety had its drive lines extending along the side of a ridge and over a steep decline. At the base of the decline, often hidden in the trees, a rectangular-shaped catch-pen constructed of logs laid into tiers awaited the animals. A group of these pens measured by Frison et al. (1990:218) are from 14.8 feet to 23.9 feet in length and 8.2 feet to 13.5 feet in width; usually they are positioned at a lower elevation than the sloping entry ramps, which are built of logs leaning into the pens on their high side at the apex of the drive lines. Covered with soil and vegetation to help conceal the trap, their inward-leaning logs prevent the sheep from leaping out once they have been driven inside. Although the catch-pens examined by Frison have eroded, the tallest ones remain standing to a height of five feet. The side walls lean into the structure as a further hindrance to the sheep escaping. Frison et al (1990:226) report that one even had a log in its bottom that could be swung out, like a pole corral gate, probably to allow for removal of the sheep carcasses.

The larger, more elaborate type of trap added a circular or oval corral near the terminus of the v-shaped drive lines, where the sheep were contained prior to sending them into the catch-pen. It is Frison's idea that this allowed the hunters to control the number of sheep they had in the catch-pen at any one time. Perhaps more importantly, it let the hunters cull those animals they wanted for slaughter and others which they perhaps wanted to release. A third type, described by Forest Ranger A.G. Clayton, seemed to combine features of sheep trap and buffalo jump. Based on the remains of one which Clayton observed on the east wall of the West Fork of Torrey Creek near its mouth (in the Yellowstone National Park Timber District which later became Washakie National Forest and later Shoshone National Forest), this feature had two drive fences of wood that converged at an opening through which the game could pass. "But the opening would probably lead out onto a ledge over which the game could not go," Clayton believed, "and they would then be rushed from behind" (Clayton 1926:278).

The second type of trap probably took the most time and effort to construct. Based on the condition of timbers in their catch-pens, Frison et al. (1990:222) believe these larger traps are more recent, and that sheep hunting technology improved through time. Might this be evidence of a game

management system, by which the Sheep Eaters controlled the numbers and types of animals they took from the herds? By freeing pregnant females and the very young, they would have assured themselves of a resource for the future.

Once the sheep were in the catch-pen, Frison et al (1990) suggest they were mostly dispatched with clubs. This conclusion is based on the absence of projectile points in the catch-pens, where one might expect to find them if the hunters were shooting the penned animals with arrows. Short spears could have been jabbed at the animals, but the recovery of several hardwood clubs near sheep traps indicates they may have been more efficient killing tools. One of these clubs has a flanged end, runs about the length of a billy club or softball bat, and features holes where a wrist strap would have facilitated hanging onto it during hefty swings. Of two other sticks found by Frison one was simply a heavy stick with a rawhide wrapping, the other was a pine limb with a weighty burl on one end (Frison et al. 1990:230-231).

Among surrounding tribes these Sheep Eaters had such a reputation for effective hunting that they were rumored to possess a powerful medicine that allowed them to control whole herds of sheep (Barrette 1963:22). Among the Shoshone of the Great Basin the control of game animals by charming them during communal hunts is generally associated with hunting antelope (Lowie 1924:303; Steward 1938:34-37), while among the Wind River Shoshone hunting shamans coaxed the same animals into wooden traps that sound remarkably similar to those used by the Sheep Eaters (Shimkin 1986:386).

Always on the lookout for any inkling of hunting magic among Wyoming's mountain dwellers, Frison noticed the occasional presence of small circular structures which were either incorporated into the drive lines or were positioned on ridges near the traps, but always with a commanding view of both the drive complex and the approaching sheep. Might they not have been special booths for shamans to make their magic during the hunt? More persuasive evidence of such supernatural activity came from his discovery of ram skulls placed in trees near the catch-pens (Frison et al 1990:232-234). Some had rested in the crotches of branches for so long that bark had grown around them, and it was necessary to cut them down for safeguarding in museums. All told nearly a dozen of these elevated skulls were found, many exhibiting broken crania for the removal of brains (Frison et al. 1990:234). Early trappers had reported the veneration of these ram's skull trees by the Flathead, a tribal group whose territory was adjacent to the Sheep Eaters on the north and west (Ferris 1940; Wiesel 1951), and hence Frison has wondered whether the Sheep Eaters learned this magic from their neighbors or vice-versa (Frison et al. 1990).

Clearly these Shoshoneans were intimately acquainted with the habits of Bighorn sheep and were capable of hunting them very efficiently. Much like bison to Plains Indians, bighorn sheep were their staple, and they used them in many ways. The meat, of course, was their main food supply, the hides became clothing, and the horns were turned into bows, spoons, and arrow shaft straighteners. The activity of acquiring them must have been so much a part of Sheep Eater identity that it comes as no surprise that they believed it would continue forever. As Hultkrantz has written of the Sheep Eater world-view:

In religious beliefs spirits take the form of surrounding animals, and their haunts are supposed to lie at difficult passages - overhanging cliffs, narrow passageways, etc. - or in places where tradition tells they appear. The geysers and hot springs are residences of supernatural powers. Life after death is supposed to lie in a mountainous region where mountain sheep hunting is part of the daily occupation [Hultkrantz n.d. II:19].

The Food Quest II - Fishing

But the Sheep Eaters did not subsist by sheep alone. Their appetite for fish distinguished them dramatically from their Plains neighbors like the Crow and the Blackfeet. Much of the following information on fishing actually derives from Demitri Shimkin's interviews with Wind River Shoshone in 1937, most prominently from Dick Washakie. Since Washakie was a Plains Shoshone we might ask whether his comments are relevant for the Mountain branch. But from all available data it seems that fishing techniques were fairly standard across Northern Shoshone territory, and most likely Sheep Eaters practices did not differ significantly. Obtained throughout the entire year, spring (June) was the optimal time for fish to congregate in shallow waters. But unlike their neighbors who lived along the Columbia and other plateau streams, the Sheep Eaters could not rely upon an annual fishing surplus, since the waters of the Yellowstone Region are not subject to the dramatic spawning runs one finds farther west. None the less, they fished in Yellowstone Lake as well as other basins and sought fish along the mountain rivers as well.

According to Dick Washakie fish were second only to bison as a preferred food source among his people, and one need only substitute "sheep" for bison in order to speculate that the same was true for the Sheep Eaters. Early trappers and travelers in Idaho describe fishing among the Sheep Eaters' linguistic cousins, the Northern Shoshone and Lemhi Shoshone, who were known historically as Agaidika, or "salmon eaters" (Steward [1970] 1938:186-187; Murphy and Murphy 1986:306).

Evidence of earlier fishing in the Park comes in the form of stone net sinkers randomly found along the shores of Yellowstone Lake (Yellowstone National Park collections in the Smithsonian Institution) which were inspected by our project in August 1996. Made by chipping notches into the sides of water worn pebbles, these distinctive artifacts also turn up in such Sheep Eater-related sites throughout the wider region as Mummy Cave along the Shoshone River (Husted and Edgar n.d. ca. 1968). One well-made plummet (an elongated, torpedo-shaped stone with a hole through its top) was found by Norris (1881b:34) in the Park and may have been a fishing accessory, but to our knowledge, no net sinkers have been dug from Park sites. There is speculation that remains of a stone wall in shallows of Bridge Bay were part of a fish weir (Aubrey Haines interview March 13, 1994), but individuals who have examined the feature believe it could also be a natural phenomenon. At the same time, there is strong evidence for eating

fish from recent excavations along the Gardner River, where fish bones intermixed with charred earth have been recovered from cooking pits (Ann Johnson personal communication July 1995). Because of the virtual tabu against fish among the Blackfoot and Crow (McAllester 1941:602-604), these remains are more likely of Salish or Shoshonean origin.

Historically the most abundant fish species in Yellowstone Lake were Cutthroat trout, and in earlier days they were probably the dominant catch in the Park. In the Yellowstone River, however, Indians went after whitefish and suckers, while they probably pulled grayling and other species out of streams and smaller lakes. Early references to fishing in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem are few and far between. On June 17, 1860, Captain W. F. Reynolds noted that, "We were visited by Indians today, among who was Cut-Nose...I made him a small present, and from the others the men purchased some capital trout" (Reynolds 1868:95). Although the Sheep Eaters were familiar with



Figure 3.10. Shoshone Dick Washakie with string of fish caught in Yellowstone National Park while guiding Owen Wister in 1887 (Photo courtesy of American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming).

hooks and lines, they probably caught more fish with dams, weirs and fish baskets traps. Wherever the water channeled through a narrows, at lake inlets or stream shallows, they positioned temporary weirs or brush dams. Driving the fish into them, it was easy to spear or scoop them out with basket nets. Quickly assembled of perishable brush on the spot, these weirs do not survive very long, but they were probably quite effective, if one extrapolates from Norris' experience of building one on June 3, 1881:

Wishing a supply of trout... Rowland, Cutler, and myself rode to Trout Lake, and, after pacing around and sketching it, with brush and sods I slightly obstructed its inlet near the mouth. Within eight minutes thereafter the boys had driven down so many trout that we had upon the bank all that were desired, and the obstruction was removed, allowing the water to run off, and within three minutes thereafter we counted 82 of them from 10 to 26 inches in length. Of these, 42 of the larger ones, aggregating over 100 pounds, were retained for use, 30 of the smaller ones returned to the lake unharmed, and the remaining 10 were, together with a fine supply of spawn, distributed in Longfellow's and other adjacent ponds, which, although as large, and some of them apparently as favorable for fish as Trout Lake, are wholly destitute of them [Norris 1881b:30-31].

From Norris's fishing memoir we also learn that in 1881 three men could catch 100 pounds of fish with minimum effort in a short time, releasing the smaller ones to maintain the supply. Furthermore, while the distribution of fish was not uniform from lake to lake, the Sheep Eaters had sufficient places to fish with the ease described by Norris in order to meet their needs. Not far from Trout Lake is Soda Butte, which stands close to the spot where Osborne Russell (1965:26-27) describes a small camp of Sheep Eaters in late July, 1835 who may have been fishing as well as sheep hunting to fill their larders. We might suspect Norris of a fisherman's tall tale except that in 1880 an army surgeon remarked that the soldiers in his escort took so many trout from Trout Lake, each weighing about five pounds, that his boat was nearly swamped (S. Weir Mitchell quoted in Haines 1977:II.398). Trout Lake continued to supply fish to the miners in Cooke City who took large numbers with explosive powder and nets until the practice was stopped through the game laws protecting animals and fish in the Park (Haines 1977:I.304).

Sheep Eater check dams made of rocks and brush were probably much like that described by Norris, but perhaps the Indians also used the Northern Shoshone style of conical-shaped fish basket which Dick Washakie described for Shimkin (Interview notes 1937). The dams blocked the small streams, while weirs were constructed by pushing pointed willows into soft mud and interlacing them with other willows to form a crude lattice-work fence. As for the baskets, they measured five feet long with an opening diameter of three feet and were woven from willow splints using a simple over-one and under-one checkerboard pattern. Strips of bark finished the upper rim, bending the warp over and lashing it across the uppermost weft splint. The small end was finished in the same way, except that the diameter of the opening was only about an inch.

Positioned in the center of a rock dam, so that the stream current flowed through the basket's wide mouth, incoming fish had no alternative but to swim into it. Then the basket was either lifted out and dumped on the ground, or the fish were removed by hand. They could also be extracted from dams and weirs with the help of an eight to ten feet long spear tipped with a single barb carved out of greasewood. The barb's butt end was inserted into the spear's split end, then bound in place with glue and sinew. The spears were thrust down using two hands, releasing with one and retaining hold with the other.

While fishing could have occurred all year, an especially bountiful period was said to be during the spring run-off, when fish were moving downstream and basket traps were most effective. Certainly the Sheep Eaters favored convenient spots for dipping and spearing, but we have no indication that families owned rights to repeatedly-used holes or shorelines. In winter the traps would be abandoned with new ones tied together in springtime.

When fishing was going on couples worked together, men constructing the dams and extracting the catch, women cleaning the fish for drying (smoking fish was apparently not a Shoshonean practice). After removing the viscera the back was split to remove the bones and head. Then the fillets were lined up to dry on a willow rack which stood five to six feet high and extended about sixteen feet in length. Into a boiling pot went the bones and heads for immediate consumption, while extra fish heads were tossed to the dogs. Another method of drying was to simply lay them on grass mats on the ground, but they had to be watched carefully lest the dogs did get them. Depending upon the amount of sun and the weather, the drying process could take from one to two months. Once they were ready, the dried fish were stored in parfleches or baskets for use over the winter.

Dip nets made of willow were used to scoop up squirming bunches of minnows, which went into soups that were consumed almost immediately. Although this might be considered a secondary food pursuit, in October 1811 a small village of Shoshone, probably near Fort Hall, Idaho, were observed drying small fish, about two inches long, along with roots and seeds (Irving 1897:II, 18 quoted from Steward 1938:205). In this case cleaning was unnecessary, and their small bodies were eaten as is or pounded in mortars to make a fish flour.

Although fish may have played a much greater role in the Sheep Eater larder than previously suspected, the activity does not leave the abundant evidence which archaeologists can recover from large game hunting and processing sites. And while fish bones do preserve in some locations it has only been in recent years that archaeologists have used the sophisticated flotation techniques necessary for recovering their minuscule bones. If the drying of fish took up to two months, it would have restricted the movements of the Sheep Eaters until it was completed. It is also apparent that fish would dry best during the summer or autumn when there was abundant sunshine and less chance of rain or snow. Using these parameters, we might hazard a guess that the best fishing occurred between late May and late July, while the optimal times for drying them in Yellowstone National Park were from August to the end of September.

As a region of overlapping influences for Great Basin and Plateau subsistence traditions, the greater Yellowstone ecosystem may still be under-recognized where fish utilization by Sheep Eaters is concerned. Walker believes, for instance, "that prior estimates of Lemhi Shoshone-Bannock reliance on fish have been too conservative" and that his initial review of their fishing practices "supports Swanson's argument for deep Plateau-Great Basin cultural linkages" which are evident in art, mythology, technology and social organization" (Walker 1993a:246). The Shimkin and Hultkrantz material suggest that women and children joined in fishing - and Shoshonean fishing seems to have been exempt from some of the restrictions and magic that preoccupied hunters for big game. There were no spirits of the fish nor any medicine men with the power over the catch, Walker argues a different viewpoint for the Northern Shoshone, Bannock and their Sheep Eater associates. "There appear to be quite similar religious practices regarding fishing throughout the Plateau and Great Basin" he writes, and "The presence of fish leaders (chiefs), fish shamans, and veneration of the rivers and falls in both areas have been verified ethnographically" (Walker 1993a:246).

The Food Quest III - Foraging

Although the name Sheep Eaters reflects a bias towards a meat diet, plants, much like fish, probably satisfied a greater part of the Sheep Eater nutritional needs than usually credited. Ethnographic information on subsistence practices of hunting and gathering groups in the Great Basin suggest that roots, seeds, nuts, and berries constituted from thirty percent to seventy percent of their diet (Fowler and Liljeblad 1986:91-92). On the other hand, hunters and gatherers who live in sub-arctic environments not too different from Yellowstone National Park, use few plants for food (Rogers and Smith 1981:134). Perhaps a more appropriate comparison is the Northern Shoshone who obtained their subsistence in the same region as the Sheep Eaters. According to Robert Lowie (1924:195), these foragers relied heavily on plants and it seems reasonable to assume the Sheep Eaters also incorporated them into their diet.

Since archaeologists tend to recover large mammal bones and associated stone tools this can skew their interpretations towards a meat-biased economy. Except for a few manos and metates, archaeologists working in the Yellowstone National Park region seldom find tools specifically associated with plant collection and processing. The perishable nature of the wooden sticks used for digging roots and the baskets used in collecting seeds may account for this lack, but the techniques for processing and preparing plants are not well researched and archaeologists probably overlook some evidence. For example, pine nuts from both the limber pine and white bark pine are excellent food sources in the Yellowstone National Park area, and both were probably eaten by Sheep Eaters. The cones could be roasted slightly to open them, or if the cones were taken after the first frost, the bracts opened naturally to release most of the seeds. As described by Fowler and Liljeblad (1986:65), the next step was to extract any remaining seeds by beating a pile of cones with sticks or tapping individual cones with a small hand stone while holding it on an anvil stone. Picked up locally, used for this single purpose, and not kept for another season, it would be very difficult for any archaeologist to specify these rocks as pine nut-harvesting tools. Based upon Fowler's Great Basin

Shoshonean material, however, other items used for seed-processing might be more easily identifiable:

Once extracted, the seeds were given a preliminary parching in an open twined fan-shaped tray to make the seed coats brittle. They were then shelled using a flat metate and, depending on the area, differing types of large hullers. The seed coats were removed by winnowing in a fan-shaped tray. A final parching in twined or circular coiled trays prepared the seeds for grinding [Fowler and Liljeblad 1986:65].

Fragments of baskets in association with stones which could have been used for hulling in this fashion were recovered in Mummy Cave (McCracken et al 1978:plate 26 and plate 34), and radiocarbon testing assigned them a date of AD 734. Similar tools have not been identified in Yellowstone National Park, but site environments in the area where basketry preservation is most likely (caves or rockshelters) have never been searched and the hullers may not be recognized.

Seeds from many other plants, like sunflowers (Helianthus annuus), knotweed (Polygonum sp.), and lamb's quarter (Chenopodium) were also collected and eaten without additional processing, crushed with manos and metates and used as flour, or boiled and added to soups (Steward [1970] 1938:189). Soups made in steatite pots were probably the pillar of the daily sustenance of the Sheep Eaters. Meat or fish and water would form the base, but many other ingredients would change this basic soup into nutritious food. Wild onions (Allium sibiricum), wild carrots (Leptoacnia multifida), and wild turnips (Psoralea esculenta), for example, would add distinctive flavor when they were in season while pounded chokecherries (Prunus melanocarpa) and service berries (Amelanchier alnifolia) would add a different, sweeter taste when they were available. Soups were probably also thickened with a flour made by grinding the seeds from a variety of Chenopodium and Amaranth plants.

Digging and processing roots of various plants was likely the most important source of plant food for the Sheep Eaters. There are multiple species and sub-species of plants like bitterroot (Lewisia rediviva), balsamroot (Balsamorhiza sp.), biscuitroot (Lomatium sp.), yampa (Carum gairdneri), camas (Camassi sp.), sego lily (Calochortus nuttalli) and tobacco-root (Valeriana sp.) that could have been important sources of food for Indians in the Yellowstone National Park region. When they were plentiful some of these roots were probably eaten raw with any excess dried in the sun, stored in hide bags, and reconstituted in soups. The dried roots were also ground into a mealy-flour, mixed with water, and formed into flat cakes that were placed on hard wood trays or flat slabs of rock and set in the ashes of a fire to bake. The name biscuitroot is derived from these biscuit-like cakes that early trappers saw Indians preparing and eating (Range Plant Handbook 1937:W55). Yampa is another root that was eaten in its raw form, boiled in soups, or dried and pounded into flour.

Apparently the liking for bitterroot was an acquired taste, but it was highly sought and used by Indians and trappers alike. C. A. Geyer, who collected information on Indians' preparation and use of plants during a trip from Saint Louis, Missouri to the Pacific Ocean (across South Pass, Wyoming) in 1843 and 1844, writes:

The root is dug during flower-time, when the cuticle is easily removed; by that it acquires a white colour, is brittle, and by transportation is broken into small pieces. Before boiling, it is steeped in water, which makes it swell, and after boiling it becomes five or six times larger in size; resembling a jelly like substance. As it is so small a root, it requires much labour to gather a sack, which commands generally the price of a good horse [Geyer 1846 quoted in the Range Plant Handbook 1937:W105].

As Lewis and Clark (Coues 1965:III-543-544) describe the roots that were in the possession of Shoshone (Lemhi) women in August, 1805:

The roots were of three kinds, folded separately from one another in hides made of buffalo made into parchment. The first is a fusiform root six inches long, about the size of a man's finger at the largest end, with radicals larger than is usual in roots of the fusiform sort. The rind is white and thin; the body is also white, mealy, and easily reducible by pounding to a substance resembling flour, which it thickens by boiling, and is of an agreeable flavor; it is eaten frequently in its raw state, either green or dried [Coues 1965:III-543].

The identification of this root is questionable but it may be a biscuitroot. It is probably not yampa, because Lewis and Clark were familiar with yampa having learned about it, including its Shoshone name, from their guide, Sacajawea. The second of the roots was described as fibrous with a cylindrical form. According to the Indians it was always boiled before eating; when Lewis and Clark tried this they learned that it readily softened and could be eaten, but it had a bitter taste and was almost certainly bitterroot (*Lewisia rediviva*). The third root, a small tuber with a round shape and nutty flavor, was most likely sego lily.

In addition to the parfleches or rawhide containers described by Lewis and Clark, the Shoshone had two bags made of silk-grass, derived from yucca, and presumably braided to make a strong fiber for the bags (Coues 1965:III-543). The bags were large, one holding about a bushel of dried service berries and the other about the same amount of dried roots, and it is not certain how they were made. Because they were identified as bags they were apparently flexible, with an open weave, perhaps something like the bags used to package onions today. Lewis and Clark encountered the mountain Shoshone with these supplies of dried roots and berries along the Jefferson River, about 85 kilometers northwest of Yellowstone National Park, in August of 1805. The plants were dug with elk antler tines or wooden sticks that had fire hardened ends. A cross piece, made of an antler, was sometimes fitted over the end held with the hand to facilitate the digging. Their journals also mention several locations in the vicinity where holes in the ground were left by Indians digging for roots. Almost certainly the Indians were collecting and drying the plants for winter.

To make them palatable several of these roots need to be baked. Foremost among these is camas, a very important food plant in the region that was used extensively by the plateau tribes (Downing and Furniss 1968; Malouf 1979) and when it was available by Great Basin tribes (Fowler 1986:69).

Tobacco-root (*Valeriana sp.*) also requires baking or some other cooking to make it edible. These baking pits were dug into the ground, often near the area where the roots were harvested, and a fire was set in the bottom. Their size dependant upon the amount of roots to be cooked, the pits were commonly one to two meters in diameter and dug to a depth of a half-meter. For cooking a layer of rocks was laid in the pit, heated with a fire, then covered with a layer of moist vegetation, perhaps intermixed with damp earth. The roots were placed on top of this heated surface, and the whole was capped with more vegetation and earth. A fire was then built on the top of the underground oven and kept burning for the two or three days that the roots were roasting.

Other plants, including roots, nuts, berries, and seeds which were eaten raw or dried without additional processing, would add significantly to the larder. As for a paramount tuber resource, Camas, we are reserving Chapter 5 for a synthesis of our data on this staple. Combining all this information on edible plants, however, it is easier to appreciate their probable role in the food supply of hunting and gathering groups like Sheep Eaters.

Dwellings of the Sheep Eaters

One of the mysterious attractions of Yellowstone National Park which has always caught the eye of visitors and photographers are the largest, most obvious indicators of Indian occupation in the area - their homes. Standing mute and skeletal, those few conical timbered lodges that have miraculously withstood the ravages of fires, windstorms, bugs and vandals seem to evoke a special sympathy perhaps because we know that in those camping spots other living and breathing human beings socialized, worked, ate, argued, told stories, loved, slept, and planned their days. As to the exact origins and ethnic identification of these buildings that acquired the Algonkian language term of wickiups, however, there has been some debate.

After 1750 when horses were in general use throughout the plains, the Crow, the Blackfoot, the Shoshone, and the Bannock built conical-shaped, hide-covered tipis as their preferred dwellings. But their long lodgepole pine frames and weighty hide covers required horses to transport them; lacking horses the Sheep Eaters were not able to transport such heavy houses. Instead, they lived in semi-permanent shelters or temporary houses which, from their scanty remains, seem to be of three kinds. The first type of impermanent shelters were made by leaning timber poles into conical-shaped structures, the aforementioned wickiups. The second form of structure was built inside a rockshelter and featured poles leaning against a crude frame which backed up against the rear of a cave wall. A third building type was made by stacking deadfall-timber into cribbed walls with four or five sides that stood about five feet in height.

Because all northwestern Plains tribes made both the conical and cribwork shelters, it is exceedingly difficult to differentiate their use by one tribe from another; hence when an archaeologist finds these temporary dwellings they are customarily assigned to the cultural groups closest to their location (Kidwell 1968, 1969; Loendorf and Klinner 1995; Frison 1991:122-127; Larson and Kornfeld 1994:204-205). To be sure, artifacts found at the sites may be a more reliable indicator of

cultural use, but these are often problematic. Given the usual association based on proximity, it is interesting that in the opinion of Aubrey Haines, the wickiups found within Yellowstone National Park were not the work of Sheep Eaters. Instead, he reports that:

George Bird Grinnell long ago identified the Yellowstone wickiups as Crow hunting lodges, and Dr. Malouf recently came to the same conclusion as a result of his archaeological investigations, which showed only a very transient use and none of the household debris that would have remained from even a seasonal use by Sheepeaters [Haines 1977:25].

To identify the wickiups as Crow, Haines uses a letter written by Grinnell to Phillip Martindale, a Park Ranger, in 1927 (Martindale 1927:4). Grinnell suggested the wickiups were made by hunting and raiding groups who build them with poles that stood close together to conceal fires. The Malouf reference stems from work undertaken as part of a preliminary archaeological survey in the Park, which occurred prior to the research of Jake Hoffman and Dee Taylor. Yet when Hoffman reviewed the evidence collected by Philetus Norris regarding these structures, he (1961:39) assigned the wickiups to the Sheep Eaters (1961:39). Hoffman may have been wise not to take the work of the Park's second superintendent lightly, for as already mentioned, Norris was extremely interested in archaeology, sent collections of artifacts from the Park to the Smithsonian Institution, and drafted maps of several archaeological sites in the Park. In Norris' view both the cribbed-style dwellings and the conical wickiups were clearly the work of Sheep Eaters. According to his annual reports, Norris reached this conclusion after considerable discussion with others while visiting the sites, and it still seems presumptuous to question this conclusion some 125 years later. And a principal consultant to Åke Hultkrantz was of like mind: were the diameters of Park wickiups once larger when they were brand new, and were they made by Piegans? Hultkrantz asked Jack Haynes:

Yes the wickiups in the park had considerably wider bases originally. I doubt they are Piegan. They were identified as Sheepeater as early as the 1870's [Jack E. Haynes to Åke Hultkrantz, January 6, 1956].

Research among the Shoshone Indians, including inquiries made of Sheep Eater descendants, reveal ample knowledge of these very house types. From the Northern Shoshone, for example, Robert Lowie (1909:183) learned that before they used hide tipis they lived in small, conical-shaped dwellings made of timber and covered with brush. In fact the crudity of these dwellings led to outsiders referring in sign language to the Shoshone as "Bad Lodges" (Lowie 1909:183; Clark 1885:337). When the Wind River Shoshone described these shelters to Lowie they said they were both grass-and-brush covered, stood seven to eight feet high, faced east, and that inside there were no fixed seating assignments (Lowie 1924:221). Among the Northern Shoshone Murphy and Murphy (1986:294) obtained a photograph of one taken circa 1900, which was made of interwoven rushes and willows on a conical frame, and identified as a "summer tipi". Without the brush covering, it would look almost identical to the conical-shaped wickiups found in the Park.



Figure 3.11. Scholar Ake Hulthrantz at Sheepeater Cliffs, July, 1994.

More recent interviews of the Shoshone also tie the Park wickiups to the Sheep Eaters. When David Dominick (1964:163) interviewed Wind River Shoshone consultants they claimed that the conical wickiup remains were the work of both Plains Shoshone and Sheep Eaters. But more than one claimed that the mountain-dwelling Sheep Eaters laid more tightly-fitted poles into the cone so that they were "waterproof," and added that they sheltered one or two families (Dominick 1964:164).

While some of these timbered shelters may have been used by the Crow, the foregoing discussion makes a strong case that most of the conical wickiups and other pole dwellings in Yellowstone National Park were the work of the Park's more permanent residents, the Sheep Eaters.

a) Wickiups. Since the creation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872 dozens of wickiup sites have come to light. Hardly an annual report of Superintendent Norris neglected to comment on the abundant wickiups in the "sheltered glens and valleys" of the Park.

In his report for 1880, for example, Norris (1880:7) describes a Sheep Eater camping spot on the divide between Hoodoo Creek and Miller Creek where a single wickiup stood among the remains of more than forty others which had collapsed. According to Jack Haynes, this site was still visible in 1924:

In the fall of 1924 in company with Superintendent Horace M. Albright, Samuel T. Woodring, chief ranger, and Ed Bruce I saw a large, ancient Indian camp ground northeast of Parker Peak across the gully between there and Hoodoo Peak. It was on the bank, sheltered by the southern ridge and about 1/4 mile west of the rim of the gully. The area consisting of three or four acres was covered with tepee poles - hundreds of them - flanked at the west by a grove [of] aspen trees [Jack E. Haynes to Åke Hultkrantz, October 23, 1955].

According to Haynes this was the largest site in the Park. Actually his father, Frank Jay Haynes, had already seen it in 1894 in the company of acting Superintendent Captain George S. Anderson and scout George Whittaker. But Frank Haynes failed to indicate whether any of the wickiups were standing at the time (Jack E. Haynes to Åke Hultkrantz, October 23, 1955). When Stuart W. Conner, Kenneth J. Feyhl, and Dan Martin visited this region in 1977, they recorded the remains of a site known as the Parker Peak site, 48YE506, but they did not encounter any evidence of fallen wickiups. It seems quite probable that the collapsed poles had decayed and decomposed in their relatively wet environment. None the less, the record of this site attests to the popularity of free-standing wickiups as Sheep Eater houses, especially in the summertime.

The remains of dwellings in Yellowstone National Park whose claim to Sheep Eater manufacture seems clearest are the conical-shaped pole structures a short hike off the Mammoth-to-Tower road. Recognized for more than a century and assigned site number 48YE2, these structures stand relatively close to the road between Mammoth Hot Springs and Tower Falls in a location near the Park headquarters, where they have received considerable attention (Norris 1880:10; Replogle 1956; Hoffman 1961:35-40; Shippee 1971:74-75; Haines 1977:24-25). A series of picture post cards were made of the structures *circa* AD 1900 by an unidentified photographer. According to a letter from Jack Haynes written to Park Superintendent Rogers in 1940, in 1905 his mother, Lily V. Haynes, provided the following caption for one of those cards:

Tepees put there by Indians forty years ago. Near 3 mi. post on way to E. Gardiner Falls. Papa saw them years ago (3 of them) thought they had been torn down. Hunter found them early this year. Are 1/4 mile E. of road [L. Haynes 1905 in J. Haynes 1940].

This pictorial collection includes two views of unidentified hunters holding an elk head in front of the most prominent wickiup and separate views of two of the wickiups standing alone. One image reveals a third wickiup barely visible to the rear of a prominent one. Based on an estimated height of 5.5 feet for the hunters themselves, the prominent wickiup appears to be standing about 12 feet high.

Another photograph showing two wickiup structures and dated 1915 is found in the F. J. Haynes collection with the caption "Indian tepees (aspen) above road east of Sheepeater Canyon Bridge. YNP." When Stuart Conner (1994) compared this photograph to ones he has of the site taken in 1937, 1963, 1964, and 1991 in order to be certain it was the Lava Creek site, 48YE2, he noted that the photograph was from a glass plate in the F. J. Haynes collection at the Montana Historical Society, but that the photographer was unknown. When the scene was photographed at least a decade after the post card series, the site showed little change.

When he was working for the Smithsonian Institution River Basin Survey, J. M. Shippee (1971) twice saw this site, in 1947 and 1950. During his first visit three structures were standing and a fourth was collapsed. The upright structures had inside height measurements of about 9 feet and base diameters of 14 feet, the poles were fir with a basal thickness of 2 to 3.5 inches, and fifty-five of them were counted in one structure while another had 65 in its walls. Shippee adds:

All four wickiups had small shallow fireplaces at their centers. In one fireplace, an obsidian spall was found. Obsidian flakes also occurred in the cutbank of the highway, but around the lodges the litter of the forest floor hid all camp debris except for several large leg bones of animals [Shippee 1971:74].

The Shippee notes represent the first systematic attempt to describe the size and character of these wickiups. It is noteworthy that this recording did not take place until nearly a century after Superintendent Norris described the site in his annual report of 1880. In 1958, eleven years after Shippee's first visit, Jake Hoffman (1961) recorded the site and found two standing and two collapsed wickiups, all arranged in an arc with the open side facing downhill to the northwest. According to Hoffman the wood was both aspen and lodgepole pine, with the poles measuring about 4 inches in diameter. According to his measurements the largest standing wickiup was 12 feet in height, with an ellipsoidal base which measured 6 feet by 10 feet. The smaller standing structure measured 10 feet in height with circular base diameter of 8 feet. Discussing their interior features Hoffman wrote:

The center of each wickiup floor (standing and fallen) has been dug out by unknown persons. However, stones and charcoal still left inside the wickiups reveal the presence of true hearths. We recovered several large pieces of elk bone consisting of a femur, vertebrae and scapula from inside the wickiups. No other occupational debris lay within the wickiups, but we found small amounts of obsidian 25 yards north of the structures within the sites area [Hoffman 1961:38].

The "animal" bones mentioned by Shippee are probably the elk remains identified by Hoffman. But they are not necessarily contemporaneous with the wickiups since the bones may be from the trophy elk shown with hunters in the early picture postcard. Then Hoffman spotted a single large pole resting on top of the wickiup's other crossed poles, and concluded that its weight "exerted at the poles' common focus creates a downward force and increases the stability of the shelter's framework"

(Hoffman 1961:36). Using a pole weight across the top of the structures is reminiscent of the long pole used in the construction of the Sheep Eater dwelling in the cave on Big Sheep Creek.

Site - 24YE301 is another wickiup site found in the extreme northwest corner of the Park. Originally described by Wayne Replogle (1956) in his discourse on the Bannock trail system, the site was officially recorded by L. Kyle Napton who was completing archaeological survey in the region to the west and north of Yellowstone National Park for a master's thesis at Montana State University, Missoula (Napton 1966). Napton's research was coordinated with the larger archaeological reconnaissance the University was undertaking throughout Yellowstone National Park, and included areas along the Gallatin River Canyon that are within the Park (Napton 1966). Three wickiups are reported at the site but when Napton visited the site in 1958, only one of the wickiups, Structure Two, the largest of the three, was standing. Napton tells us that when his parents photographed the wickiups in 1938 all three were standing, thus two had clearly collapsed in the intervening 20 years. Curiously, two years after Napton's work Stuart Conner visited the site and found two wickiups standing. Apparently some unknown person reconstructed one of the collapsed wickiups but never reported their effort to the Park (Conner 1960). The reconstructed wickiup has collapsed again this time due to a nearby tree falling on it. Today only Structure Two, the largest of the original group, remains standing.

This lone erect wickiup is made of 130 aspen poles ranging in diameter from one to four inches, some apparently cut with an iron ax and others gathered from deadfall timber. The poles were stacked in a conical form and, using Stuart Conner's measurements, it was ten feet in diameter, stood twelve feet on the outside, with an interior height of six feet. But the poles had slumped some, suggesting it may have once been a foot higher inside (Conner 1960). Napton learned during excavation that the base of the poles had actually rotted into the topsoil reducing their overall length by about eight inches which would have decreased both the height and the diameter of the structure by several feet. The other wickiups were smaller and composed of seventy five aspen poles.

Napton (1966:141) excavated into the floor of Structure Two and into the probable occupation area adjacent to the collapsed Structure Three. A large fire hearth, found centered inside Structure Two, was contained in a shallow basin that had apparently been prepared before the fire was set into it. Fill in this feature included ash, charcoal, and burned bits of bone, but unfortunately these bone scraps were not readily identifiable as to what animals they represented. Napton also found 25 chert flakes, one black obsidian flake and 12 cobblestones averaging five to six inches in width and three inches in thickness arranged about eight inches apart around part of the inner perimeter wall of the structure. The function of the stones is not known but we might guess they may have held the base of a hide lining attached to the inside of the structure that served as additional protection from the wind and weather capable of penetrating the walls. The occupation area of Structure Three contained only a single quartzite flake.

Napton (1966:137) also recorded 24GA325, another wickiup site with two collapsed structures, located in the Gallatin River area a few miles west of Yellowstone National Park. In 1940, a large pine tree fell on the structures knocking them both down, but one of these wickiups was once a

stately example of this house type. It was composed of 100 lodgepole pines with some exceeding six inches in diameter at their bases. It would have stood more than ten feet high inside and had an interior floor greater than fifteen feet in diameter. The other structure was much smaller, and in this regard it reflects the pattern of 24YE301 where one large structure is found with smaller ones. While Napton did not excavate into the areas around the structures at 24GA325 but based on the work at 24YE301 we might also guess that the larger structures served as the "cook tent" with the occupants cooking and sleeping around the central fire while the smaller structures were used for storage, or some other function. The absence of fire remains in the smaller ones indicates they did not need warming fires if they served as sleeping "tents". This would not be surprising, however, since the wickiup-type structures are believed to have been predominantly occupied during the summertime. Winter houses were more likely built of poles stacked against the walls of rockshelters or of deadfall timber laid into horizontally stacked tiers.

b) Timber-Pole Houses. A second type of Sheep Eater shelter is the so-called timber-pole house, which is found in caves and rockshelters throughout their territory. In smaller caves they are constructed with walls of rocks and timber across the openings, while in larger caves or rockshelters they are made by stacking timber, brush and rocks against the rear walls. A probable Sheep Eater structure of this variety was discovered in the mountainous terrain of southwestern Montana (Davis 1975). It stood within a limestone cave on a tree-covered slope at 7,400 feet elevation, in Big Sheep Creek Canyon at the southern end of the Tendoy Mountains which rise about 150 kilometers west of Yellowstone National Park.

Known today as Wickiup Cave, 24BE601, the structure was built of timbers, branches, pine boughs, and rocks. Its main frame was two long poles that were braced against the rockshelter's back wall, which were supported by a forked, upright post. More than thirty timber poles leaned against this framework so as to enclose a semi-circular area 17 feet in diameter and 10 feet high. Many of the poles had burnt ends, suggesting they were felled or cut to length with fire. For added protection smaller tree branches and pine boughs were interwoven into walls, while around the exterior sides a rock wall was constructed by stacking limestone blocks to a height of two feet, with a break for an entryway (Davis 1975:298-299)

In its prime the timber-pole house fit tightly against the rear wall, with rock walls snugly flanking it on the sides. The natural rock ceiling afforded protection from snow and rain while the woven branch and pine bough walls deterred the wind and cold. Inside lay a 4 x 8 foot bed, outlined with rocks and matted with pine boughs and giant wild rye grass. Although archaeologists found no interior fire hearth, the site had been disturbed by relic hunters who may have destroyed the cooking remains. The estimated date for this structure was most likely circa AD 1850, but the discovery of a square nail, an unidentifiable metal fragment, and a hammered lead pendant suggest that the cave had also seen human use in the protohistoric period, in the 185 years after AD 1700.

Unfortunately vandals had scattered nearly all the artifacts from the site, but archaeologist Carl Davis tracked many of them down and was able to reconstruct a representative inventory (Davis 1975:301-302) of some thirty small triangular arrow points, a few with side-notches, others with side and base-notches, and a collection of simple triangular points lacking notches. Although its shaft was

broken, one of those points was tied by wrapped sinew to an arrow fragment. Other pieces of shaft, smoothed from cottonwood and elm, exhibited narrowed ends and presumably were the main bodies of compound arrows whose points, as described earlier, were attached to hollow reeds and fitted over the narrow tenon. One arrow piece even retained a feather, attached with sinew, about 4 inches below the nock end, and although it was not identifiable, other bits of feather fleching were identified as blue grouse and sage grouse (Davis 1975:301).

In the collection were also chipped stone artifacts for cutting, scraping, and drilling. One long and narrow blade, shaped like a willow leaf and measuring 17 cm in length by 4 cm. in width, was a typical Shoshone knife which had been extensively re-sharpened. There were also two bone awls, one made from a splinter of straight bone shaft, the other from the scapulae of an unidentifiable mammal. Under the mattress of rye grass and pine bough matting two beads were recovered, presumably carved from bird bone.

In addition the Wickiup Cave site yielded more than 100 ceramic sherds, only two of which remained for Davis to identify as "undecorated Intermountain," a ware typically associated with Shoshones of Wyoming and Idaho. The relic collectors indicated that they had found them beneath the cave floor, but the disturbance from illegal digging was so great that the exact placement of the pottery in the deposits could not be determined (Davis 1975:301). Since this Intermountain Tradition pottery has recently been recognized as having far greater antiquity than previously believed (Torgler 1995:98), it is possible the ceramics represent a still earlier cultural use of the rockshelter.

From the trapper Alexander Ross there is an early description of the use by "mountain Shoshone" of such caves. Describing the different Indians that inhabit the mountainous region surrounding Yellowstone National Park, Ross identifies one group as the Ban-at-tees, or "mountain Snakes" who:

...live a predatory and wandering life in the recesses of the mountains, and are found in small bands or single wigwams among the caverns and rocks [Ross 1855:240].

According to Davis, these Ban-at-tees or "mountain Snakes" are thought to be the Sheep Eaters and this reference to their "wigwams among the caverns" suggests houses constructed in caves (Davis 1975). Much like the Big Sheep Creek example, timber lodges constructed within caves may have been a preferred seasonal type of lodging for the Sheep Eaters. Yellowstone National Park Superintendent Norris (1880b:35) mentions Sheep Eater occupation of caves but does not describe houses in them. Hikers and tourists have reportedly stumbled upon similar-sounding structures in Yellowstone National Park (Aubrey Haines interview 3/14/94), but unfortunately none have been recorded. Haines (1977:24) has pointed out that one advantage of pole lodges in caves is that fires built against the back wall of the cave would radiate heat. While this may have been a factor in cold weather, during the warmer months and when they were traveling in areas which lacked these overhangs, Sheep Eaters undoubtedly sought shelter in other types of housing.

c) Cribbed Log Structure. The third type of Sheep Eater shelter is a crib-style timber structure, which was probably once abundant in Yellowstone National Park. Their construction involved stacking horizontal layers of timber, usually deadfall trees, into cribbed layers to a height of five or

six feet. Resembling small forts or rudimentary versions of the well-known Navajo corbeled-log roofed house type called a hogan, they were built so that each successive course of roof logs was slightly smaller than the one below. Despite their absence of roofs or doors, the examples which Norris (1881b:37) recorded in the Park contained evidence of interior fires and split animal bones - strongly attesting to their role as habitations.

Although none of these structures were recorded by Park archaeologists, they are well-known from surrounding regions (Johnson et al 1988; Loendorf and Klinner 1995). It is the view of Haines (1977:25) that they were the work of Flathead or other Salish tribesmen, but their distribution does not support this contention, for they are far more common in eastern Montana than in the Salish territory to the west. In the canyons and hideways of the Pryor Mountains, south of Billings, for instance, they are found more commonly than any other form of timber structure by a ratio of 14 to 1 (Loendorf and Klinner 1995). The same goes for the Bull Mountains, near Roundup, Montana, where we find a ratio of 10 of the cribbed-style to 1 of the conical variety (Johnson et al. 1988:112). Yet, the possibility that this ratio is reversed in the Absaroka Mountains, Little Belt Mountains, and the Snowy Mountains is referred to by Johnson et al. (1988:112-113).

While such a distinct pattern strongly suggests a cultural preference for one variety of dwelling over another, there may be pragmatic considerations. Construction of the conical timbered type requires straight and relatively long poles, for which pine or fir trees are far better suited than juniper. Also, the cribbed style may have been preferable for cold weather while the conical-shaped wickiups seem to have been a more temperate shelter. When compared to the Snowy and Absaroka mountains, the lower elevations of the Pryor Mountains and Bull Mountains may have been more conducive to winter travel and even occupation. Norris himself proposed that the cribbed style was the winter house of choice for Sheep Eaters in Yellowstone National Park because they are found:

... in the thickest borders of warm, sheltered valleys, where abundant timber of the decaying wind-falls, in which they are always found, could be liberally used in an inclosure so large as to not take fire, while it was a protection against the cold, even if, without being wholly or in part covered with the skins of animals [Norris 1881a:37].

Because sizeable numbers of both conical wickiup and the crib style horizontal housetypes are reported for Yellowstone National Park, Norris' explanation seems most reasonable. To summarize, we do have a general picture of Sheep Eater architecture, in which a) the wickiup structures, such as those formerly standing on the divide between Miller Creek and Hoodoo Creek, were most likely used in summertime, while b) the rockshelters featuring their leaning pole structures were probably candidates for high elevation winter use, and c) the cribbed style of shelter would most likely have been built and used in the lower valleys during the colder months.

Sheep Eater Social and Political Life

How did the Sheep Eaters organize their interpersonal existence? How did they govern themselves; how did they reach decisions concerning when and where to hunt; did they have leaders and how did they select them; how did they choose their husbands and wives; how did they resolve quarrels among themselves; how did they relate to outsiders? And how can we possibly answer any of these questions?

The difficulties of making the circumstantial case we have attempted in the foregoing reconstruction of the technological achievements and food-gathering strategies of Sheep Eaters are only compounded when we try to submit some picture of their non-material beliefs and practices. There is no getting around the fact that we have very few recorded accounts revealing their social structure and political organization. Even after his interviews with elder Sheep Eaters in the late 1940s and 50s, Åke Hultkrantz lamented the fact that he still had few facts regarding Sheep Eater sociopolitical customs. To fill the gap he believed it was necessary to extrapolate from information obtained from neighboring Plains Shoshone (Hultkrantz n.d. 1:59). In the following discussion, we have added to his information from the writings of Robert Lowie (1909; 1924); Julian Steward (1938; 1970), Demetri Shimkin (1947a, 1947b) and Carling Malouf (1966), with supporting material from trappers' and explorers' journals. But in most cases we have had to reconstruct sociopolitical patterns through materials obtained from other Shoshone groups, an extrapolation which may not be as risky as one might believe, for as Julian Steward reminds us:

A very fundamental feature of Basin-Plateau society is the remarkable absence of any traditional institutions other than the nuclear families. There were no men's initiations or secret societies, no marriage-regulating clans, moieties, segments or lineages, no age grade or women's societies, and no ceremonials, recreational activities, or warfare that united all members of what were later called "bands" [Steward 1970:115].

Steward's negative check-list is probably of considerable relevance to the sociopolitical organization of those close cousins to the Basin-Plateau Shoshoneans with whom we are concerned, the Sheep Eaters. Certainly the most applicable feature of his characterization is the fact that Sheep Eater society was also founded upon the native nuclear family - father, mother, a grandparent or two, and immediate offspring. Two or three of these related families might join together for weeks at a time during their annual food pursuits, and even more might convene for their periodic use of large sheep traps. But generally these groups did not rely upon help from secondary sources, except when a lone shaman or medicine man was needed in the event of illness or stress.

In the day-to-day activities of any Sheep Eater encampment, the clearest social distinction visible to any outsider would have been the sexual division of labor. Men hunted and fished, women gathered tubers, seeds, and berries. Since plants were a significant part of Shoshone diet in the Great Basin, it was women who supplied as much as seventy-five percent of their food supply. But in the higher elevations, where sheep and fish were so abundant, this ratio dropped to about equal time devoted to meat and fish, on the one hand, and to plant-foraging on the other. Yet this does not mean that men and women put the same amount of energy into camp tasks, for women completed

additional chores such as preparing meals, working hides, drying fish and gathering wood in addition to their responsibility as primary caretakers of children. Men certainly had their gender-specific jobs, including the procurement of suitable stone and steatite, manufacturing finished tools from them, and crafting the specialized items such as horn bows. So even though most anthropologists might classify Sheep Eater society as "egalitarian" and lacking in class distinctions, in the final analysis the lioness's share of daily tasks probably fell to the women.

Lamentably, we know next to nothing about the inner, psychological and emotional aspects of Sheep Eater life. None of the ethnographers who were in a position to elicit a Sheep Eater "life history" ever did so, and as we have explained in the introduction, the purported Sheep Eater "marriage ceremony" in the Allen book is patently absurd (Allen 1913:62-71). More likely, as judged by Hultkrantz, any marriage was consummated without a great deal of ceremony. And based upon Shoshonean customs in the Great Basin and the Plains, we might suspect that there was not even gift exchange to publicly formalize the union, although a young man who was considered a good hunter and provider would certainly be highly valued by his new in-laws.

While the family unit was almost certainly the basic building block of Sheep Eater society, it was commonly augmented by a larger, loosely-knit amalgam of families. To characterize this working cluster of loosely-associated families the anthropologist Carling Malouf has coined the useful term kin and clique (Malouf 1966:4-5). By this he connoted the primary subsistence, social and political unit of the Great Basin Shoshone, which were composed of nuclear families who were linked by various combinations of relatives, friends and acquaintances. In Malouf's concept, these kin and clique groups varied so greatly in size and composition from year to year that it is difficult to give them any firmer definition:

There were no social compulsions which gave the kin and clique a permanent identity. Friends, especially, were apt to change their affiliations for practical or emotional reasons. A quarrel or the prospects of a more favorite food quest in another area might entice some of the group away [Malouf 1966:4].

Not until after the introduction of the horse did the Shoshone transform some of these socially-fluid and highly-mobile kin and clique units into somewhat more permanent organized hunting bands (Steward 1970:114-116). Originally Julian Steward (1938) assigned many northern Shoshone groups under the political designation of "bands," but after more comparative research was available on hunters and gatherers throughout North America and the world he changed his mind and suggested that bands were so variable that his own term had lost much of its definitional value (Steward 1970:115). This debate about "bands" aside, the Sheep Eaters, who never possessed horses, do not appear to have felt the practical, diplomatic or social need to organize themselves beyond the level of something like a kin and clique.

As far as selecting leaders was concerned, it was probably repeatedly successful hunters, or charismatic individuals who got along with everybody - or were able to intimidate them - who initiated decisions regarding the movement of Sheep Eater camps. While these leaders were often

as not males, the women undoubtedly played a significant role in scheduling and guiding the foraging parties in their search for vital plant staples like camas and biscuit root. At all times, we can guess that consensus was a desired ideal. Malouf offers this description of the inner workings of a kin and clique:

Politically the kin and clique group was basically democratic. An informal council of adults made the decisions. Men of good reputation for knowledge or strength, or persons with potent shamanistic powers were consulted or even asked to lead a temporary drive, a gathering venture, or a ceremony, but their office was not permanent. Some older persons were regarded as important to the kin and clique

because of their knowledge of places where plant and animal foods could be found, but they never held a place of prestige [Malouf 1966:4].

Once again, basing our assumption upon the practices of generally equivalent Great Basin groups, we strongly suspect that any quarrels between individuals outside the nuclear family were easily adjudicated, since the disputing party simply moved apart to align with another kin and clique. But arguments within the immediate family were probably not so easily resolved. Separation was an option and certainly after children reached an age where they could travel on their own they were free to join relatives elsewhere.

We may recall that the Sheep Eaters encountered by Osborne Russell in Yellowstone National Park in July of 1835 included six men, seven women, and eight or ten children (Haines 1965:26). This would have been a



Figure 3.12. Which Sheep Eaters are they? Exhibit on Yellowstone Park's Sheep Eaters in Albright Visitor Center, employing cutout photo of "Sheep Eaters" taken by William Henry Jackson along Idaho's Medicine Lodge Creek, over a hundred miles to the southwest of West Yellowstone (Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives, Catalog #YELL34259).

plausible size for a kin and clique in mid-summer, when there was no reason to have extra people with the group for hunting or processing meat. At least three or four of the men and women were probably married, and one or two of the men may have had more than one wife. Again relying on the Shimkin research among Plains Shoshone, the other adults in the group possibly included an aged female relative or a divorced woman who was cared for by the group, and two or three unmarried but related males. Of course it is also quite likely that the group visiting Russell included more than a single family, converging for this special occasion out of a sense of curiosity and the opportunity to trade with the trappers.

In contrast to the group Russell visited, a large gathering of 60 Sheep Eaters feasted and traded with a party of trappers in 1866 near the head of the Greybull River, "Squaws, dogs, papooses and all, they was all loaded down with skins and furs, besides a large Jackass loaded down to the guards and the only animal these beings possessed" (Henderson 1866:20). Their size suggests that this meeting occurred around the time of a communal hunting episode, perhaps just as the Sheep Eaters were emerging from the mountains for trading or hunting. The fact that Henderson's description took place 36 years after the Russell encounter may also signify some acculturation that led to a change in group dynamics and practices, underscored by mention of the "Jackass" or mule. Still and all, the picture of such a large kin and clique group laden with furs to trade suggests they were successfully inhabiting their mountain homes.

Descriptions of trading interactions between Sheep Eaters and trappers can also offer oblique insights into social customs. In these dealings, according to Russell, the Indians simply threw their tanned hides and skins on the ground, as if ready to accept whatever the trappers thought was a fair price. From their exchange with Henderson somewhat later we get the more explicit impression of innocent Sheep Eaters ripe for the picking. To better understand the Indians' negotiating posture, however, we should probably explore such economic transactions from the native viewpoint. Probably their asking for a "fair price" was an overture to what is identified by economic anthropologists as a form of "balanced [if delayed] reciprocity," in which parties to such a transaction are expected to honor debts at a later time. As we might easily understand from their combinations of people in their kin and clique relationships, in Sheep Eater reckoning such a debt would be honored in a time of need. In more direct language, when a Sheep Eater tossed his tanned skins on the ground and the trader returned items deemed of lesser value, it meant that when his family found themselves without food in the next year, he could then rely upon the trader, the person he still had in his debt. Trade to a Sheep Eater was probably never a quick and fast "done deal;" instead, as a more drawn-out engagement between parties, it thus created important social and political bonds. Trading times were an opportunity for all kinds of social business to take place, a time for meeting new people, and even when cross-cultural engagements might be intimidating to the individuals involved, trade seemed to offer a mutual language for human interaction, an opportunity for exchange of news and input of fresh ideas.

In this regard it is important to recognize that the Sheep Eaters were historically noted for their presence in trade engagements. Horn bows, obsidian preforms, tailored clothing, and sheep and elk hides were the most common items that the Sheep Eaters brought to a trading rendezvous while they

obtained marine shells from the Pacific, bison robes, salt, seeds, roots, salmon, and dried crickets (Shimkin 1947a:269-270; Steward 1938:203; Lowie 1909:191; Dominick 1964:155). Trade to the east was with the Plains Shoshone while to the west it was other Shoshone and the Nez Perce and Flathead. Although the Sheep Eaters did not trade for horses, the value of various items is usually reckoned in horses and in the mid 1800's Lowie (1909:191) tells us the 10 sheep skins or two bearskins were worth one horse, while Jack Contor learned that a sheep horn bow was worth five to ten horses (Dominick 1964:156). Of course, foremost among the Park's trade commodities was obsidian, the use and importance of which has already been mentioned.

Sheep Eater World-View and Religion

Most of the earlier 20th century scholars who conducted ethnographic fieldwork among the host reservations where remnants of the Park-dwelling Sheep Eaters found refuge did not make an effort to elicit whatever diagnostic data might set them apart from the Wind River on the one hand or Lemhi Shoshones on the other. Thanks to the notable exception of the historian of religion, Åke Hultkrantz, however, we have a little better handle on the conceptual life of these "elusive" mountain people than we do of their socio-political organization. But in striving to sort out what made the Sheep Eater cultural inheritance unique, Hultkrantz had to peer through "the common religions pattern on the [Wind River] reservation" (Hultkrantz n.d. II:9).

During his fieldwork in the 1940s and 50s, Hultkrantz tried to locate every elder of Sheep Eater ancestry he could find. But he also talked with the knowledgeable, conservative Shoshone medicine people whose houses clustered around the Sage Creek corner of the Wind River reservation as he sought to construct "a theoretical pattern, a structure in which the fragmentary facts [of Sheep Eater beliefs] find their natural place" (Hultkrantz n.d. II:9). For Hultkrantz, a fundamental dimension of such a pattern was "ecology", a concept whose influence he explained at the outset of his unpublished manuscript on Sheep Eater lifeways and religion:

There are three steps in the ecologist's investigation. First, he analyzes the interrelationship of exploitative or productive technology and environment. Second, he investigates the behavior patterns associated with this technology. Third, he tries to find out to what extent these behavior patterns affect other aspects of culture, such as society and religion.

The religio-ecological approach proceeds from these premises [Hultkrantz n.d. II:14].

This quote also helps to clarify the conceptual framework that organizes many of his following glimpses into the Sheep Eater belief system. Although Hultkrantz' data may be skewed in favor of this outlook, his fieldwork, scattered throughout his publications and an unpublished and unedited notebook manuscript [referred to as Hultkrantz n.d.II], remains the best we have on this topic.

a) World View, Cosmology and Sacred Geography. In these unpublished notes on Sheep Eater religion, Hultkrantz opened with a sketch of their world-view and its basic principles. First was the important clarification that while the Sheep Eaters lived in both the supernatural and natural worlds:

A conscious distinction between them was never made, at least not verbally. Some of the phenomena of the supernatural world belonged to the diffuse upper part of the world, the sky; or they were just as distant by belonging to the remote past, the days of Coyote and his associates, or they represented a different existence, the afterlife [Hultkrantz n.d. II:22].

A trinity of sorts occupied the highest, most generalized tier of Sheep Eater cosmology. All of Hultkrantz' Sheep Eater consultants were unanimous in their conviction that Tam Apo, or "our father," was a pre-Christian concept. But the Sun also figured in a supreme position. As to the relationship between them, one of his informants tried to explain:

We pray to Our Father, not to the Sun, although we direct the prayers to the Sun. We thank the Father for our lives, and for the fact that the sun shines over us. We do not pray every day facing the Sun, only at certain occasions, for instance, at the Sun Dance. Memories from the past indicated that we have never prayed to any other being than the Father above (tam pa ant) and the Sun. The father has created the Sun; Sun is a superior being, therefore we pray both to the Sun and to the Father [Hultkrantz II:60].

In his commentary on these remarks, Hultkrantz said that what at first seems contradictory can be explained by the fact that when Sheep Eaters prayed they often actually faced the Sun, which was at once the symbol for our Father (also called oyo k tam nuwonaip, or "all us people he made") and was "a divine being in its own right" (Hultkrantz n.d. II:60). At the same time, some of his Indian friends also cited the importance of the third semi-divine character, Coyote, or tzi isapo. Although they admitted that he had assisted Our Father in creating life on earth, one Sheep Eater woman added, "Coyote is a treacherous animal, he even tried to copulate with his mother and his daughter" (Hultkrantz n.d. II:63). Thus we have Coyote appearing here in Sheep Eater conceptions in his time-honored, cross-tribal multi-faceted role as creator, transformer, and transgressor (See Bright 1993 for a full treatment of Coyote's multiple personalities).

But most of the other spirits known to the Sheep Eaters were more down-to-earth, constantly interfering or assisting with their hopes and dreams. In the religious consciousness of the Sheep Eaters Hultkrantz saw some distinctions. For there were the beings associated with the "diffuse" and "superior" supernatural world which they invoked in times of peril or during story-telling or in meditation. Then there was an "inferior" domain of spirits, closer at hand, a possible source of supernatural assistance or of immediate danger, and yet somewhat more susceptible to human supplication and manipulation.

According to Hultkrantz, the "scene of the interaction" between Sheep Eaters and their spirits was the "wooded mountain areas of the Yellowstone Park, the Absarokas, the Wind River Mountains and, possibly, the Big Horn Mountains" (Hultkrantz II:22, emphasis ours). This was the landscape which, to the medicine men with whom Hultkrantz interacted, was by "definition the home country of the spirits" (Hultkrantz II:22). Of all the guardian spirits available to human beings, they said, the power (pukka or puha) known specifically as "mountain-medicine" (toyawo) was the strongest and most dangerous, and a Sun Dance leader, his closest Wind River Shoshone consultant, added:

The fellow who wants it has to bathe, paint himself, make cedar smoke, smoke tobacco and pray. He may pray in any language, like pukka understands all kinds of languages. He must be alone, he is without the help of the medicine-man. Now, pukka has drawn its signs on the rocks, and in tall trees -- you can see them drawn in the bark high up on the trees of the mountain areas. There are many rock-drawings in the mountains round about [the Wind River Valley] where you can seek pukka. One place is just under the Teton peak, another north of the hot springs in Yellowstone Park, close to the boundary line to Montana [Hultkrantz n.d. II:23].

Some of Hultkrantz' Sheep Eater informants refined this notion by saying that the spirits withdrew into the mountains during the summer but returned to the rock drawings in lower altitudes in September, when the weather had turned cold (Hultkrantz n.d. II:46). In a sense, then, the movements of spirits paralleled those of the Sheep Eaters, many of whom passed their summers in the mountains and spent much of the rest of the year in the Wind River country. Hultkrantz explained this "spirit nomadism" by recalling that, in older days, summer was the only proper time for receiving the power-visions at the rock drawings, through the practice known as puhawilo, or "sleeping at medicine-rock" (Hultkrantz n.d. II:23, 46, 49, 50). Because the rock drawings are all at lower elevations, this suggests that late summer, the yuvat nuu or elk breeding month of late September and October, would have been the primary time for the vision-seeking ritual.

Hultkrantz was also told that it was actually within the mountains that the spirits lived. One Sheep Eater claimed to have entered a peak behind Bull Lake (known to the Wind River Shoshone as "water buffalo lake" and a special haunt of water spirits, whose buffalo-like sounds can be heard in the spring when the ice cracks [Hultkrantz, in Farhart 1993:293]) which is located in the northern Wind River mountains. The spirits had invited him there to play the hand game with them (Hultkrantz n.d. II:23-24). When Hultkrantz wanted to know if the Sheep Eaters considered their hunting grounds "sacred", he could find no satisfactory equivalent in the Shoshonean vocabulary. Their closest term was igaunt, which meant "full of wonder," and referred less to the sanctity of place than to the efficacy of supernatural powers who lived there (Hultkrantz n.d. II:25).

Rock-drawing places were definitely igaunt, in part because they were considered evidence of the work of sacred lightning, or evgagu ce, "red light". Hultkrantz was able to visit such places throughout Sheep Eater territory - at Dinwoody Lake, different points along the North Fork of the Popoagie River, "Washakie's meadows" west of Fort Washakie, the South Fork Canyon of the Little Wind River, the Sage Creek foothills and Medicine Butte, sites in the Owl Creek Mountains, on the slopes of the Absarokas and in the Tetons.

b) Souls, Spiritual Guardians and Spirits. Hultkrantz's inquiries delved into the uncharted terrain of Sheep Eater ontology. He learned that each Sheep Eater possessed at least three types of "soul." First was the suap, or "ego-soul," which was embodied by one's breath. Second, they also had a closely related "free-soul," or navushieip, the soul which might abandon the body during dreams, trances and comas. During a particularly powerful one of these dreams, known as puhanavuzicip, one also might be receptive to the appearance of a guardian spirit who would remain an ally throughout one's life. Thirdly there was the "body-soul," or mugua, which activated the body during one's waking hours. Hultkrantz's Sheep Eater informants likened this third soul to a thin but strong thread, and one said it was situated "between the eyebrows. Breath is a part of mugua. The heart keeps you alive; it stops, mugua leaves the body [through the top of the head], only skin and bones remain" (Hultkrantz n.d. II:35).

Even though Hultkrantz found it far more difficult to obtain stories of Sheep Eater vision quests than he had among the Wind River Shoshone, "the tradition of vision quest" among them was still alive, although it was hard to find out about them "perhaps because some would-be medicine men secretly practice spirit seeking, perhaps because medicine-men have done so in recent times," he speculated (Hultkrantz n.d. II:50). Their visions might earn men the power of invulnerability; such was the consequence of a power-dream which was received by a Sheep Eater in which he shot at three bears in his dream, only to have the bullets twist like mud in their fur. Thereafter he believed he had acquired that power as well.

Sheep Eaters sought their visions through a process which was not radically different from their Plains and eastern Basin-Plateau neighbors. According to Hultkrantz, the pattern went as follows:

There is the frightening trial, the manifestation of the spirits who tends to change forms - now a man, now an animal -, the imparting of



Figure 3.13. Rock art image identified as Shoshonean spirit known as Water Ghost Woman (Drawing by Linda A. Olson).

supernatural power, the conditions for the ownership of this power, and the regulations concerning ritual paraphernalia [Hultkrantz n.d. II:51].

The category of spirits which might become allied to Sheep Eaters through such life-changing experiences were what Hultkrantz called "particular nature types, such as the water spirits." Lakes, rivers, springs and thermal pools were all potential locations for this group of spirits who possessed great supernatural power, with which the Sheep Eaters sometimes transacted for good or ill. Hultkrantz took pains to distinguish these spirits from the spirits which are "associated with the dangerous places - mountains tops, geysers," supernatural beings that he believed usually played little role as guardian spirits. Although under extraordinary circumstances, it appears some of the following generally malevolent beings might be allied with an especially powerful medicine man.

1. pa:unha - these were evil "children of the water", or "water babies," who lived in creeks, rivers and lakes.
2. pandzoavits - these were large, tough-skinned "water ghosts," ogres who occupied lakes and hot springs and drowned people so as to eat them.
3. pa:waip - a female "water ghost" whose special prey were men.
4. tundzoavits - this "rocky-skinned ghost" also belonged to the "water" spectre category; his body was made of stone with the exception of soft face and hands.
5. tundzoavaip - the "stone ghost woman", female counterpart of the above, who had a reputation for snatching babies.

Another group of supernaturals were the mischievous or evil spirits who hovered around human habitations. However Hultkrantz confessed that he often found it difficult to clearly differentiate between what he called the 1) "pedagogic ficts", or frightening spirits that figured in stories told children so as to make them behave; the 2) "true spirits" which haunted and even hurt adults; and the 3) "ghost" spirits of the living dead. The following is a partial list of the second group of "true spirits" whom Sheep Eaters identified for Hultkrantz:

1. wokaimumbic - a giant, cannibalistic owl. It talks and behaves like a human being, but resembles an enormous butterfly. It grabs children, flies away with them, and then eats them.
2. toxabit narukumb - an evil spirit of the night, who may have been identical to the owl, and whose shrieking sounds, "tchi-tchi-tchi-tchi," terrify people.
3. nimrika - dangerous ogre-like spirits who are often difficult to distinguish from human beings, except that they eat human flesh and live in old-style brush houses. Unlike the fearsome owls, they can bestow power on humans.

4. ninimbi - spiritually powerful, usually invisible "little people" who are often associated with the Sheep Eater homelands in the mountains. Prominent in Sheep Eater religious thought, humans can help them and vice-versa.

Lastly, there was a third group of spirits, the ubiquitous dzoap, or "living ghosts," who might brush up against the living without warning. As one of Hultkrantz' Sheep Eaters informants recalled such an encounter:

I have heard that almost every day the spirits of the dead are around us. The ghosts who walk round appear as whirlwinds. Not long ago I and some other women met a whirlwind, and one of these women got angry and threw a slur towards it. The whirlwind turned and went against her, destroyed her tent into pieces and broke her leg. That was three years ago [1945]. That woman is still alive [Hultkrantz n.d. II:57].

c) Individual Curing and Group Ceremonies

The oldest and most common form of interaction between Sheep Eaters and their supernatural realm may have been more individual than collective. The mediator of this relationship was generally a medicine-man, or puhagant, who was known to have a powerful puha (or pukka), and who used that dream-derived power to heal or harm. Possessing a lesser power might grant one a "gift," such as the ability to outrun deer, but it did not qualify one as a medicine-man who could effect a cure or have an impact upon the natural world. That required the level of power one only received in a power-dream.

There were two primary techniques by which Sheep Eater healers cured an illness. If they determined that someone was sick because their soul had fled, the medicine-man put himself into a trance to search for the "fugitive soul," hopefully restoring it to the body and their patient to health. But if the ailment was revealed as coming from an object having been "shot" or inserted into the patient's body through witchcraft or a malicious spirit, then the medicine man's job was to suck or blow out the infecting object. But some Sheep Eater medicine-men possessed other specialized powers as well - to charm game, cause storms, induce rain, and so forth. Unfortunately, the few purported examples of Sheep Eater oral tradition that might tell us more about their supernatural practices appear to be unauthentic (Allen 1913), and little has come down to us regarding the careers of their medicine men.

When it came to discussing any collective rituals of the Sheep Eaters Hultkrantz admitted he was dealing with "very brittle" documentation. Relying on comparative material from neighboring Shoshone groups, Hultkrantz pieced together a case for the so-called Father dance as having been their one-time annual ceremony. This appears to have been an older form of the "round dance" known in Shoshone as naraya ndo narayar, literally "shuffling sideways," and which Shimkin identified as one of the special dances of the mountain Sheep Eaters (Shimkin 1937). And that suggests that Sheep Eaters, whose descendants acted as consultants for both Shimkin and

ethnomusicologist Judith Vander, were in part, at least, responsible for the Naraya, also referred to as the later Ghost Dance, the Shoshonean rendition of the revitalization movement whose intense focus was to reverse the order of the world in the Indians' favor once again. As late as 1927, Yellowstone National Park officials conveyed the U.S. government's general attitude towards this ritual: "The Ghost Dance is more recent [than the Sun Dance] and far more dangerous from a disciplinarian point of view" (Phillips 1927:35). Yet despite this negative attitude, the Shoshones managed to retain the song literature from their unique, Great Basin form of Ghost Dance (as differentiated from the Plains form) on the Wind River Reservation into the mid-20th century (for exhaustive analysis on this Shoshonean Ghost Dance and its Great Basin origins, see Vander 1997).

The Wind River Shoshone told Hultkrantz that the oldtime "round dance" existed "way back when Coyote was ruling the world." But the older form of the round dance was known as apo noka, or the "Father Dance." During his early fieldwork on the Wind River Reservation in 1912, the name of "Father Dance" was explained to Robert Lowie. As ethnomusicologist Judith Vander (1997) has pointed out, Lowie's comment indicates a close relationship between the Father Dance and the Naraya as well as the almost multiple-personality relationship between Coyote as Creator and Father:

After the Father (a'po) had created the world, there was a man with his wife and two children. Coyote came along and said, "I am your father and made all these hills and trees. Now I will give you this a'po noqa." [a'po, father; noqa, dance] So he taught them the na'roya dance. Coyote was merely fooling the people [Lowie 1915:817].

From Hultkrantz's description this ceremony sounds like a grander version of the category of foragers' celebration which anthropologists sometimes call a First Fruits ritual, the expression of collective gratitude for the seasonal availability of a primary, natural food source. Directed by a shaman, the Shoshone of Grouse Creek in Utah staged such a thanksgiving dance when the first pine-nuts were ready for picking. They then thanked apo, the Father, setting aside some pine-nut mush for him. According to Shimkin, it took place at night in fall, winter and spring, and both men and women joined in as sacred songs were sung (Shimkin 1986:325).

After the introduction of the Sun Dance from the Comanche - also known as "Standing Alone in Thirst" - this earlier round dance appears to have been demoted in importance for most Plains Shoshoneans. As the Sheep Eaters drew closer for comfort and protection to their lowland cousins, Hultkrantz speculated that their version of this annual thanksgiving ritual was gradually replaced by first the Shoshone-style Sun Dance and then subsequently by the Ghost Dance. According to one of Hultkrantz's female Sheep Eater consultants, the Sheep Eaters staged their first Sun Dance with the Bannock in the Jackson Hole country sometime before 1896 (where they also remembered the Plains Shoshone holding theirs - Hultkrantz 1956:187). They emphasized that the ceremony was held in the mountains, and that they sang the same songs as were heard at regular Shoshone Sun Dances.

Interestingly, however, in retrospect the Sheep Eater consultants who talked with Hultkrantz claimed an independent origin for their own particular Sun Dance. The rite seems to have first gained

currency in Sheep Eater culture after the turn of the 19th century. As one Sheep Eater descendant told Hultkrantz:

According to what we have learnt from the old timers we did not get the Sun Dance from any other tribe. It happened this way. Many years ago there appeared a Shoshoni warrior. He had left his people [for some time]. During the night he rested on a hill, and the Father appeared to him in a vision and instructed him to go back to his people and to build a round enclosure [i.e., the Sun Dance lodge]. He should tell the people to go there, to dance and to pray. Those who believed in the Dance would be cured from diseases [Hultkrantz n.d. II:76].

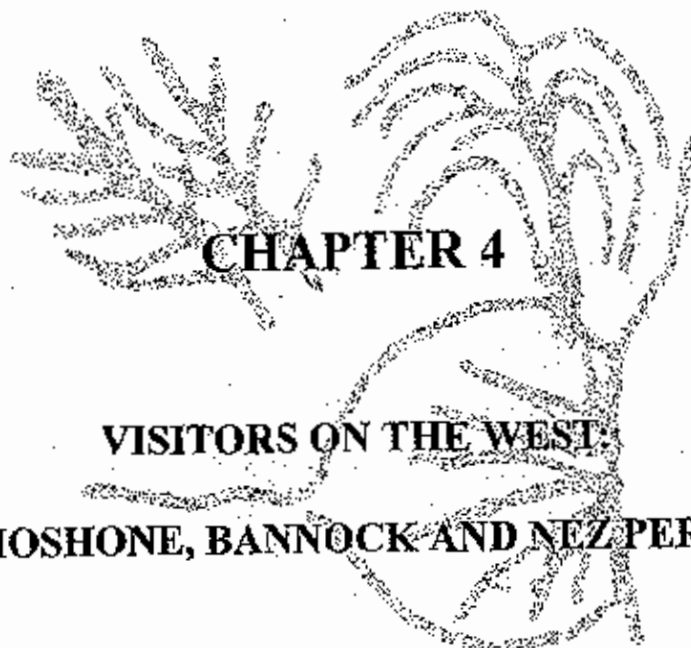
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In this chapter we have attempted to interweave direct, indirect and circumstantial information on the lifeways of the Sheep Eaters. But the foregoing profile must be regarded as only an unfinished, interim contextualization of their cultural world. We earnestly hope that one result of this report will be a revived effort to search out more data and sources on these high-altitude dwellers, to produce more imaginative ways to compile and cross-reference the available information, and to keep improving our knowledge of the only Indian group who are generally acknowledged, even by Park officials, to have been "the only permanent residents of the Park" (Phillips 1927:38).

We recognize this overview has committed two already-criticized sins of representation where Indians are concerned. First, we have been obliged to take a largely ahistorical "snapshot" of Sheep Eater life, casting them in a timeless amber. Second, since we have no full-bodied ethnographies or life-histories of Sheep Eater life in the mountains, to some degree we have adopted a "trait list" approach to diagnostic aspects of their largely material cultural life. We hope the new, unpublished material from Hultkrantz on religion and world-view, almost certainly the last of its kind, has offset our inevitable reliance on this cultural inventory. By picking up the Sheep Eater chronicle in a more historical context in Chapter Five we will add to the social and political change in their story.



CHAPTER 4

VISITORS ON THE WEST:

SHOSHONE, BANNOCK AND NEZ PERCE

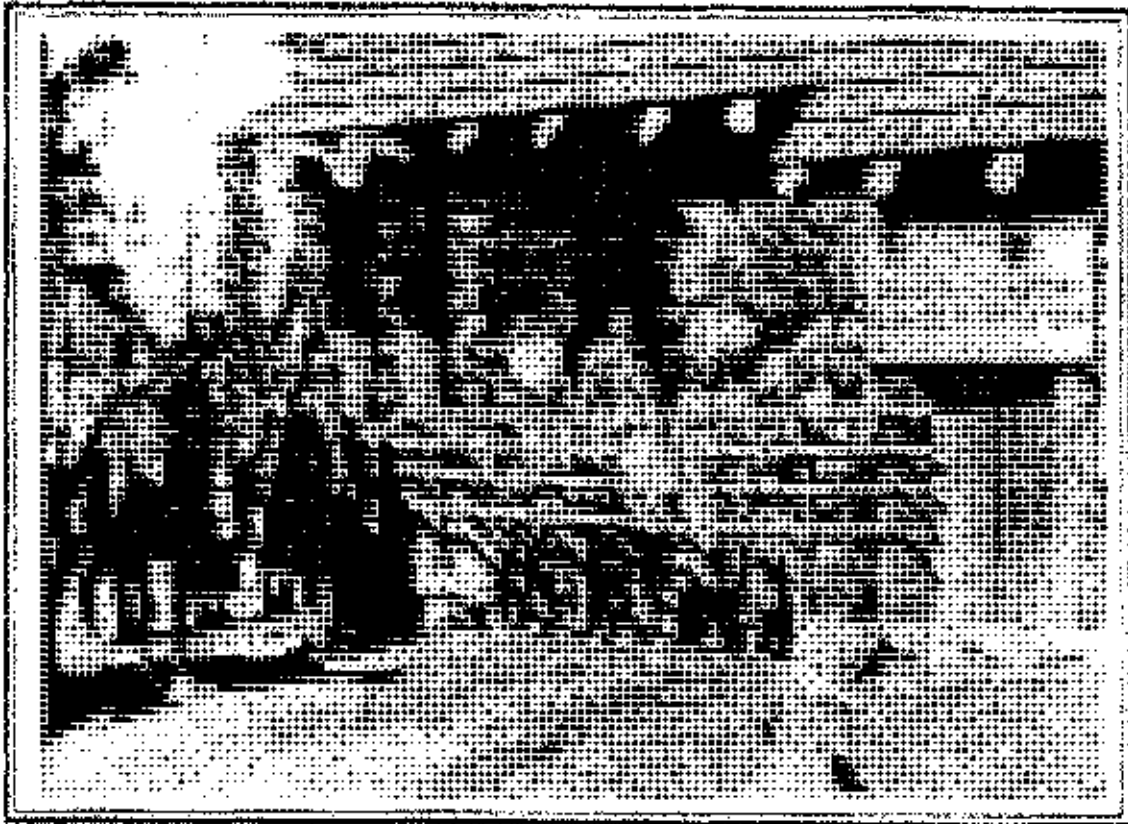


Figure 4.1: *Northern Shoshone and Bannock at opening of West Yellowstone Gate Entrance (Courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives 1925, Catalog #YELL 372450).*

These final two chapters cover other branches from the Shoshonean Indian family tree. Abutting the Yellowstone Plateau on the west, in present-day Idaho, lived semi-nomadic bands of Northern Shoshoneans. Their modern representatives, along with the Bannock tribe and Sheep Eater descendants from the Snake River region, dwell today on the 544,000-acre Fort Hall Indian reservation about a hundred miles southwest of the Park's West Yellowstone entrance. This chapter focuses on them. Along the southeastern flank of the plateau, in today's western Wyoming, lived other groups known as Eastern Shoshone, who were consolidated along with Sheep Eater remnants within the Wind River Reservation. They are featured in the next chapter.

Reconstructing the interconnected culture-histories of these groups has taxed the ethnohistorical skills of notable scholars: Demitri Shimkin, Julian H. Steward, Omer C. Stewart, Sven Liljeblad, Åke Hultkrantz and Deward E. Walker Jr., among others. As they learned the hard way, anyone tracing the range of Shoshonean socio-political worlds and their micro-adaptations to different habitats should always clarify where and when any cultural or historical description is situated. We must pose the where question because a prime feature of the fluid, mobile, small-scale nature of their pre-horse way of life was its adaptability to its natural surroundings. For any given native group, the habitat for a primary food source - seeds, fish, or small mammals, etc. - could determine the relative size of a band, their migratory patterns, and their tool inventory. Being so responsive to their environment, it is not surprising to learn of their custom of naming groups by their dominant food supply, as already mentioned (Walker 1993b:141). At first the list of food-named groups or "hunting districts" by which these Shoshoneans are distinguished - Jack Rabbit Eaters, Salmon Eaters, Ground Hog Eaters, Yampa Eaters, and the like - sounds suspiciously like a non-Indian's shorthand for identifying a bewildering medley of local Indians. But apparently this pattern was an indigenous tradition, since when the Shoshones first encountered the Peyote religion, for instance, they dubbed it Wogwedika, or "Peyote Eaters," and when the ritual fell under defamation as being a drug cult, they upgraded the name to Natsundika, or "Medicine Eaters" (Vander 1986:68).

The where question is bound up with the when question. After the adoption of horses in the late 1700s the socio-political constitution of these eastern Great Basin and southern Plateau Indians underwent dramatic revision. Once groups of Northern and Eastern Shoshoneans were no longer on foot, their lifestyle grew similar to that of Plains Indians like the Crow and Cheyenne in northeastern Wyoming's Big Horn mountain country. Yet some of their Shoshonean cousins in south-central Idaho, northern Utah and eastern Oregon continued to subsist on rabbit-hunting, fishing and gathering seeds, nuts, roots and berries. According to Omer C. Stewart, the liberation from having one's survival constrained by local food supplies, plus the sudden access to war booty and surplus game, produced new class, age and even personality divisions within the Northern Shoshone world - as highly intelligent or charismatic leaders bolted into chiefly prominence (Stewart 1965:4). Some fringe bands or elderly people may have stuck with seed-and-root gathering and hunting for smaller, burrowing mammals. But the majority now reveled in their new equestrian lifestyle. To complicate this picture, other Shoshoneans developed what might be termed "seasonal identities," alternating at different times of year between the buffalo-hunting and ground-foraging ways of life. All this dynamic, rapid change testifies to the urgency of answering the when question whenever scrutinizing

data on these peoples, since their behaviors and appearances might differ considerably, even from one decade to the next.

While this chapter deals with Shoshoncans who pressed upon Yellowstone National Park from the west, we must also include the Bannock, an offshoot of the Northern Paiute world who hailed from the Snake River and Blue Mountain area in eastern Oregon and whose fortunes joined forces with these northern Shoshones from the early 1700s onward. Due to unusual historical factors, this chapter covers a Columbia River Indian people as well, the Sahaptian-speaking Nez Perce. Although the Yellowstone Plateau lay somewhat beyond their cultural hearth, Nez Perce hunters and raiders freely criss-crossed the region in the early days. But a key phase of the tribe's dramatic bid for freedom, which transpired in Yellowstone National Park only five years after its establishment, would make an indelible stamp upon the Park's relations with Indians down to the present day.

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Trails Into Yellowstone National Park from the West

From the rim of the Yellowstone caldera you gaze west across the grey-green tree cover of the geologically-younger Madison Plateau and notice how the gradually-sloping country grows progressively drier - down to an average rainfall of under 15 inches a year. And descending from the western side of the Yellowstone Plateau you cannot miss the emerging features of the Columbia Plateau physiographic province. Stands of lodgepole pine give way to forests of fir and wind-beaten aspens, which in turn are replaced by stunted juniper before leveling out into low brush and spotty grasslands. Away from the river valleys, the broken landscape can appear quite inhospitable, with erodible slopes and an extremely rocky surface especially where the Snake River courses deeply through the broken-up lavabeds as it heads for the Columbia River.

At one time the carpet of grasses were thick here and supported the migrating buffalo who grazed up the Lemhi Valley and upper Snake River region, and which were pursued by Indians all the way into present-day Montana until the mid-19th century. But today sagebrush has come to dominate the landscape. Yet this is also a region whose valleys then and now supported a host of edible roots. As one moves northward from the Great Basin pinyon-nut region and into the Columbia Plateau proper, the primary native food supply was the all-important camas, along with other tubers which provided sustenance for most of these western peoples, as will be described in the following chapter.

Even before entering the Madison River valley that provides a principle westerly portal into Yellowstone National Park, one has traversed Indian-occupied country of considerable antiquity. In recent years the windswept, arid flats of southeastern Idaho are revealing evidence of dense native occupation over a considerable time-depth. Within the sprawling lava-plateau are such recently-discovered sites as Scaredy Cat Cave, which, it is hypothesized, was utilized by early Shoshoneans or their forbears as a meat locker for possibly 4,000 years. Located only about a hundred and fifty

miles southwest of the Park's West Yellowstone entrance, in this dark cool natural chamber Bureau of Land Management archaeologists have turned up old picks made from elk antlers which may have been used to dislodge the stored bison meat from the ice, decaying remains of sagebrush stalks which probably helped to insulate the food stores, and fragments of woven baskets and broken stone pestles (Twin Falls, Idaho: *The Times-News*, Sunday, September 15, 1996, p.1).

About fifty miles closer to West Yellowstone and more directly on the Snake River corridor that led many Shoshoneans to the Yellowstone is the region's archaeological counterpart to the spectacular Mummy Cave site just over the Park to the east. As already described in the last chapter, we are speaking here of the Wahmuza site, one of a cluster of early Numic sites that archaeologist Richard Holmer has been investigating since the 1980s in the bottomlands near today's Fort Hall Indian Reservation. The great time-depth of the site which Holmer named Wahmuza - from the Shoshone word for "Cedar Point" - made it promise a similar sort of long-term record of material culture change among Yellowstone National Park-connected Indians to the west that Mummy Cave had revealed for the east (Holmer 1990).

But the reconstruction of eastern Great Basin precontact history is by no means complete. It will be some time before we can synthesize a full picture of ahoriginal movements along the western boundary of Yellowstone National Park. To glimpse those movements today we may be on firmer ground if we follow the tracks left by historical Indians, always keeping an eye open for

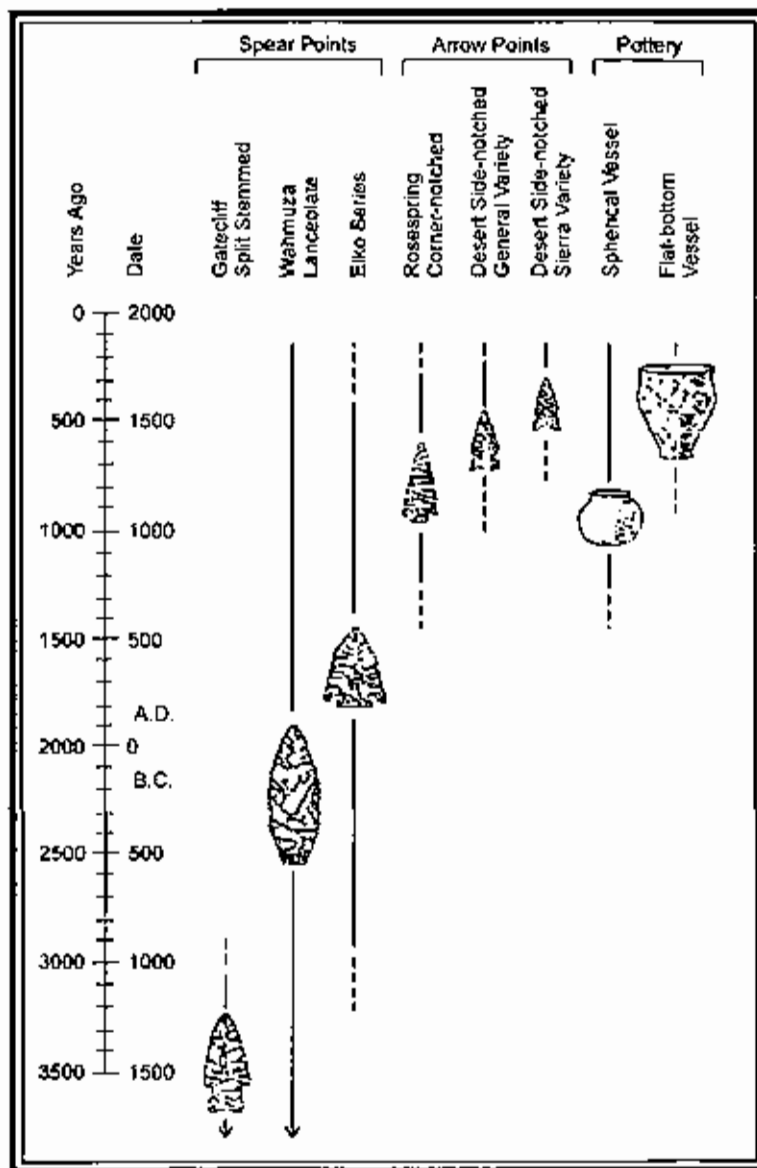


Figure 4.2. Sequence of artifact sites at Wahmuza site to west of Yellowstone National Park.

signs that they, too, might have been traveling in the paths of their own or other ancestors. All around the Park, as already observed in earlier chapters, were old trails that led Indians to various, familiar locations within, through and around the Park. Hints of the presence of such well-worn pathways come from the faint remains of what appear to be trail cairns or rock piles (Chittenden 1964:14) which may have guided travelers along the way. Blaze marks on trees probably prevented early Indian wayfarers from making disastrous wrong turns in the road. The comments of early trappers and explorers frequently refer to this or that "old Indian trail" they ran across; Chittenden's early history of the Park is replete with such comments, such as the important trail "in the vicinity of Conant Creek leading from the Upper Snake Valley to that of Henry Fork" (Chittenden 1964:12).

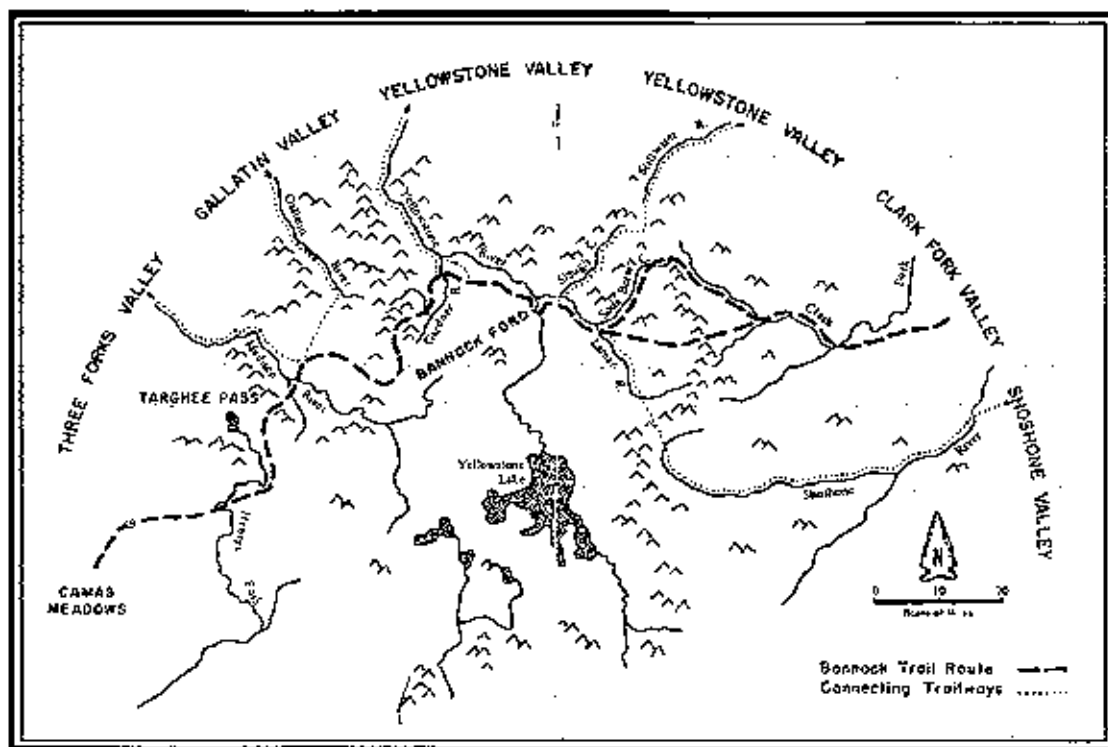


Figure 4.3. Map of Bannock Indian Trail and associated hunting areas (Map by Aubrey L. Haines, from his *The Bannock Indian Trail*, Yellowstone Library and Museum Association, 1964. Pp. 4-5).

While "Beaver Dick" Leigh apparently named the creek for a white man who almost died there (Urbanek 1988:43), it was familiar enough to the mixed-blood Indian boys who accompanied Ferdinand V. Hayden's 1872 trip into Yellowstone that they were able to provide Sidford Hamp with its (untranslated) Indian name: pom-pya-mena creek (Brayor 1942:273).

For the most part the early exclusion of Indians from the Park seems to have left present-day Shoshone or Bannock consultants with few surviving memories of the precise topographical routes used by their ancestors - or else they prefer to keep such information to themselves. And searching for mention of these century-old trails in the documentary record is tricky because inevitably one tends to privilege the best-known pathways of the late historical period. Thus, when the historian Aubrey L. Haines attempted to reconstruct from his array of old government reports, explorers' diaries and trappers' journals the system of old Indian trails into and out of the Park area (see fold-out map), because of its historical importance during the Nez Perce War he felt compelled to highlight the Bannock Trail as the Park's preeminent native roadway, acknowledging that, "Essentially, the Bannock Trail was a system of trailways, which, together, made up a complex route" (Haines 1964:7).

Yet in aboriginal days this now-famous Bannock Trail complex may not have experienced any greater quantity of foot traffic than other native roadways in the region. As to their presence over a considerable time-depth, however, a strong piece of circumstantial evidence comes from what we can infer of early obsidian trade, which even includes hints at the directional flow of such commerce, as nicely summarized most recently by Leslie B. Davis and his study group:

The mechanisms by which obsidian was translocated from the Obsidian Cliff plateau source to geographically distant destinations are not known. Overland transport along trails or over water are usually suggested. That the Yellowstone River would have been the gateway or passageway is likely, with continuation via one or more exchange events to a downstream corridor (or corridors) leading to the Mississippi. Obsidian may have been traded 'utilizing a generalized regional exchange system involving trading partners' (Anderson et al. 1986). To date, materials exchanged or traded for the obsidian which are known to be diagnostic for Hopewell, i.e. Snyders points and Havana Ware, have not been found in the Yellowstone drainage, on the Obsidian Cliff plateau, or in the vicinity (Holmes 1903 to the contrary). That void may reflect the transfer of obsidian from the source eastward by indigenous peoples who quarried it and transferred it to the middlemen.

Or Hopewellian traders went to the quarries and in a single procurement event, acquired sufficient obsidian to meet their needs (Griffin 1965)... The 300 kg (660lbs) of obsidian found cached at the Hopewell site, for example, attests to the importance, value, and energy involved in moving this high density raw material over distances, in this case over more than 680 km (425 mi) [Davis et. al. 1995:57].

The likelihood of such long-distance trade would also testify to the probable Indian awareness, via oral traditions, of the intervening topography, and to the existence of a repeatedly-used trail system. As Chittenden describes the density of such aboriginal Park pathways, he opens with two lesser-known routes before addressing the more renowned west-to-east Bannock road:

Indian trails, though generally indistinct, were every-where found by the early explorers, mostly on lines since occupied by the tourist routes [which would also have contributed to the obliteration of their traces]. One of these followed the Yellowstone Valley entirely across the Park from north to south. It divided at Yellowstone Lake, the principal branch following the east shore, cross Two-Ocean-Pass, and intersecting a great trail which connected the Snake and Wind River valleys. The other branch passed along the west shore of the lake and over the divide to the valleys of Snake River and Jackson Lake. This trail was intersected by an important one in the vicinity of Conant Creek leading from the Upper Snake Valley to that of Henry Fork. Other intersecting trails connected the Yellowstone River trail with the Madison and Firehole basins on the west and with the Bighorn Valley on the east [Chittenden 1964:11-12].

Of all the numerous Indian pathways which threaded over the Yellowstone Plateau from all sides, it still remains the Bannock Trail, cutting across the 200-mile width of the Park from Henry Lake to the Shoshone River, which has captured the imagination of historians and Indian buffs alike. For western Indians it possessed the practical virtues of steering clear of dangerous Blackfeet country, offering open, grassy oases dark with meandering buffalo, and its linkage of valleys and climb-overs promised the smoothest traveling to be expected in such a mountainous region. To outsiders, however, its fame undoubtedly derived from its prominent role during the Nez Perce "war" of 1877, and because some of its overgrown furrows, originally gouged by generations of tipi poles tied to the sides of files of Indian ponies with their ends dragging along the ground, can be detected to this very day.

A fairly comprehensive reconstruction of this Bannock trail is due to the work of Park naturalist Wayne F. Replogle (and his wife Marian), who devoted eight years, from 1948 to 1956, to reconstructing the winding path followed by the Bannock Trail and its branches (Replogle 1956), and Park historian Aubrey L. Haines, who built upon Replogle's efforts eight years later. While Replogle's lengthy description is included in full in our Appendix E, since this thoroughfare has always been one of the most historically noteworthy ethnographic resources in the Park, here we include Haines' more condensed account written in 1964:

That portion of the Bannock Trail which lay across what is now Yellowstone Park can yet be traced on the ground almost throughout, and it will give a better idea of the nature of the route to trace it in detail. From the point near Horse Butte in the Madison Valley, where the main trail from the Camas Prairie, via Targhee Pass, was joined by branches up the Madison and Gallatin Rivers, the trail entered what is now the Park by way of the Duck Creek drainage, approximately ten miles north of West Yellowstone, Montana. It then followed the edge of the valley in a southward swinging arc almost to Cougar Creek, before doubling abruptly northward to pass over the Gallatin Range west of Mount Holmes, at an elevation of over 9,300 feet (2,750 feet of climb from Horse Butte). Once over the top, the trail followed down Indian Creek to its junction with the Gardner River, where there was a branching; the

main trail crossing Swan Lake Flat and descending through Snow Pass to the vicinity of the present Park headquarters at Mammoth, while a cut-off passed between the Gardner River and Bunsen Peak to rejoin the main trail below the present high bridge over the Gardner.

At Mammoth, near where the hydro-electric powerhouse now stands, the main trail was joined by an Indian trail ascending the Gardner River from the Yellowstone (an exit which gave access to the buffalo range in the valley between Yankee Jim Canyon and Livingston, Montana.)

Southeast of Mammoth, the trail crossed the Gardner River and ascended the east bank of Lava Creek to the vicinity of the present campground, then crossed Blacktail Deer Creek, where it was joined by two minor Indian trails, one from the mouth of the Gardner (later known as the "Turkey Pen Trail"), and one to the ford over the Yellowstone River below the mouth of Oxbow Creek. From the junction on Blacktail Deer Creek, the main trail continued across the high meadows to Crescent Hill, which it rounded on the south side through a narrow ravine later designated as The Cut. Descending steeply to the site of Yancy's Ranch, the trail crossed Pleasant Valley to the Yellowstone River, and passed upstream, over the top of Overhanging Cliff to a crossing of Tower Creek at the present automobile campground.

Where the trail crosses Antelope Creek, it is plainly visible from the road, and it was there joined by an Indian trail from the Canyon area, via the western flank of Mount Washburn. Continuing down the Yellowstone River, a crossing was made at the ford near what are now called the "Sulphur Beds".

Once over the river, the trail climbed out of the canyon to enter the Lamar Valley through the "Horseshoe". From there the route held close to the foot of Speciman Ridge and Amethyst Mountain, branching off another minor Indian trail to the Stillwater and Rosebud Rivers by way of Slough Creek. At the mouth of Soda Butte Creek, the main trail itself branched; one fork passing the Clark Fork River by way of Soda Butte Creek, and the other reaching that river more directly by following up the divide between Cache and Calfee Creeks. An Indian trail from the Upper Lamar and Shoshone rivers joined the route at the mouth of Cache Creek (Haines 1964:6-7).

One final topic connected with this western flank of the Park and its old Indian trail system deserves mention. This is the relationship between Indians and fire, for anyone retracing the winding route of the historical Bannock Trail from west to east today runs headlong into the burnt-over countryside around West Yellowstone, a grim reminder of the ravaging fires of summer, 1988, which began on July 22nd with an illegal woodcutter tossing out a cigarette butt on the Moose Creek Plateau. Most extensive of the seven major burns which eventually burned about a million acres of Park ground cover was the North Fork blaze (Morrison 1993). A controversial dimension of

Yellowstone National Park history and policy that seems associated with this western entryway to the Park concerns this relationship between humans and fire. Yet even before that recent conflagration, some observers have sought to bring Indian data to bear on the debate over whether or not to "resume an ancient approach of using fire to accomplish multiple objectives" (Barrett and Arno 1982:650).

Those advocating the environmental benefits of such man-made fires often point to evidence, especially strong for America's eastern woodlands (for useful summary of this material see Cronon 1983) and for California (for comparative discussion on Indian fires among western Great Basin and Californian hunter-gatherers, see Blackburn and Anderson 1993), that the habitats encountered by the first Europeans had already undergone considerable alteration, much of it by fire (Pyne 1982).



Figure 4.4. Park Historian Wayne F. Replogle standing on remnants of Bannock Trail. Date and location unknown. (Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives, Catalog #YELL 37838-1).

Indeed there are arguments that intentionally using fires to drive game into concentrated bunches for easier hunting - and perhaps to expand rangeland for buffalo or to encourage the growth of browse to attract deer - occurred in and around Yellowstone National Park (Chase 1987:92-97).

But opinions differ strongly as to the utilization of fire by Indians in the Park. It is fire ecologist George Wuerthner's contention that:

Though Indians occasionally passed through Yellowstone, and one small group called the Sheepeaters lived there year-round, it is uncertain how many fires they may have caused in the Yellowstone ecosystem. Because of their overall low numbers and the infrequency with which they passed through the area, the Indian influence on fires [in the Park] is likely to have been less than it was in other places, such as the Great Plains, for example [Wuerthner 1988:7].

This position seems premised on the lighter use of the Park by Indians than that proposed by historian Mark Spence, who has recently suggested that, contrary to Wuerthner:

Seasonal burns also shaped Yellowstone's landscape in significant ways, keeping portions of forest free of underbrush to ease travel, opening up broad savannas favored by ungulates, and encouraging the growth of certain grasses, berries and tubers. The setting of small fires also kept favored camping sites clear of underbrush and insect pests, and served as an important tool for hunting large game [Spence 1995:10].

Direct evidence still remains too thin to make any solid case about the degree to which Yellowstone National Park proper was subject to alteration by intentional Indian fires, although some scholars have tried (Kay 1995). At the same time there do exist scattered, circumstantial data on the widespread practice of Indian-set fires, serving multiple purposes, throughout the greater Yellowstone ecosystem. To the east, for instance, it was on August 23, 1805, while traveling west through the Beaverhead Valley, that Captain Meriwether Lewis weighted his canoes with rocks and dunked them in a pond to protect them from "the Fire that is Frequently kindled in these plains by the natives" (DeVoto 1953:222).

To the west, the Nez Perce also significantly altered their regional environment this way, as anthropologist Alan G. Marshall writes:

The use of fire by the Nez Perce to improve game habitats...was noted in 1900 by John Leiberg, a forest ecologist. His studies of the Bitterroot Forest Reserve showed that two-thirds of it had been burned at least twice in the previous 150 years. Nez Percés both then and in the present have maintained that such burning increases game populations, especially elk and deer. Thus, the very character of this region's forests was affected by the Nez Perce management practice. Fire was similarly used on the region's prairies; reportedly, camas meadows were also burned [Marshall 1991:171].

To the north, the Flathead, Pend d'Orcille and Kootenai habitually ignited the lichens hanging from trees so as to kill insects, halt the spread of tree diseases, help prevent the spread of wildfires

and improve forage for grazing (Barrett 1980:18). But apparently these particular Plateau peoples set their fires in an ad hoc, non-patterned way, or whenever their movements prompted them to clear trails, encourage the growth of browse for deer, elk and horses, as signals to communicate over long distances, and even as a shamanic technique for influencing the weather - all of which, the Indians maintain today, would simultaneously have bolstered the growth of pasturage for deer, elk and horses (Barrett 1980:19-20).

Closer to the Park's northern entrance, Lieutenant Gustavas C. Doane may have identified a hunting technique when he reported a fire in 1870 along the Gardner River, with apparently multiple points of origin, which he believed had been set by Indians "to drive away the game" (Doane 1871). Even as late as 1887, a newspaper report entitled "Indian Marauders" testifies to Indians along the western boundary of the Park employing this fire-drive technique:

A serious danger menaces the game and forests of a portion of the Yellowstone National Park. This danger arises from the invasion of the country to the south and west of the reservation by Indian hunting parties, principally Hannocks and Shoshones from the agencies at Fort Hall, Lemhi and Washakie.

These Indians leave their reservation and proceed toward the borders of the Park, where they destroy great numbers of elk, drying the meat for winter use, and carrying it and the hides to their home. A far more serious injury than the destruction of game which thus takes place, is caused by the forest fires which these Indians kindle to drive the game from one place to another, or to prevent it from going to certain directions. In this way thousands of acres of living forest are frequently burned over, and an amount of harm is done that the growth of a quarter of a century cannot repair.

Captain Harris has known of this state of things for years, and has done everything in his power to keep the Indians away from the Park. He has repeatedly notified the interior department of these depredations but the agents in charge of these Indians have met his remonstrances with demands of facts which are perfectly well known to all travelers in the southern portion of the Park [Incomplete Xerox Copy, Billings Gazette, 1887, Bob Edgar Collection, Cody, Wyoming].

Yet Indians who relied on fish and traveled on foot through the mountains could also maintain a healthy wariness of fire. Some Sheep Eaters of central Idaho told G.A. Thompson that it was actually their practice to fight wildfires because of their "great fear" of the devastated canyons left in their wake (Thompson 1964). Today, managers of what remains of American Indian cultural resources in the Park have good reason to feel threatened by fires as well. For when the flames of 1988 drove through the Mammoth Hot Springs and Tower Junction areas, they quickly consumed up whatever dried-wood remains of old Indian dwellings, pole storage locations or fenced game drives lay in their path - precious evidence of Indian presence in the Park for at least hundreds of years.

Western Indians and the Greater Yellowstone Region

1. The Bannock

Speakers of a Shoshonean dialect that springs from the great Uto-Aztecan language family, the Bannock called themselves Bana'kwut, or "Water People," although others knew them by more pejorative titles, such as "Diggers" or "Robber Indians" (Swanton 1952:398). Hailing from northern Paiute stock with an aboriginal homeland located possibly in the eastern Oregon plateau, these Bannock obtained horses in the late 1600s from Ute Indian traders to the south and their lives were never the same. Under the widespread, group-naming tendency which we have already described for their new northern Shoshonean allies, in the early days the Bannock titles for their various subgroups betrayed an intimate association with particular ecosystems. For instance, there were Bannocks known as Kutsshundika, or "buffalo eaters", or those called Penointikara, meaning "honey eaters" and also the Shohopanaiti, or the "cottonwood Bannock" (Swanton 1952:398). With the rapid spread of their horse-culture, however, it was the first group, "buffalo eaters," who bloomed into the Bannocks of historical chronicles, and whose fortunes most impacted upon the history of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem.

As these early Bannock shifted their base of operations into the Snake River and Lemhi river valleys, and the Bridger Basin, they formed a close affiliation, some maintain a virtual "confederation" which not infrequently was sealed through intermarriage, with the already resident Shoshone. From here they launched their eastern forays in search of buffalo to be found in especially plentiful numbers in the plains dubbed by them "Buffalo House," around Laramie (Interview, Deward E. Walker, Jr., April 2, 1997). And while en route there, crossing the Yellowstone before dropping down the Big Horn valley, these Sho-Ban were not averse to exploiting any raiding opportunities along the way. Indeed, relations between these two tribes grew so interdependent that Deward E. Walker Jr.'s most recent argument is that "The artificial distinction between the Bannock and the Shoshone as separate cultures must be discarded. The two groups comprised one social system during the protohistoric and historic periods" (Walker 1993b:154, see also Steward 1937 and Jorgenson 1972:66-69).

Despite Walker's recent comments on the indivisibility, starting with their earliest days together, of the Shoshone and Bannock, and the fact that non-Indians often found it difficult to tell the two tribes apart, one does discover commentary on psychological and physical differences between them. While some non-native observers found the Bannock more "aggressive" (Spence 1996a:15), a few Indians today will confide that the Bannock were "always the bigger people, taller" (Interview, Fort Hall, GE, November 18, 1995). And based upon his fieldwork, the scholar Sven S. Liljeblad believed that although prior to the Shoshoni-Bannock merger the Bannocks were not known for their socio-political development on a level much larger than the "band," once they allied with the Shoshoni they "tended to be a dominating group whenever they settled with the Shoshoni" (Liljeblad 1957:90). It was also Liljeblad's impression that while the Shoshone could be characterized as "extreme individualists," the Bannock appeared more willing to "sacrifice their personal differences and to

follow their leaders in achieving concerted action" (Liljeblad 1957:90). At the same time, the old internal distinction between the mounted and "walker" members of the Sho-Ban world continued to provide grist for inter-ethnic stereotyping, as the horse-riding Fort Hall Indians joked about their pedestrian bands who were so poor they became cannibals in destitute times and "could only keep themselves upright by placing forked sticks under their chins." But in retaliation, descendants of the Sheep Eaters would complain about "the haughtiness, quarrelsomeness, and clannish egotism" among the horse-owning bands (Liljeblad 1971:7).

Once they were on horseback the entire Yellowstone Plateau sat comfortably in the lap of Bannock territory, for their tribespeople of the late 18th and early 19th centuries freely hunted through southeastern Idaho and western Wyoming, but could also be found down the Snake River, up the Salmon River, and into southern Montana. The eventual residence of these peoples was forecast five years later, when Nathaniel Wyeth established Fort Hall in 1834. However it would take until 1878 for the freedom-loving tribe to be forcibly ensconced on the Fort Hall Reservation. Never a numerous nation, they are estimated to have numbered about 1,000 members in 1845, and according to the Indian agent for the Eastern district of Oregon, they had been reduced to only 700 souls by 1859 (in Ulebaker 1992:285).

Until the mid-1830s the countryside of eastern Idaho covered by Bannock hunters was home to ample numbers of buffalo, on which tribes from the Rocky Mountains all the way west across the Plateau to the California Sierras could survive. As Osborne Russell wrote in 1841, "In the year 1836 large bands of buffalo could be seen in almost every little valley on the small branches of this stream." Indeed, four years ago representatives of the Bannock tribe claimed that "Buffalo Country" was their original name for the Yellowstone National Park area (Yellowstone National Park Archives, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Tribal Tax Commission to Superintendent Robert Barbee, October 7, 1993). However the intensity of buffalo hunting, white settlement and mounting overland use of the trails heading west meant that five years later it was a much different story, as "the only traces which could be seen of them were the scattered bones of those that had been killed" (Russell 1965:123).

With almost no adequate meat supply left on the Snake River Plain by the early 1840s (Steward 1938:191,204), now the Bannock were forced to range far wider and to undertake lengthier journeys in order to secure meat. This was when these long-distance hunting trips became yearly affairs, and increasingly the tribe was accompanied by their intimate associates, the Northern Shoshone. And on occasion, for reasons of collective security on these far-flung ventures the Flathead, Lemhi and Wyoming Shoshone might join them as well (Steward 1938:191; Haines 1964:6). As Crowder writes of the Lemhi at this time, "As the buffalo were practically extinct in Idaho by 1840, the Indians of the Lemhi area had to cross the Continental Divide into Montana and travel into the Three Forks country, north and east of what is now Yellowstone National Park" (Crowder 1969:18). Along the way they might utilize any resources in their path - plants, smaller game, mineral resources, and possibly they even stockpiled tipi poles en route, such as the cache of still-standing tipi poles leaning in the crotches of cottonwood trees which one finds just off the Bannock Trail in the Lamar Valley today.

The widening reach of these hunting expeditions also meant that these mixed-ethnic Bannock and Shoshone parties probably had greater contact with non-Indian communities than other Plateau Shoshoneans, and hence greater opportunities to raid for food and horses in order "to compensate for the loss of game and key resources" (Spence 1996a:16). As Faulkner describes the broadening yearly movements of Bannocks and Shoshones that developed in the 1841-63 time period following the virtual extinction of their local buffalo resources:

Families or bands began their annual quest in the spring, moving down the Snake River to Camas Prairie or to the area of the junction of the Boise and the Snake rivers. After digging camas roots and trading with other Indians, they returned upstream fishing or trading for fish on the way home. In the autumn when the leaves were turning, the Shoshoni and Bannock migrated to Yellowstone River or Green River, where they spent the fall hunting in the buffalo country, not only because they desired additional hunting in the spring, but also because of the comparably milder winters of the Yellowstone Valley. Usually, however, most of them returned to their winter camps on the Snake River [Faulkner 1988:48].

These new, more dangerous - and, to younger warriors, also more exhilarating - conditions of life had an internal effect on notions of tribal leadership. They quickly propelled to positions of authority those Bannock and Shoshone chiefs leaders with proven abilities in battle (Liljeblad 1957:41). The new climate of heightened mobility produced other transformations as well. Excellent horsemen, these tribes built up horse herds that numbered in the thousands, and for their relatively brief 1820-1840 heyday they lived life to the fullest, enjoying the white man's goods by trade or theft, as they hunted and raided at will. At the same time their increasingly abrasive interactions with whites, although begun on an equal and promising footing, soon encouraged a battle-ready, aggressive outlook that prepared the Bannock and Northern Shoshone to strike out whenever they felt the government had reneged on promises of compensation for remaining at peace.

Contributing to their belligerent mood was one of the worst mass killings of any Indians in the history of the United States. This was the annihilation of a band of north-western Shoshone on the Bear River north of Cache Valley in Utah, on January 29, 1863. Every native member of the northern Great Basin Indian world would have heard word-of-mouth how "California Volunteers" under Colonel O'Conner had mowed down nearly 250 men, women and children in an encounter that Madsen calls "unnecessary and cruel" and an outright "massacre" (Madsen 1985:222-223), and which noted historian Alvin E. Josephy Jr. concurs to have been "one of the largest, most brutal, and, because of its eclipse by other Civil War news, least-known massacres of Indians in American history" (Josephy1991:259). As Josephy explains further, word of the tragedy passed quickly throughout the area's Indian communities, inspiring some to revenge, and intensifying in others a fearful apprehension about their very survival.

At the same time the Bannocks and their allies were more clearly grasping what they had to lose

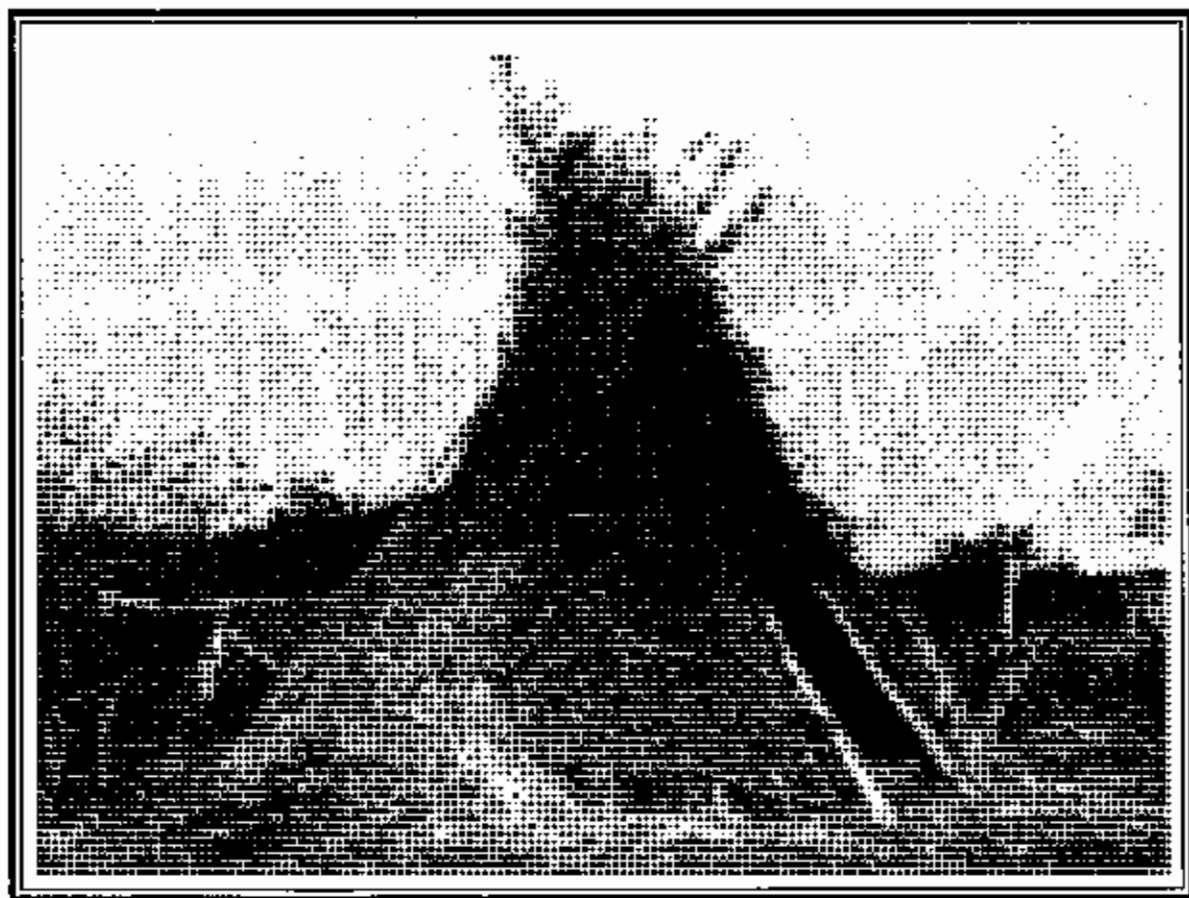


Figure 4.5. Bannock Indian brush lodge. Photograph about 1900. Location unknown. (Photo courtesy of Idaho State Historical Society, Catalog #77-69.4).

as they watched with alarm the mounting volume of emigrant traffic on the various roadways - the Oregon Trail, California Road, Lander's and Hudspeth's cut-offs - which pointed west along the various, lush river valleys that spilled out of Wyoming Territory and over their old hunting and foraging grounds. They were not going to allow their few decades of unbridled freedom to close without a fight.

For their part, the attitudes of Anglo-American emigrants, local settlers and townsfolk from areas surrounding Yellowstone National Park began to stiffen towards Indians, as if importing from California the hardened posture nurtured in the gold country over the previous two decades. Only a few months before the Bear River killings a local man in Bannack, Montana "bought a Sheep-Eater squaw; but she refused to live with him, alleging that she was ill treated" (Dimsdale 1982:33). When an elderly tribesman came to her defense, some barroom toughs immediately "declared, while drinking, that if the d--d cowardly white folks on Yankce Flat were afraid of Indians, they were not" and fired at point blank range into the tipi, killing the chief, a boy and a baby. Before they were completely exonerated by a local jury they explained that this was revenge for the killing by Indians of their friends during the 1849 California gold rush (Dimsdale 1982:34-35, 38). Others would continue to draw unflattering associations between Great Basin Indians of California and Utah and the horseless Shoshoneans they found in and around the Park. Wrote Dr. A.C. Peale, a mineralogist who accompanied F.V. Hayden's 1871 survey to Yellowstone, after discovering clear evidence of Indians in the northeastern corner of the Park:

We concluded that the Indians must belong to the same class as the Diggers. When Utah was settled by the Mormons, the Ute, Bannack, and Snake Indians were driven out, and as the game disappeared they were obliged to separate into small bands. Some were driven to the mountains [and] having no ponies they are very poor, and live principally by stealing [from diary of Dr. A.C. Peale, entry for August 21, 1871, Merrill 1999].

It is necessary to evoke this general climate of ethnic animosity west of Yellowstone National Park in the 1860s and 70s if we are to understand the context and motivations for the Nez Percé, Bannock and Sheep Eater outbreaks which now were about to impact upon Park history. For some citizens to the west in Idaho Territory, for instance, an oft-quoted editorial from a Boise newspaper in the fall of 1867, expressed their widely-shared sentiment towards Indians at this time:

This would be our plan of establishing friendship on an eternal basis with our Indians: Let all the hostile bands of Idaho Territory be called in (they will not be caught in any other manner) to attend a grand treaty; plenty of blankets and nice little trinkets distributed among them; plenty of grub on hand; have a jolly time with them; then just before the big feast put strychnine in their meat and poison to death the last mother's son of them [Idaho Statesman, Boise, Idaho, October 6, 1867].

For non-Indians to the north of the Park, the words of Montana congressman James Cavanaugh, uttered the following year during debate on an "Indian Appropriation Bill," echoed how many locals felt towards any free-roaming western Indians:

...in my judgement, the entire Indian policy of the country is wrong from its very inception...The gentleman from Massachusetts may denounce the sentiment as atrocious, but I will say that I like an Indian better dead than living. I have never in my life seen a good Indian (and I have seen thousands) except when I have seen a dead Indian. I believe in the Indian policy which was taught by the great chieftain of Massachusetts, Miles Standish. I believe in the policy that exterminates the Indians, drives them outside the boundaries of civilization, because you cannot civilize them [Congressional Globe, (May 28, 1868) 1868:2638].

To the east and south of the Yellowstone Plateau, a large measure of public opinion towards any native obstacle, Shoshone, Bannock or otherwise, to Wyoming's incoming pioneers, was reflected in this editorial from a major Wyoming newspaper only two years later:

The Indians must stand aside or be overwhelmed by the ever advancing and ever increasing tide of emigration. The destiny of the aborigines is written in characters not to be mistaken. The same inscrutable Arbiter that decreed the downfall of Rome, has pronounced the doom of extinction upon the redmen of America. The attempt to defer this result by mawkish sentimentalism in favor of savages is unworthy of a great people...If these Indian treaties have got into such a tangled knot that they cannot be untied, the sword of the pioneer will sever them [Cheyenne Daily Leader, March 3, 1870].

2. The Northern Shoshone

When the early linguist and folklorist James Teit (1864-1922) collected ethnographic information among the Salishan peoples of the eastern Oregon plateau from 1907 to 1917, they gave him the strong impression that in their view, "to the south, both east and west of the rockies," there were no tribes that were not branches of the "Snake," or Shoshone. As for the country "East of the Rockies," his Indian informants led Teit to believe that:

Shoshonean tribes occupied the Upper Yellowstone country, including the National Park, and they are said to have extended east to the Big Horn Mountains or beyond...Farther north Shoshonean bands occupied the country around Livingston, Lewiston and Denton. How far east and down the Yellowstone they extended is not known; but they are thought to have at one time held the country around Billings, and most, if not all, of the country where the Crow Indians now have a reservation [Teit 1930:268, emphasis ours].

Apart from the critical but characteristic neglect of a time frame in this Salish-oriented description of Shoshone territory, and ignoring for the moment the important question of whether "owning" is the most accurate term to characterize land-use customs of highly mobile Shoshonean bands, the quote at least provides an Indian perspective on the virtual encompassment of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem by members of the Shoshonean peoples all along the southern half of the Park. Among their Siouan and Algonquian-speaking enemies these Shoshoneans were maligned far and wide as "Snake Men" (Chippewa) or "Rattlesnake Men" (Yankton Dakota). At the same time other Plains tribes, who enjoyed better on-again/off-again trading relations with Shoshones, often adopted the more neutral name for them of "Grass Lodges" (Crow), or "People that use grass or bark for their houses or huts" (Arapaho) (Swanton 1952:403). As for self-designations, the Fort Hall Shoshone came to know themselves as Bohogue, meaning "Sagebrush Butte," tying them to a promontory to the northeast of Fort Hall. Although their Lemhi Valley and lower Snake River linguistic kinfolk adopted this term as well, the Bannock knew the Fort Hall people as Winnakwut, which probably meant "Iron Knife" (Steward 1938:198).

Due to their wide geographical range and highly changeable social and political organization, the total Shoshonean population was almost impossible to tabulate over these early decades. Whereas in 1845, ran the rough estimate of Indian agent Jacob Forney, the combined numbers of Shoshones and Sheep Eaters was about 4,500 souls (Ulebaker 1992: 285), this figure overlooked the highly localized, independent nature of their sub-groups. One of the largest of these Shoshonean populations were the group known as Pa:dai, or "Water," because its 200 families, who foraged over a 27,000 square mile area, had their base camps along Idaho's Lemhi River, centered around present-day Salmon (Steward 1938:188-189). A portion of this group were self-identified as Sheep Eaters, but the influence of the horse, which the Lemhi Shoshone obtained from Spaniards, was significant in attracting many of these independent mountaineers to relocate in the larger, horse-riding villages with their centralized control and authority under permanent chiefs. When the Lemhi hosted Lewis and Clark in 1806, the explorers counted about 400 horses at that time, and also noted the presence of Spanish bridles and brands.

As for how the Indians employed these mounts, according to the leading scholar on Great Basin and Plateau cultures, Julian Steward, an annual semi-nomadic pattern soon arose. Conducting the tedious task that was common among mid-19th century anthropologists of extracting lists of diagnostic cultural traits and then comparing them, Steward also found little distinction between these Northern Shoshone and Bannock, although he did distinguish them from their brethren who remained on foot, like the northerly Sheep Eaters. As Steward summarized the new lifestyle:

The two [Shoshone and Bannock] seem to have wintered together and pastured their horses in and near the lush bottomlands of the Snake River since prehistoric times. They usually made hunting expeditions together on horseback, sometimes going east to Wyoming for buffalo, west to Camas Prairie and beyond to trade and gather roots, and down the Snake River below Shoshone Falls for fishing. The foot Shoshoni, along the Snake River gorge below American Falls, especially on the south bank, were, in contrast to the Fort Hall Shoshoni and Bannock, impoverished, primitive in

their culture, restricted in their movements, and unorganized. Few of them owned horses [Steward 1938:200, emphasis ours].

When reading ethnographies which describe such "seasonal rounds" of traditional American Indian societies, however, one should never underestimate the degree to which economic opportunism dictated their survival strategies, and Shoshoneans were nothing if not master survivalists. Ever ready to adjust food-gathering habits when circumstances required, with conditions of life west of Yellowstone National Park shifting so radically year by year these Northern Shoshoneans changed their lifestyle accordingly. When a combination of factors such as fear of Blackfoot raiders, the scarcity of buffalo in the Snake River country, and the greater efficiency of communal hunting made larger groups mandatory, they had no hesitation about creating multi-ethnic bands of Fort Hall Shoshone, Bannock, Lemhi, Nez Perce, Flathead and Wind River Shoshone members who traveled together en masse. As sizeable large parties moved eastward, they always scoured the landscape for any familiar seeds, roots and berries they could find in the mountains. In the Yellowstone National Park vicinity, for instance, Steward notes that "they sometimes stopped briefly to gather nuts of the "white pine" variety, known as wongoduba, which they either ground and carried to the plains in buckskin sacks or cached to assure food for their return trip (Steward 1938:204).

During that optimistic interval when horse herds were multiplying and before the imposition of government pressure to consolidate on Idaho and Wyoming reservations, one of the favorite Northern Shoshone camp grounds lay near the Menan Buttes, two old volcanic craters southwest of the junction of the Snake River and Henrys Fork (Beal 1942:49). As the Northern Shoshone of Idaho made the horse a mainstay of their expanded lifestyle, the extent of journeys launched from such camps grew exponentially. Much as Chapter Two described the long-distance travels of Blackfoot explorers and raiders, there are early citations which describe "Pannacks" and even Shoshoneans from as far south as the Great Basin (Salt Lake) participating in hunting expeditions to the headwaters of the Missouri and the Yellowstone - journeys which might traverse 1,200 miles (Steward 1938:201).

At the same time, for reasons of caution or cultural or environmental preference, those pockets of mountain Shoshoneans mentioned by Steward clung to isolated highland outposts, remaining on foot and relying on their dogs - in locations such as the headwaters of the Henry River, a tributary of the Snake, where Hunt's Astoria party came upon them in 1811 (Irving 1964:12-13). Right into the days of forced consolidation on the reservation, these sub-groups often retained their older Shoshonean identity. "Although the Fort Hall Bannock and Shoshoni were probably comparatively well amalgamated into a band by 1840, " writes Steward - an amalgamation which Deward Walker would maintain was tantamount to a formal confederation - "there is little doubt that a few small groups continued for many years to live in isolation..." (Steward 1938:202).

But the Shoshone-Bannocks could not avoid the overwhelming irony that descended upon all newly equestrian tribes of the Plains. This was the fact that just as one loan item from Euro-American society was allowing them to cover ground so speedily, and to hunt far more effectively

and extend their tribal territories, the expanding territorial settlement by Euro-American society was quickly reining in their brief interval of seemingly boundless freedom. Each and every year after the informal opening of the Oregon Trail in 1841 the consequences of more and more wagon trains trundling through their country on a proliferating number of trails and cutoffs and toll roads were not lost on the Shoshone. As Chief Washakie of the Wind Rivers would describe their impact on his people's lifestyle to Captain Frederick Lander in 1858:

Before the emigrants passed through my country, buffalo, elk, and antelope could be seen....Now, when I look for game, I see only wagons with white tops and men riding upon their horses. My people are very poor and have fallen back into the valleys of the mountains to dig roots and get meat for their little ones [Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, U.S. House Executive Document 108, 35th Congress, 2nd Session, no. 1008].

Fifteen years earlier the opening phase of this traffic in pioneering wagon trains had seen only an estimated 1000 people pass through Fort Hall. Yet two years later that number had trebled, and by 1863 the Bear Valley featured a permanent white town, with additional ranches and fences starting to crowd around the Fort Hall area with each passing year. As proximity between Indians and whites tightened, the desires of new residents for more pasturage, railroad rights and homesteads, together with anxieties about threatening Indians at large in the region, caused Idaho's Territorial Governor, Caleb Lyon, to establish the Fort Hall Reservation in 1867 (Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, Idaho Centennial Celebration Brochure, Fort Hall, Idaho, 1968, p. 5).

And that same year President Andrew Johnson signed an Executive Order which gave federal sanction to the Fort Hall Reservation, a development that was accepted by the Indians the following year in the Fort Bridger Treaty of 1868. Initially this document set aside 1.8 million acres of the former Bannock homeland for a separate reservation for that tribe alone. Despite the paper document, however, the Bannocks were not moved from Fort Hall, and in 1872, due to "a surveying error," a shared reservation centered at Fort Hall for both the Bannock and the Northern Shoshone had been reduced to 1.2 million acres.

Meanwhile there was another treaty of 1868 that was never ratified, although it had been drafted and signed on September 24, 1868 at Virginia City, Montana Territory between Indian Commissioner W. J. Cullen and Acting Montana Governor James Tufts. The agreement saw twelve members of "the mixed Shoshone, Bannacks and Sheepeaters" accept two townships on the north fork of the Salmon River about twelve miles above Fort Lemhi (Kappler 1904:707). In his accompanying remarks to the treaty, Commissioner Cullen described the threesome as a "mixed nation" which was scattered "from the Yellowstone to a mountain between the Bitter Root and Big Hole, running through Montana into Idaho" (Kappler 1904:709).

What makes this particular document valuable is how it helps us to understand the cultural territory and desired lifestyle of these Bannock and Shoshone. Most important was their clearly stipulated right to travel to their nearby Camas Prairie, and to continue their long distance trips to the buffalo country. According to Doty, while the Shoshones had described their eastern boundary at the Virginia City conference as the crest of the Rocky Mountains, "it is certain that they, as well as the Bannacks, hunt the buffalo below the Three Forks of the Missouri, and on the headwaters of the Yellowstone and Wind rivers...they wander over an immense region, extending from the fisheries at and below Salmon Falls, on the Shoshonee [Snake] river, near the Oregon line, to the sources of that stream, and to the buffalo country beyond" (Doty 1864:174-175).

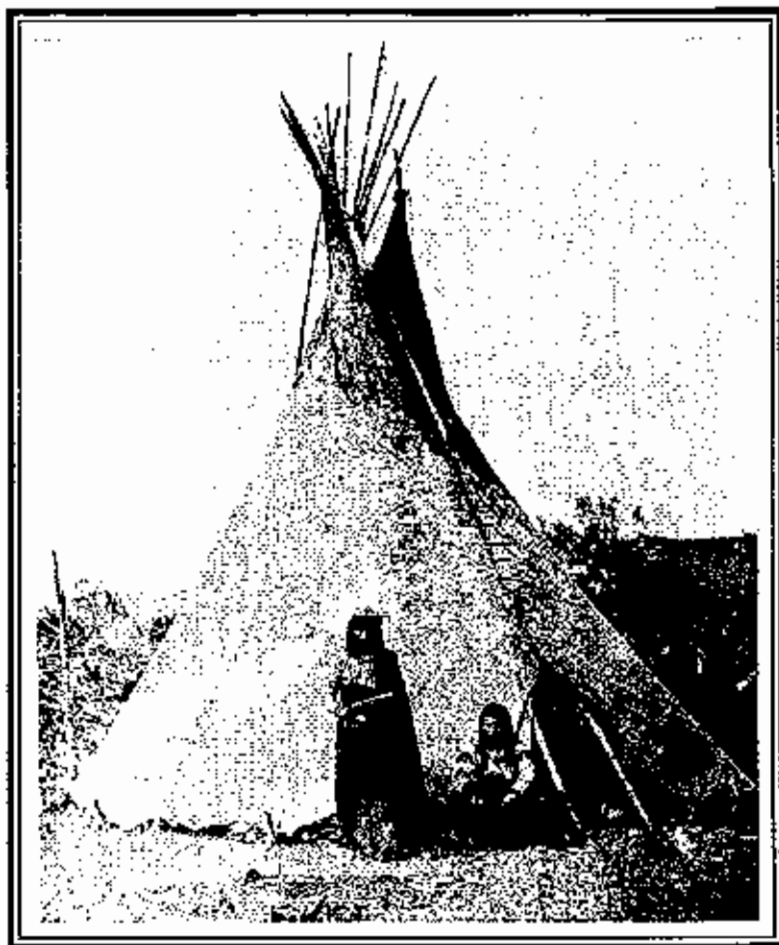


Figure 4.6. Northern Shoshone (Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives, Catalog #YEEL 8134)

A year later, in another treaty finally signed on February 24, 1869 between the United States and the Bannock, it was stipulated that the tribe "shall have the right to hunt upon the unoccupied lands of the United States so long as game may be found thereon, and so long as peace subsists among the whites and Indians on the borders of the hunting districts" (Kappler 1904-1941). But when Wyoming Territory was admitted into the Union as the 44th state on July 10, 1890, there was an express declaration that it should have all the powers of other states over its lands, and make no special provisions for Indians, whether or not they had a treaty (in Supreme Court Reporter, V. 16: 1076-1077).

Despite the presumed pacification and confinement of these Indians on the Fort Hall Reservation, however, relations between these new neighbors remained uneasy over the next three decades. In

1873 ranchers in the area were reported as increasingly "annoyed," as Special Commissioners John P.C. Hanks, T.W. Bennet and Henry W. Reed reported to the Secretary of the Interior, about "roving bands of Indians...near whitemen's homes [which] causes distrust and fear on the part of women and children, and their universal custom being to carry all their effects with them, their horses turned upon the prairies encroach on the inclosures of the whites" (Shanks et al. 1873:157-8).

3. The Nez Perce

At first it seems to be little more than a twist of fate which wound up linking the geographically distant Nez Perce tribe so intimately with the history of Yellowstone National Park. We are referring, of course, to their famous evasive maneuvers through the region in 1877, as will be described below. But even in earlier days, no sooner did the Nez Perce get horses than they apparently began exploring the wider world to the east, as hunters, traders and raiders. This exploration gained them the geographical knowledge to which an old Nez Perce warrior known to whites as Ilemene Moxmox, or "Yellow Wolf" testified, when long after the 1877 war he stated emphatically in his autobiography:

My grandfather [maternal], Thomas, son of Seeloo Wahyakt, died on a buffalo hunt in Yellowstone Park. I am not mistaken. It was at Sokolinim [Antelope] where he was buried. This is north of some hot springs. Not over or beyond any big mountain, but is above where two rivers meet...We knew that Park country, no different what white people say. And when retreating from soldiers [during the Nez Perce War of 1877] we went up the river and crossed where are two big rocks. The trail there is called Pitou Kisnit, meaning Narrow Solid Rock Pass. This is on the south side of Pahniah Koos., We did not enter the Park by our old trail when on war retreat [McWhorter 1948:26, emphasis ours].

At the turn of the 18th century Yellow Wolf's Plateau Indian tribe, some of whom today prefer to call themselves Nee-Mc-Poo, were largely concentrated in present-day western Idaho, in the heart of their aboriginal territory, and occupying communities of reed-mat or buffalo hide lodges that lay north and south of the Clearwater River. While James Mooney estimated their aboriginal population at about 4,000 members strong and spread across some 130 villages in this area (Walker 1985), in 1805 their numbers were believed to be as high as 6,000 by Lewis and Clark. However, less than fifty years later warfare and disease had withered their population down to an estimated 1,700 people (Swanton 1952:402).

Within the Nez Perce communities of this pre-reservation period, their primary social groupings were known as "camps", or wi.se.s, which according to Walker constituted "the smallest customarily associated group of persons tending to be found on a seasonal basis in a given named geographical locale" (Walker 1985:9). These "camps" differed from the more sizeable Nez Perce "village", or tew?yeni.kes, in that they only possessed usufruct privileges over the environment, while the village was considered to "own" its geographical territory. As for the highest level of Nez Perce socio-political grouping, this was the "band," which was composed of several villages located along a

larger stream, into which each of the village streams emptied (Walker 1985:13). However this one-dimensional picture of a static social hierarchy and structural sameness over the Nez Perce landscape must be altered by two real-life facts of their existence.

The first concerned cultural diversity within the Nez Perce world across space, for throughout the southeastern Plateau the bands of Nez Perce "were clearly distinguished from one another and had well-known dialectical, ecological, and economic differences" (Walker 1985:14). The second was their evolving character over time, for while always in a state of some flux, the lifestyle of these Nez Perce began to change dramatically as the different historical exposures of separate bands to the horse culture of the Plains after 1700 only widened the sub-tribal specializations among them. Living in deep riverine canyons, for instance, the two main bands of the Salmon River Nez Perce, often derogatorily known as enevnu ti.to.gam, which Walker translates as "provincials," kept relying on their fish and root diet despite the intrusion of horses.

However those bands north of the Clearwater who were more influenced by the Plains culture and who took to horses early on became known as k'usaynu ti.to.gan, or "sophisticated people." They would mock their pedestrian kinfolk with humorous imitations of their eating dogs and their preference for huckleberries rolled in salmon fat over the more manly buffalo flanks (Walker 1985:14). Thanks in part to their commercial and social interactions with the Flathead and, especially, with the Crow, it was these Nez Perce who greatly expanded their world-view. As to the degree to which this cultural cross-fertilization expanded their geographical freedom as well, the leading expert on the tribe, Deward E. Walker Jr., asserts:

The Nez Perce had a pretty full knowledge of that area that would include present Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, probably Nebraska, and the river systems, the mountain systems, the locations of the different tribes...The Crow came over to Idaho to trade horses often and there's a lot of exchange back and forth. You know, I think anthropologists have got themselves much too limited in their thinking about tribal movements. I've always run into this with archaeologists especially. People erect boundaries that tribes never understood, recognized, or even now agree with, concerning the range of their movements [Interview, Deward E. Walker Jr., April, 2, 1997].

Of course it is principally due to the role of Chief Joseph's followers and their much-publicized "war" of 1877 that the history of their tribe will always be irrevocably linked with that of Yellowstone National Park. Although that violent interchange only involved rebellious remnants of the Lower Snake and Salmon-Wallowa groups of the tribe, and the Park lay somewhat to the southeast of their traditional range, it is highly likely that Nez Perce awareness of routes across the greater Yellowstone preceded those exploits. During his forty years of fieldwork among Plateau tribes, Deward E. Walker Jr. took road trips on both sides of the Rocky Mountain uplift in the company of Nez Perce, Kootenai, Flathead and Wind River consultants. He summarizes the experience:

In the process it became apparent to me that there were a number of fairly well established pathways or trail systems that they followed. Lolo [Pass] of course, which goes to Flathead country, and then the southern pass that they would go through, or the southern trail that they would take is now the one that goes across Bannock Pass, not far from Leadore, Idaho. They would go up and over there and down into the Park area on a regular basis, sometimes even accompanied by some of the Lemhi... They usually went in pretty big [multi-tribal] parties because they were afraid of the Lakota and they were afraid of the Blackfeet... I would say that the Nez Perce... looked upon the Park as a friendly place, a place where there was good hunting, none of this stuff that the Swedish ethnographer [Åke Hultkrantz] talks about, no fear of the geysers or any of the other stuff he said worried other tribes. I don't think he's right about that. I think that's all nonsense [Interview, Deward E. Walker Jr., April 2, 1997, emphasis ours].

Occasionally one runs across older documents to back up Walker's assertions about Nez Perce interaction with other tribes. Their friendly trade with, inter-tribal-marriage among, and artistic influence on Crow culture has been well studied (data summarized in Galante 1984; Lessard 1980; Loeb 1983). They also enjoyed a clearly-marked, 800-mile trail from Lapwai and across the Salmon and Boise rivers to the Wind River country, where they hunted for buffalo and returned to the Columbia River with hides for trade with those fisherman groups (Report on Indians Taxed and Indians Not Taxed in the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1880, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1894, p. 627). But these same citations also touch on the potential drawbacks of such adventures, such as the report of a clash with the Sioux east of Yellowstone park around 1867. Eight of the Nez Perce were killed, and under cover of night they wrapped their corpses in raw buffalo hides, lashed them to the backs of their ponies, and rode for thirty days before returning safely to Lapwai, Idaho.

To get within range of the easterly trails leading into and bordering the Park, the Nez Perce of Idaho might well have turned east from their own "ancient Nez Perce Indian Trail," which headed into the Snake River country "by way of the Seven Devils [Mountain], crossed over the mountains, and wound down into the Wester River drainage", a major route for the horse trade used by Spokanes, Flatheads and Cayuse as well (Corless 1990:13). Before finding themselves that far south, however, the Nez Perce hunters would probably have cut west, skirting the northern rim of Lemhi and Shoshoni-Bannock territories, in order to hasten through the Yellowstone Plateau in search of the buffalo herds. That they might not have been inhibited from striking through the center of the Park area itself was suggested by the Nez Perce historian Adeline Fredin to Joseph Weixelman. As she wrote to him, the "geysers/hot springs were a ceremonial and religious part in our history/prehistory... It was one place where the Great Spirit existed and we could bath the body and spirit directly" (Weixelman 1992:53).

Indian "Wars" of the West and Yellowstone National Park

Because these hostilities are part of the history of Indian relations with the greater Yellowstone region, in this section we briefly review the causes and consequences of three of the some 1,470 incidents of military action which are officially enumerated by the U.S. War Department against American Indians between the years 1776 and 1907. In fact, only two of these actions were ever formally elevated to the status of "war" under the U.S. Army typology: 1) the Nez Perce "war," that lasted from May 14 to October 1, 1877 and covered a theater of skirmishes that ran for 1,170 miles, and 2) the 1878 Bannock Indian "war" in Idaho, Washington Territory, and Wyoming Territory, while 3) the third was often referred to as the Snake or Sheep Eater Indian campaign or "troubles," that took place from August to October, 1879 in Idaho.

Before summarizing these conflicts and their connections to Yellowstone National Park in particular, an introductory word on what historian Frederick E. Hoxie has called the "self-justifying rhetoric" of violence in the history of Indian-white relations seems in order (Personal communication, May 20, 1997). As we have already seen, traditional historians of the Indian wars of the west generally adopted words like "raid" or "skirmish" or even "feud" to characterize the intrusions by parties of Blackfoot and other tribes into the Yellowstone Plateau during the early fur-trapping and "mountain man" years. In those instances the terms usually evoked stealthy, hit-and-run attacks by adventuresome Indian warriors on the prowl for guns, horses or furs from whomever they might encounter, Indians or non-Indians. These terms covered the pitched battles and hand-to-hand combat necessary to gain the war honors and the booty that would win heightened status for the tribesmen once they returned home. So we might well ask if the conflicts in this chapter were in fact fully-fledged wars, or are they more aptly characterized on an individual basis as, "a military version of that childhood game known as blind man's buff," which is how Aubrey Haines described the Yellowstone Park chapter of the Nez Perce War of 1877 (Haines 1996:219), or "a summer of fox-and-hounds chase," as Brigham D. Madsen referred to the Bannock War of 1878 (Madsen 1986:108), or a "pathetic affair...committed to memory by Idaho historians under the presumptuous title of the Sheep Eater War" of 1879 (Liljeblad 1972:39).

What is similar about the violence to be summarized in this chapter, however, is that the anxieties raised by the native peoples that were moving in and around the western boundary of the Park presented opportunities for military authorities to argue for their own protective role to the Park. They provided justification for Park officials to try and persuade Indian agencies to keep tighter rein on their Indians. We also detect a semantic shift in terminology. Instead of "raid" or "attack" we now have the formalized introduction of that inflammatory word war, and the intrusion of a logic of military retaliation which that rhetoric for Indian-white conflict kicked into gear.

Throughout the history of Indian-white relations we often get the impression that this shift from "raid" to "war" reflects the spirit of the times, when an emotional vocabulary was needed for military strategists and their supporting politicians to respond to public outcry for redress against perceived threats to its security. On the other hand, might not this semantic shift from "raid" to "war" have also quite accurately reflected new terms of engagement, in which native peoples had decided to resist diplomatic or other maneuvers to shrink their territory or to remove them altogether, or to mount a last-ditch form of collective defiance against perceived oppression? In the brief span of three years,

the Park experienced this semantic shift as it bore witness to outbreaks by invading Nez Perce (1877) and neighboring Bannocks (1878) as well as perhaps overblown problems with the western group of Sheep Eaters (1879). Another incidental commonality among these hostilities was that they all drew the involvement of the same veteran Indian fighter, General Oliver Otis Howard; in the general's own mind, suggests historian Robert M. Utley, there may even have been a deeper connection, for "the Bannock-Paiute War enable[d] the one-armed 'praying general' to gloss over the stains left on his reputation by the Nez Perce War" (Utley 1973:329). A third common feature was that none of them appear to have been directed against the Park's existence or its authorities per se. But their most profound shared causes were the similar losses to each of these American Indian peoples of their ways of life and land tenure. A surprising appreciation of this deeper background shared by the Nez Perce, Bannock and Sheep Eater conflicts was offered by Mrs. Emma Carpenter Cowan, which she even spiced with a little cultural critique of her own society. What makes her paragraph so unaccountably charitable is that this is the same 24-year old woman who was captured, along with her husband George Cowan, on her second wedding anniversary, August 23, 1877, by the Nez Perce rebels in Yellowstone National Park. Despite watching her wounded husband nearly die, and enduring fears for her own fate, she would later write:

...a tribe of Indians is located on a reservation. Gold is discovered thereon by the prospector. A stampede follows. The strong arm of the government alone prevents the avaricious pale face from possessing himself of the land forwith. Soon negotiations are pending with as little delay as a few yards of red tape will admit. A treaty is signed, the land is ceded to the government and opened to settlers, and "Lo, the poor Indian" finds himself on a tract of a few degrees more arid, a little less desirable than his former home. The Indian has few rights the average white settler feels bound to respect [Cowan 1931-59:169-170].

As for their impact on Yellowstone National Park, the trio of hostilities about to be profiled would rattle its public relations image for years to come. They would also leave an indelible mark on the Park's management towards Native Americans. From today's vantage point they seem a little out of proportion to the real threat.

1. The Nez Perce War of 1877.

Following the Park's formation in 1872 there were occasional expressions of concern by Park employees concerning poaching by Indian hunters. But it was the Nez Perce outbreak of 1877 which aroused a profound sense of vulnerability among potential tourists, and official concern about the Park's ability to protect its borders. The immediate origins of this particular campaign, whose denouement included a clumsy but bloody dash through Yellowstone National Park, can be traced back to the mid-1850s. That was when an energetic governor of the Washington Territory, Isaac I. Stevens, sought to snap up millions of acres from Plateau and Columbia River Indian tribes through the most intense period of treaty-making in which the United States government would ever engage.

Among the 45 treaties which Stephens and his aides hastily drafted and managed to authorize with Indian "signatures" was one signed in May, 1855 with the Nez Perce.

The thrust of this document was the turnover by the Nez Perce of their vast countryside across the mountains, valleys and rivers of southeastern Washington, northeastern Oregon, and north-central Idaho, and the acceptance of a 5,000-square mile reservation in Idaho. But tribal feelings about this treaty were by no means unanimous, since it demanded the surrender of the Nez Percés' beloved Wallowa Valley. Already splits within the tribe had been exacerbated by Christian missionaries, with the result that outsiders, at least, divided the Nez Perce into "Christian" and "pagan" factions. With the dissent over the 1855 land cessation, however, there was now an added gulf between the viewpoints of progressive or "treaty," and traditional or "nontreaty," members of the tribe.



Figure 1. A group of Nez Perce men gathered around a large, dark, rectangular object, possibly a treaty document or a large map, in an outdoor setting. (courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives, Catalog #YELL 37810).

In the early 1860s, after gold was discovered within the new reservation, some Nez Perce were pressured into accepting an even smaller reservation along the Clearwater River. However, the "non-treaty" group had shunned both agreements, with one group camped on the lower Salmon River under the leadership of White Bird, while a second clung to the Wallowa country, located across the Snake River in eastern Oregon. Heading the latter community was the Nez Perce named Heinnot Tooyalakekt ("Thunder Coming From Water Over Land"), but who had been baptized at the age of three as "Joseph" (Halfmoon 1996:309). According to Nez Perce themselves, Joseph was actually a "civil chief" rather than a "war chief", whom circumstances soon thrust into military leadership. Although the fertile Wallowa Valley was opened up to white settlement, and these nontreaty leaders finally succumbed to the whiteman's insistence upon their

removal, a bloody outburst by some of White Bird's young warriors in June, 1977 left four white settlers dead.

Expecting the worst, the anti-treaty Nez Perce now gathered their forces. Within weeks a series of bloody engagements began to move eastward like giant footsteps, from western Idaho and eventually covering over 1200 miles until it came to its sad denouement on October 5 on Montana's Snake Creek, less than forty miles from the U.S.-Canadian border. During five days of that exhausting chain of heated fights and nightly outmaneuvering, as the outnumbered Nez Perce rebels fainted and clashed in their last race for freedom - described by U.S. Library of Congress historian Robert M. Utley as "one of history's great - and tragic - odysseys" (Utley 1984:190) - the Indians were inside Yellowstone National Park. The story of their traversing of the Park under Chief Joseph has been told often and requires no more than brief summary here, drawn from accounts in Lang (1990), Utley (1973) and Wilfong (1990).

Some time around August 22nd Nez Perce scouts are believed to have first crossed into the Park, moving along the Madison and then the Firchole Rivers, and on the morning of August 24, taking prisoner the Frank Carpenter party, early tourists in the Park. Returning to the main body of Nez Perce with their captives, initially the whites were freed, but a subsequent tense encounter saw one of them severely wounded and three others escape into the trees. Riding along Trout Creek, the next day the Indians headed on to what became known as Nez Perce Ford, and on August 26th the rest of these prisoners were released.

But the Nez Perce were splintered into somewhat separate groups, and one band of independent-minded warriors engaged in two more attacks on tourists, near Mud Volcano and just north of Mammoth Hot Springs, leaving two dead victims behind them. As if aware of the consequences, the Indians quickly headed north, burning James Henderson's ranch house and then trying to put the seven-year-old Barocett Bridge at Junction Butte at the junction of the Lamar and Yellowstone Rivers out of commission behind them. Aside from yanking out some beams, however, and trying to burn them up, the runaways caused only minor delays to General Howard pressing on their rear, who was forced to halt for the three hours it took to repair the span.

Although the combined forces of Generals Howard and William T. Sherman were gearing up for a pincer movement to grab the Indians when they emerged out of the Clark's Fork Canyon on the Park's eastern slopes, Nez Perce scouts seem to have second-guessed the strategy. Riding to the crest of the Clark's Fork canyon, the Indians first crossed the eastern end of Sunlight Basin and then performed one of their most cunning maneuvers of the entire campaign. It was as if in finding a way to outsmart the whites in escaping from the Yellowstone Plateau they were making up for their fumbling around for the most efficient Madison River entry into it, which had caused that first run-in with the tourists a week before.

Instead of exiting from Sunlight Basin in plain sight of one group of eagerly waiting soldiers - headed by Colonel Samuel D. Sturgis - the Nez Perce party diverted onto a little trail that led from Dead Indian Hill, as if making for the Shoshone River. But then they doubled back and abandoned

this trail altogether, descending instead down a narrow, heavily-shaded, rocky draw on the east side of Dead Indian Hill, before hurriedly returning to the Clark's Fork. By this time the impatient Col. Sturgis had repositioned his troops from the Clark's Fork over to the Stinking Water. But soon General Howard was back at the Clarks Fork Canyon entrance and discovered, to the chagrin of all, that the Indians were already long gone. According to Nez Perce themselves, accusations that Joseph's Nez Perce were initially lost in the Park are erroneous. They maintain that a man named Ho-to-toe-e, who "was familiar with the country east of the Rocky Mountains...he always live there, raised there," had led them through (Lang 1990:22, cites unpublished interviews with historian Lucullus McWhorter; the Nez Perce movements through Yellowstone National Park are expertly summarized in Lang 1990, while a day-by-day itinerary of Nez Perce movements written for Park visitors is in Wilfong 1990:226-272).

In fact, after his exhaustive study of the Nez Perce experience in the Yellowstone Plateau, historian William L. Lang suggests that the hungry, weary Indians most likely tarried in the Park to get some much-needed rest, to hunt the grass-fattened elk, to enjoy the meadows and groves which were reminiscent of home. He concludes:

The Nez Percés wanted to stay in the Park. In other words, they decided to remain in the Park; they were not there because of disorientation or incompetence.... Throughout their ordeal, the Nez Percés had pursued the same strategy: avoidance of conflict with whites and attainment of sanctuary: What they wanted was their true and just homeland and an end to harassment. Those days in the Park may have been the closest they came to their goals during their heroic flight [Lang 1990:29].

The Nez Perce claim of long experience with this terrain is buttressed by the fact that the pass over Dead Indian Hill, at least, had experienced all sorts of traffic over many years. First it was a well-known game migration route (U.S. National Archives - Rocky Mountain Region, R.G. N.95, Records of The Forest Service Historical files, 1900-65, Box 15, Folder #81, Narrative by J.K. Rollinson, May 15, 1935); then it was part of the Bannock Trail used by different Indians groups for countless decades, after which it became known as the precipitous "Beaver Slide" stretch of an early wagon route. But we might interject here that its place-name has, on occasion, been erroneously associated with the Nez Perce war. The story goes that a Nez Perce insurgent was slain on top, when in fact the killing of the Indian for which it was remembered occurred the following year, during the Bannock campaign. The Bannock was said to have first been wounded by U.S. troops during General Miles' first assault on the Bannocks south of Clark, Wyoming, and only the following day was killed and scalped by Crow Indian scouts. Then his grave was marked by a pile of stones with an upright steel bar sticking out of one side (Shoshone National Forest 1941:7; Rollinson n.d.:7).

Such was that important chapter of the Nez Perce "war" which was staged within Yellowstone National Park. One still hears folklore about a secret meeting on the Sunlight Basin between Chief Joseph or his sub-chief Looking Glass and the Crow leader, Chief Plenty Coups, during these anxious days. There are also unverifiable stories that a few Nez Perce asked some friendly Crows to adopt their children in order to keep them out of harm's way. Eager to enlist their old trading

partners in their struggle, and possibly in its Dreamer ideology of nativistic renewal, a third story goes that the Nez Perce were apparently disappointed to learn that the Crows would stick with their tried and true posture of neutrality - which did not prevent them from signing on as occasional U.S. government scouts against both the Bannocks and the Nez Perce. But our project was unable to elicit native verification regarding such a clandestine conference.

It is interesting, however, that the climactic Nez Perce escape maneuver was conducted in the shadow of an important if enigmatic American Indian cultural feature to the north and east of the Park. This is the semi-circle of angular boulders atop the 8,673-foot Dead Indian Hill, which Billings researcher Ken Feyhl recorded in July 3-4, 1976 as "Bicentennial Rock Structure #48PA44. Conjectures for its function include vision quest structure, fortification, or, most plausibly in Feyhl's opinion, an observation post.

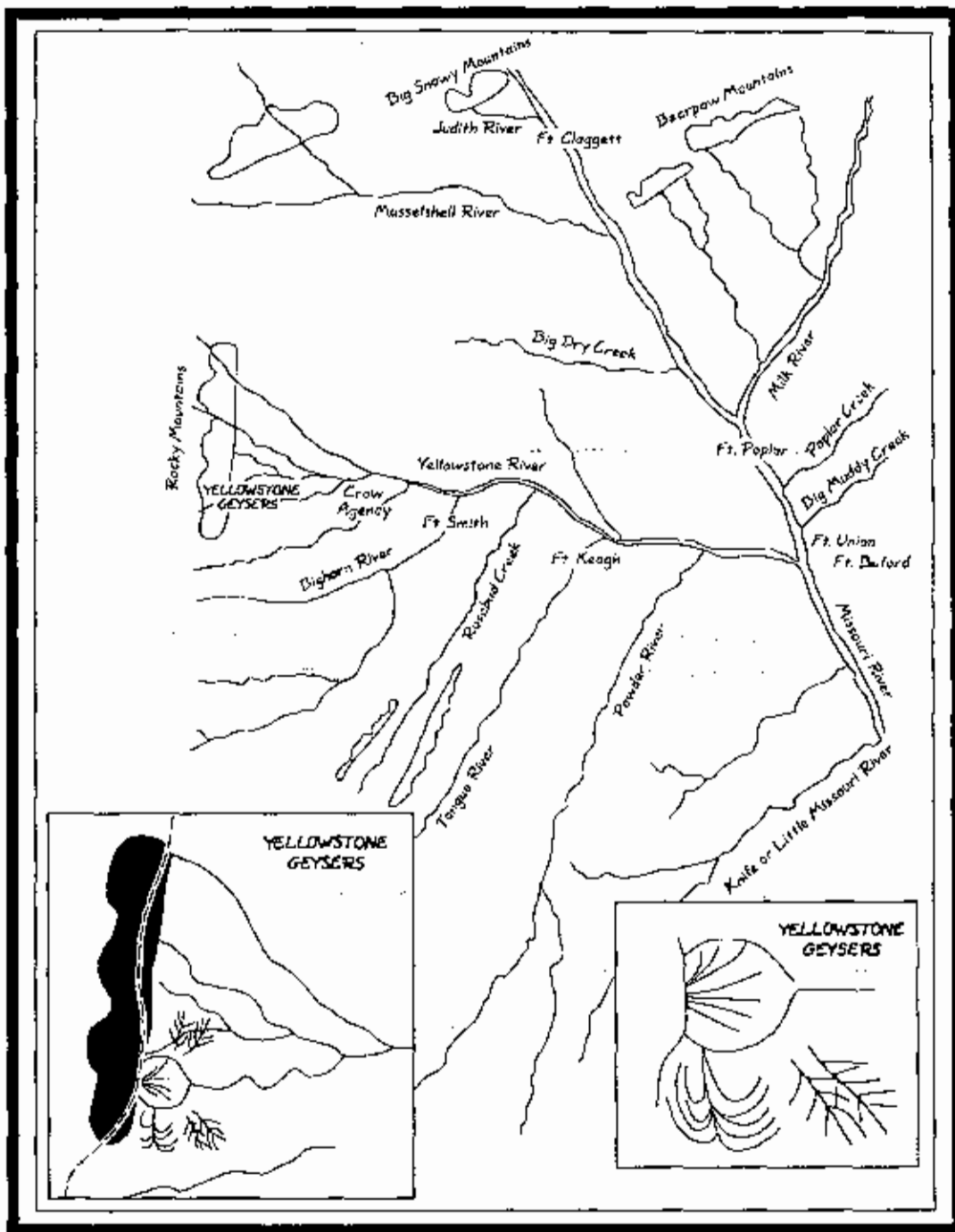


Figure 4.8. Scheme of map by Cheyenne scout, Crazy Mule, depicting Yellowstone-Milk river country, with insets from actual map showing Yellowstone geyser field (From Fredlund et al., 1996, p. 14-15).

One indication of native topographical knowledge is the presence of indigenous mapping, which has proved elusive for Yellowstone. A depiction on a buffalo hide by unidentified Indians including "among other things a little incredible, a Volcano...distinctly described on Yellow Stone" was collected by the Governor of Louisiana Territory, James Wilkinson, and sent to Thomas Jefferson, who thereupon deposited it in the University of Virginia where it was destroyed by a fire (Gowan 1989:24; Haines 1974:4). However the only native-drawn "name glyph," or pictographic representation for Yellowstone National Park or its geyser field that our study was able to turn up was an indirect product of this Nez Perce campaign. The image is found on a pictorial map of the 1877 war's stage of operations which was drawn by a Northern Cheyenne Indian scout named John Crazy Mule who was stationed at Fort Keogh in Montana Territory between 1877 and 1890 (Fredlund et al. 1996). One of two drawings made by this individual with red lines on lined ledger book paper in about the year 1880, the document was discovered among the papers of the great military ethnographer, John Gregory Bourke, that are deposited in the archives division of the Joselyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska [see page 264].

Crazy Mule's depiction of the Nez Perce campaign focuses on the Yellowstone, or "Elk," and Milk River drainages. Especially interesting are his details of the battles on Rosebud Creek and in the Bearpaw Mountains. But the artist also indicates a skirmish on the Nez Perce escape route near the extreme left side of the map, where the headwaters of the Yellowstone are depicted branching out as they flow downward from the mountain range and past the Yellowstone Geyser field. As Fredlund et al. decipher the sprays of encircled and isolated lines beneath the isolated mountain range located here:

A knowledge of Northern Plains Indian pictography allows a rough interpretation of these pictographs; however, their specific references rely on historic sources, discussed below. Following the first trail down the left side of the map, one finds a pictograph at the foot of the mountain range on one of the upper branches of the Yellowstone River. The pictograph consists of a circle enclosing a series of short lines. Trees surround the circle. A figure apparently representing a geyser...The closest interpretation this glyph allows is "they were surrounded in a grove near geysers" [Fredlund et al. 1996:13].

The Nez Perce warpath had hardly cooled before one of two typical responses by would-be tourists to Yellowstone National Park set in. On the one hand, then as today there was a fascination to view the actual scene of the tense encounters, as evidenced during the tour made by the H.W. Hutton party in September, 1881, which generally retraced the Nez Perce route into the Park by way of the Madison valley. After an overnite at Driftwood along the bank of the West Fork, the party of five female and four male visitors were thrilled to be shown the very spot "where a party of citizens from Willow camped; their object was to steal horses from Joseph band of Nez Perce. The Indians made their appearance on the bluff above their camp, fired on them and stampeded their horses, so they were compelled to go home on foot" (YNP Archives, H.W. Hutton Account of Trip Through Yellowstone National Park (1881), Typescript, page 2).

On the other hand, a certain pall, some doubt about the government's invincibility, had been cast by the facility with which those renegade Nez Perce had penetrated the sanctity of America's first national park. Even as late as 1900, the Park's Acting Superintendent, a Captain of the First Cavalry, would feel compelled to reassure a prospective visitor who had written anxiously about rumors of hostile Indians, and about the whereabouts of hot springs to assuage his rheumatism, "There are no Indians in the park, and no more outlaws that may be found in any other part of the West; you would be as safe in the park as in your own home"(YNP Archives, Letters Sent, V. 9, Oct. 2, '99 to Sept. 9, 90; May 4th, 1900).

2. The Bannock War of 1878

If the greater Yellowstone region is to be remembered for its historical role in any Indian-white hostilities, the Bannock War would actually seem a far more suitable candidate than the Nez Perce war. For while the Bannock hostilities did not see any bloodshed directly within the Park boundaries, its fighting raged all around it, its origins were more steeped in the region's history, and like the Nez Perce the year before, the Bannock rebels would cut through the northern reaches of the Park in hopes of joining up with Sitting Bull in Canada (Thompson and Thompson 1982:106). And finally, aftershocks from this flareup would reverberate the longest, as rumors of Bannocks on the loose in the Park would be heard well into the 1890s.

In the fall of 1868 two government officials made an optimistic assessment of Bannock and Sheep Eater receptivity to settling down to constructive reservation life. "They are peacefully disposed towards the whites," wrote S.S. Commissioner W. J. Cullen and Acting Governor of Montana James Tufts in their notes to a treaty they had negotiated with these Indians, "They are tractable and intelligent, receiving instruction quite readily..."(Kappler 1904:709). In no small measure it was official neglect and empty stomachs which forced the Bannocks and Shoshones at the Fort Hall Reservation to continue to break the rules. In 1875, agent W.H. Danilson, an apparently sympathetic man with a respect for the limited survival options open to his charges, reported with nonjudgmental candor:

Owing to the small amount appropriated for their support the majority of the Indians have been obliged to resort to the mountains in quest of game for their subsistence....Quite a number of the Bannacks, who have heretofore gone to the Yellowstone country to spend the winter hunting buffalo, concluded last fall to forgo their annual hunt and spent the winter on the reservation. Unfortunately the supply of beef became exhausted about the 1st of January, and they, together with the Shoshones, were here all winter with scarcely any meat at all. They became thoroughly disgusted with the reservation, and early this summer struck out for their old hunting-grounds [Danilson 1875:258, emphasis ours].

The following year Danilson's reported that conditions had not improved. Rations were insufficient, and even ran completely out before the year was done. Then heavy snow prevented the Indians from going out to hunt on their own, and they were forced to beg at his door to avoid starvation (Danilson 1876).

Under these circumstances, it was probably little surprise to Danilson that when the next hunting season rolled around he counted nearly half of the 1,052 Indians under his responsibility as absent from the reservation, "on the road to and from" their buffalo-hunting grounds - by which he conceivably meant the Bannock Trail through Yellowstone National Park. Meanwhile, at Fort Hall rumors of troops coming to quell the Nez Perce had caused his Bannocks to be "rather restless" (Danilson 1877 "Report of Fort Hall Agency," in Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office).

The immediate provocation often cited as the match that ignited this unstable situation was non-Indian invasion of the Indians' favored grounds for digging their staff of life - bulbs of the camas plant. After the Treaty of 1868 failed to protect this expanse in eastern Idaho, white stockmen and farmers took over. When packs of domesticated pigs rooted out these plants, the Bannocks became furious. In Indian oral history, this resentment was fixed in time and space in a story passed on from generation to generation which held that the war actually erupted after their disturbed camas pastures were discovered in 1878 and they left for the warpath following the harvest. Anthropologist Sven Liljeblad maintains that the insurgents actually broke away before the camas harvest had taken place, on May 30th (Liljeblad 1971:8) - possibly because the outrage had rendered it futile and they were inspired to lash back without delay.

The Nez Perce and Bannock outbursts shared some interesting features. First was a geographical connection. Against the background of unrest at home, it did not take much for angry Shoshones and Bannocks, fewer than 200 strong, to break north and east, with the last surviving insurgents following much the same Yellowstone National Park route pursued by Nez Perce the year before. As for a second, curious tie-in between the Nez Perce and Bannock hostilities, whereas the Lemhi Shoshone Chief Tendoy cautioned restraint among his people, it fell to the Bannock successor to Chief Pocatello, a young warrior named Buffalo Horn, who had actually served as a government scout during the Sioux and Nez Perce campaigns, now to assume command of the angry Bannocks. But the third, and most important link between these hostilities was their shared spiritual ideology. Behind both flareups loomed the influence of anti-Euro-American nativistic movements, originating in spirit from the 1870 California and Great Basin Ghost Dance prophets, but more directly from the new religion spawned by the Columbia River Dreamers, spearheaded by the Wanapum holy man, Smoholla (Ruby and Brown 1989:68-69). The Nez Perce called their take on this Dreamer religion, "turning around oneself," and they emphasized visions acquired in dreams, a single deity, cleanliness, and respect for the female earth (Aoki 1979:84-85). And just as Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce had the Dreamer-influenced religious advisor named Toohoolhoolzote constantly by his side throughout their escape trek through the Park to the eventual showdown in the Bear Paw Mountains, so did the Bannock uprising have a Northern Paiute shaman, named Oytes, from the Malheur Agency in Oregon, contributing his militant interpretation of Smoholla's doctrine.

As the succession of bloody clashes between a few hundred Bannock, Paiute and Umatilla insurgents and white farmers, volunteer patrols, government surveyors and military troops unfolded across southern Idaho and into Wyoming, the rebel leaders were picked off one by one (much of the following data comes from historian Kyle V. Walpole's recent reconstruction of the Bannock campaign for the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, especially his research into its climax on Bennett Butte to the east of Yellowstone National Park; Walpole 1997). First, Buffalo Horn was killed on June 6th in an encounter with armed Silver City, Idaho civilians. About two weeks later, the Paiute leader, Egan, who had filled his moccasins, died in another fight within his own Malheur Reservation in eastern Oregon. As the hostile Indians then fell under the leadership of a Paiute medicine man named Oytes, the Bannocks and Paiutes split into smaller bands, but Oytes finally surrendered on August 12th. This left a greatly reduced group of primarily Bannock rebels still at large.

Pursued by forces under various U.S. military officers, these Indians rustled livestock and exchanged glancing blows with soldiers as they broke for the east. In late August a group that was now no more than 60 to 70 Bannocks sought their old familiar entryways into Yellowstone National Park (This is apparently when the J.H. Schoenberger Jr. party, touring through the Park and enjoying a hot spring interlude, were spotted by "a party of Bannack Indians," and barely escaped a repeat performance of the Nez Percé encounter a year before; all the Indians got were two buffalo robes, scooped up without even dismounting, before disappearing into the woods - *Bozeman Avant* Courier Nov. 28, 1878). The Indians headed over Targhee Pass and across the Madison and the Gardner rivers, then rode up the Lamar Valley and eventually dropped down the Sunlight Basin to camp along a sharp bend where the Clark's Fork emerges onto the Bighorn Basin - about a mile from today's Belfry-to-Cody Road. Meanwhile, embarked upon his own leisurely pack trip towards Yellowstone National Park, the famous Indian fighter, General Nelson A. Miles got word of the Bannock uprising, and instantly transformed from tourist to commander. Driving his troops hard towards the Heart Mountain area so that they could position an ambush from some piney hills near Bennett Creek, on September 4th Miles gave the order for the two-hour surprise attack on the unsuspecting Bannocks, who were defeated and scattered within two hours (Walpole 1997:32-36).

By the time Miles had corralled about 250 Indian horses and 32 prisoners, buried the dead and cared for the wounded, in its entirety the Bannock breakout had cost around 80 Indian lives at least, about 40 non-Indian casualties, and a bill to the U.S. Treasury of over \$556,000. But it had cost the Park another blow to its aspirations as a safe and secure tourist attraction. This new flurry of military activity in and around the Plateau only reinforced a general uneasiness that the region was not entirely purged of its potentially dangerous original inhabitants.

As for the captured insurgents, some were marched to Fort Brown (later Ft. Washakie), others were dispersed to "allotments within the Territories," while a handful escaped only to ultimately wend their way to Fort Hall to blend in with their resident fellow tribespeople (Thompson and Thompson 1982:107-109). For the military, however, the Bannock affair was perhaps more of a public relations success than a military triumph. For after the larger Sioux campaigns of 1876 and 1877, this outbreak cinched the arguments made by General Sheridan and others that their depleted forces

needed significant reinforcement; by 1879 new appropriations of money and manpower for the military were pouring into the northern plains (Burlingame 1942: 242-244).

3. The Sheep Eater War of 1879

One year after the Bannock War a much smaller band of Idaho Shoshoneans, known as "Mountain Snakes" or Sheep Eaters, who lived along the Salmon River, got embroiled in what became officially listed as a "trouble," or the "Sheepeater Campaign." Although the government's problems with these Sheep Eaters involved those who resided in central Idaho, and not the Wyoming-Montana hunters of high altitude mammals, as mentioned in Chapter Three, any Shoshonean bands known by that name, such as had resided in Yellowstone National Park, would be stigmatized through association because of this conflict. Of this particular group of Sheep Eaters it is said they had greater affinities with the Plateau rather than with the Great Basin culture area, and a number of them had taken up horses and buffalo hunting, although Madsen maintains that they "hunted buffalo in a seasonal cycle different from the Fort Hall pattern" (Madsen 1980:19). Long after other Shoshones settled on reservations, "a small remnant of culturally conservative Sheep Eaters kept up their old mountain life" (Madsen 1980:19).

Triggers for these troubles were the killing of five Chinese on Loon Creek, a tributary of the Middle Fork of the Salmon River, and the discovery of two dead white settlers on the river's South Fork. While it was rumored around Bonanza, Idaho that the Chinese murders may have been the work of whites disguised as Indians, it was the white deaths which prompted General O.O. Howard to investigate. Apparently Howard had already been itching to subdue what was said to be the last holdout of hostiles from the Bannock War along the Middle Fork of the Salmon (Corless 1990:116-117). But even according to Col. W.C. Brown, who was second in command during the Sheep Eater episode, the local Indians had some justification for resisting military intrusion into their country:

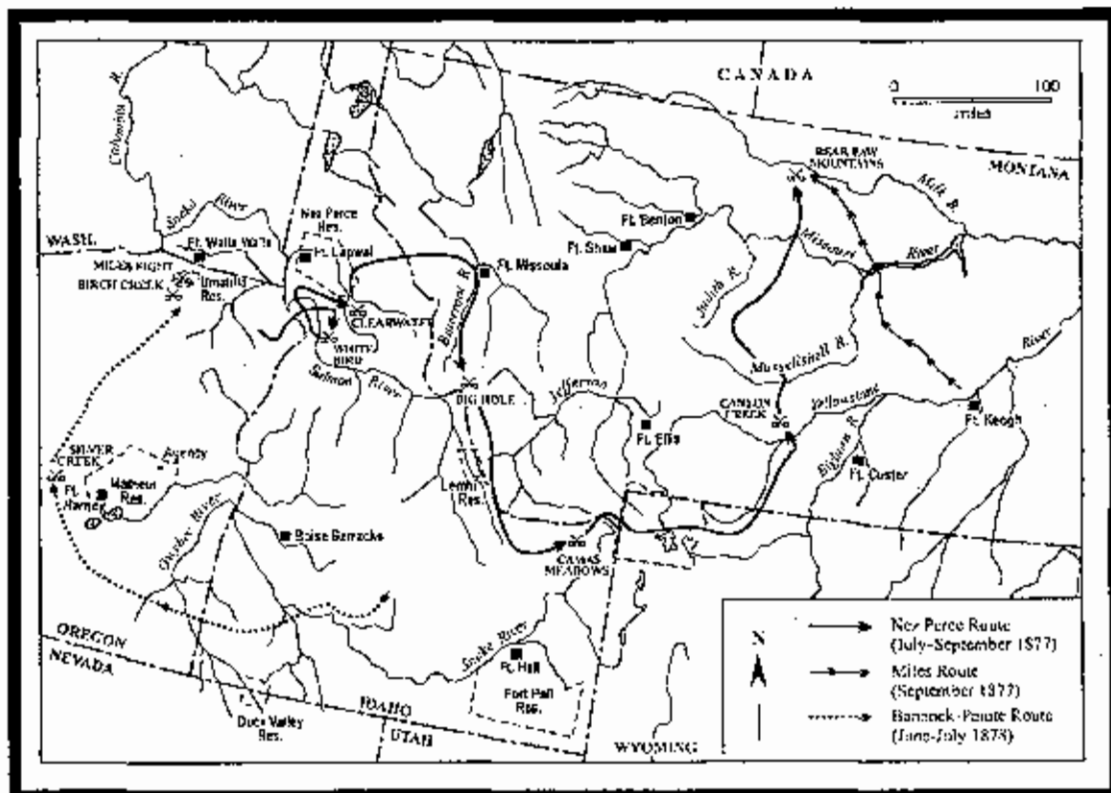


Figure 4.9. Map of Nez Perce and Bannock-Paiute Wars (adapted from *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891* by Robert M. Utley, University of Nebraska Press, 1973, p. 302).

They [the Salmon River Sheep Eaters] had been in this unexplored and almost inaccessible region for generations, with apparently no hostility to the Whites, and they might be there now but for the fact that in an evil day they were joined by a few refugees from the Bannock War of 1878, and it seems probable that the murders of the

Chinamen at Oro Grande (Casto) and [Hugh] John and [Peter] Dorsey on the South Fork of the Salmon in May were instigated by these new additions to the small tribe.

The real Sheepeaters, the old residents, resented [Lieutenant Henry] Catley's invasion. He was trespassing on their country - theirs and their ancestors before them from time immemorial. They fought to repel the invader - and who would not [Brown 1926: 14]?

Looked at today, the episode seems more like a mopping-up police action than a major military campaign, with soldiers guided by Umatilla Indian scouts being led into the isolated, rough country of today's Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness Area. When Indian snipers managed to pick off one trooper, the Boise newspaper editorialized, "These Indians are enemies to mankind, and have no more right to live than Guerilla highway men. To shoot them down would be an act of justice to the human family" (*Idaho Statesmen*, September 25, 1879, p.3). The evasive Indians seized every opportunity to ambush their pursuers until eventually, finally flushed out family by family, the government had accumulated 44 "prisoners of war." As it turned out, the mounted troops and their Indian mercenaries had been pursuing an enemy force whose entire artillery consisted of four carbines, one breech-loading and two muzzle-loading rifles, and a double-barreled shotgun (Janetski 1987:54, citing Madsen 1979: 104). Nor did this campaign conquer all of these conservative Salmon River Sheep Eaters, for according to Madsen, "Eagle Eye's band of Sheep Eaters finally settled in Dry Buck Basin in the Payette River country until the end of the nineteenth century before relinquishing their independent existence as nonreservation Indians" (Madsen 1979:24).

Discouraging Indians in Yellowstone National Park

The rolling sputter of Indian-white hostilities during this 1877-79 period seemed to bear out earlier worries by Park officials that the presence of Native Americans might be "a potential deterrent to tourist traffic in the Park," as Joel C. Janetski has phrased it (Janetski 1987:54). Whether one more aptly described these outbursts as "outbreaks" or "police actions" rather than full-fledged wars, local rumors and newspaper reports of these conflicts lent credibility to the spectre of Indian marauders lurking behind every Yellowstone tree and mountain. To minimize such bad publicity in the wake of the admittedly lethal Nez Perce actions, with his effort at damage control second superintendent Philetus W. Norris drew upon a number of data about Indians and the Park:

The lamentable Indian raid, burning of houses, bridges, and massacre of innocent tourists within the park, soon after my leaving there, is as anomalous as unexpected; the first, and probably the last of the kind, as it is wholly aside from all Indian routes, and only chosen in the desperation of retreat by the Nez Perces, who have acquired sufficient civilization and Christianity to at least overpower their pagan superstitious fear of earthly fire-hole basins and brimstone pits [Norris 1877:842].

For a number of reasons Norris' efforts at public reassurance are interesting. First, they can be seen as the opening salvo in what Janetski has called "the very effective campaign to characterize

the Park as taboo to the 'superstitious' indigenous peoples" which will be explored in depth in the following chapter (Janetski 1987:85). Of this personal crusade, historian Mark Spence has written:

...Norris believed the best course of action lay in convincing "all the surrounding tribes...that they can visit the park [only] at the peril of a conflict with...the civil and military officers of the government" (Norris 1878:985). To these ends he arranged to have the last resident Sheepeater groups moved to the Wind River reservation in Wyoming where they would be subject to the authority of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Norris also traveled at his own expense to Washington in the spring of 1880 to influence a series of negotiations then underway between the U.S. and the Crow, Shoshone, Bannock, and Sheepeaters regarding certain land cessations and railroad rights of way. He arrived too late to influence the final agreements between the government and the various tribes, but his concerns about Indian use of the national park were made clear to the Crow and Wind River Shoshone. Norris believed his biggest problem lay with the Indians of the Fort Hall and Lemhi reservations, however, and he traveled directly from Washington to Idaho to personally elicit a "solemn promise from all [the] Indians to abide by the terms of their treaty in Washington, and also that thereafter they would not enter the park" [Norris 1881:3; P.W. Norris to R.E. Trowbridge, April 26, 1880, Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, "Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1831" [Microfilm Series M234, Roll 352, Frame 322]; Norris to Carl Schurz, June 22, 1880; Norris to Harry Yount, June 21, 1880, Record Group 48, "Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior Relating to Yellowstone National Park" [Microfilm Series M62, Roll 1, Frames 288-9] [Spence 1997:3-4].

Secondly, Norris' comments on the heels of the Nez Perce affair are historically significant because here was also the first time that a highly-placed Park official publically invoked any knowledge about the inner workings of Indian culture in order to exploit the stereotype that Indians in general were afraid of the Park because of their beliefs concerning its thermal features. Thirdly, Norris also drew upon some historical knowledge of Nez Perce history in particular, for he apparently was aware that French (and Iroquois) Catholic missionaries had successfully converted significant numbers of the tribe in the early 1800s - which was when the group's leader, Joseph, had received his own name. But quite possibly Norris was ignorant of the fact that these particular Nez Perce marauders belonged to the self-consciously anti-Christian faction which had come under the influence of the Plateau Prophet movement. To these hostiles Christianity was anathema; they were in the process of consciously reviving those "pagan" beliefs which restored powers to the very Mother Earth whose actions were so awesomely apparent in the Park. And fourth and finally, despite his erroneous comment that the Nez Perce escapees had blazed a brand new trail, path, Norris would grow fascinated with the density of archaeological remains in the Park, and evidence of widespread "Indian routes" through the region, especially the well-traveled thoroughfare followed by the Nez Perce and which would be used again by Bannock renegades over the following year.

Norris attempts to reassure visitors that the park was purged of Indians were echoed by at least one popular writer, and proved to be a bit premature. Since the Nez Perce and Bannock-Sheep Eater disturbances, wrote tourist George W. Wingate in 1886 after he and his wife rode horseback through the Park, "the Indian difficulty has been cured, the Indians have been forced back on their distant reservations, and the traveller in the park will see or hear no more of them than if he was in the Adirondacks or White Mountains" (Wingate 1886:140). Yet when a Billings Gazette correspondent visited John Yancey's well-known stopover ranch near the mouth of present-day Yancy's Creek in February of 1887, the story he heard about some Bannock families still passing through the Park's northwestern corner sounds like a visitation from an earlier era. His informants were Vic Smith, an old-time scout and buffalo hunter, and Dick Rock, a bronc rider and they were recalling an event at their hunting camp on Hellroaring Creek located northeast of today's Tower Junction. Despite the obvious racial slurs and insulting characterizations of Indians in the following article that appeared on the newspaper's front page, it is a confirmation of the Bannock use of trails in the park, even in wintertime, and their continuing reliance on dogs for transport.

About a month ago [January 1887] it seems that a dozen Bannock Indians and squaws passed this camp with toboggans on which they had meat, hides and papooses attached and dogs harnessed to haul with. The Indians, not receiving much of a welcome, they soon struck out. About half an hour after they passed on, one large dog returned bringing his sled with a papoose strapped on it. Some poison had been distributed around the shack to kill magpies. Of course the dog took a lunch of the same and soon succumbed.

The boys had a friend from St. Paul sojourning with them. He went out and unhitched the sled from the defunct and brought the sled in, as it was bitter cold, and excavated the kid from the blankets and skins in which he was wrapped. It soon commenced to cry and as none of them had even been a father or mother they were in a dilemma. A bacon rind and then a sugar teat were given it, but it was no go, for the squalling still continued. The St. Paulite tapped his Henry Clay forehead (more clay than Henry) and cried "Eureka," and rushed out and unchained a large Newfoundland canine of the female persuasion, belong to Rock, and led her in, while Vic carried the two pups, and Rock was walking the floor with young Lo [a derogatory epithet for Indians of this period, derived from the phrase, "Lo, the Poor Indian"] and singing, "baby mine." The dog was muzzled and thrown down on the marble floor, and the two pups and young aborigine scrambled for the fullest teats. By a unanimous vote they called the kid Romulus.

In about an hour the squaw returned and claimed the maverick. As the boys did not have the youngster branded they cheerfully parted with it [Billings Gazette, Wednesday, March 2, 1887, p.1].

Despite the public relations efforts of Norris and his successors to downplay the cultural and historical roles of different Indian groups in the Park area, and their quieter strategy of pressuring the relevant Indian agencies to keep their native charges under stricter surveillance, the western Indians in particular had minds and needs of their own. In 1886 the U.S. Army assumed control over the Park in order to stop any and all manner of threats to its protected animals and forests. No sooner was its first military superintendent, Captain Moses A. Harris, at his new desk, however, than his annoyance fixated on these Western Indians for repeatedly trespassing into the Park to camp and hunt and set fires. Before long Harris' irritated missives to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the Secretary of the Interior, various reservation agents, as well as to concerned conservationists had ignited something of a bureaucratic name-calling controversy, while also

arousing popular eastern magazines such as *Forest and Stream* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated* to write alarmingly in 1889 about "Indian marauders" in Yellowstone (currently under research by historian Mark Spence; see discussion and citations from October 1997 version of essay entitled "First Wilderness: Indian Removal from Yellowstone").

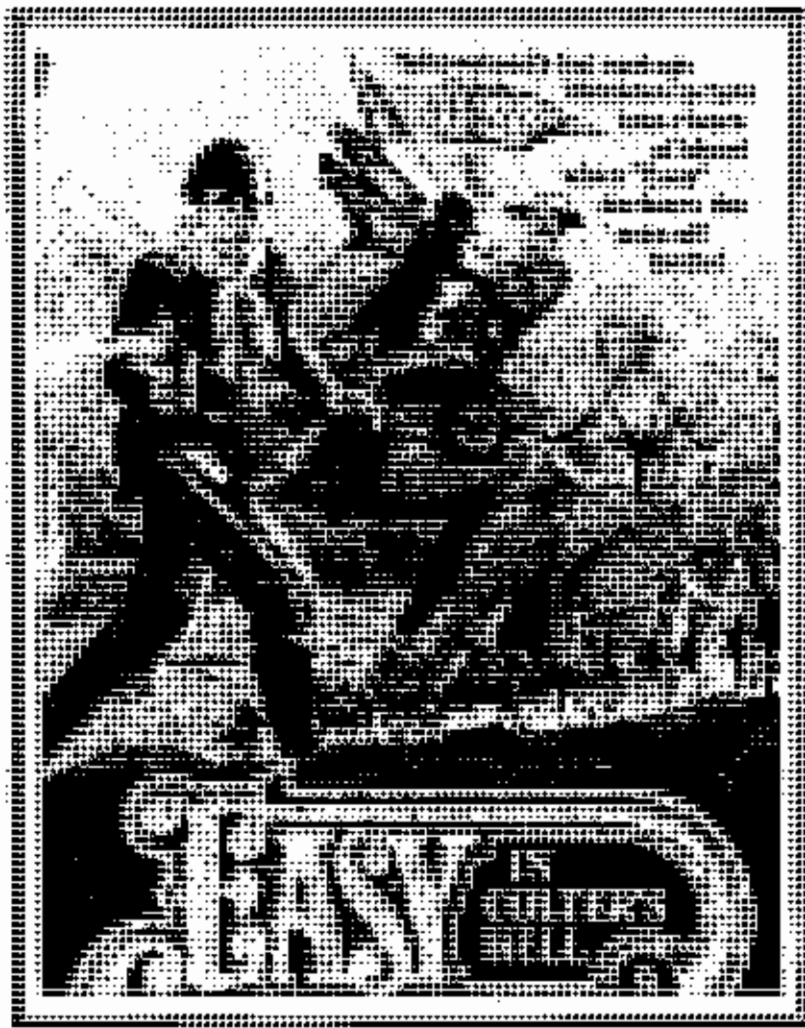


Figure 2.11 Indian "raids" along the western frontier of Yellowstone National Park, from influential popular circulation about the historical role of Yellowstone's Indians down to the present day. This cover of a pulp western novel set in the Park features warlike Indians and the U.S. cavalry company assigned to drive them out (*Easy Company in Colter's Hell*, by John Wesley Howard. New York: Jove Publications, 1981).

As Spence has learned, fears of Bannocks on the loose in Yellowstone National Park would be heard well into the 1890s. Indeed, it was to counter these "invasions of Indians" cutting across the southwestern corner of the Park in order to hunt elk in Jackson Hole that a cluster of white vigilantes conspired, as the Commissioner of Indian Affairs later put it, "to kill some Indians and thus stir up sufficient trouble to subsequently get United States troops into the region..." (Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1894 [Washington: Government Printing Office, 1895], 63-68, 76-77). Spence summarizes what happened next:

When a large posse arrested some thirty Bannock from the Fort Hall reservation in 1895, killing one and seriously injuring several others, their actions did far more than bring troops in to quell an Indian uprising that never happened. Within a year the Supreme Court would become involved in the question of native rights to hunt off-reservation in the state of Wyoming, and decided firmly in favor of the Jackson Hole residents. In the case of Ward v. Race Horse, the Court ruled that all treaties guaranteeing native rights to hunt on public lands were predicated on "the disappearance of those [public lands]." Consequently, a posse could enforce state laws that banned native hunters from lands expected to be settled sometime in the future. While it is not clear whether Yellowstone officials lobbied the court, they were certainly pleased with the ruling since it effectively restricted the Shoshone and Bannock to their reservations under penalty of law [Spence 1997:10, and his lengthier treatment in his subsection, "The First Cavalry to the Rescue," Spence 1999:62-70; see also Ward, Sheriff v. Race Horse, May 25, 1886, Supreme Court Reporter, vol 16, pp. 1076-1082].

The impact of this case upon the historical legacy of American Indian relations with Yellowstone National Park, and its wider consequences for Indian peoples in general, derived from the fact that this was when U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Edward Douglas White employed legislation which had established the Park in the first place "as the legal foundation for any efforts to keep Indians off public lands" (Spence 1999:68). Although smaller groups of Indians would continue to slip clandestinely in and out of the Park for various traditional reasons over the following years, the Ward v. Race Horse verdict would provide state and federal agencies with a definitive legal precedent for preventing Indians from leaving their reservations across the west, and for keeping them out of public lands like Yellowstone National Park (Harring 1994:204-206).

Greater Yellowstone in Far Western Indian Memories

The shadow of historical conflict and inter-ethnic distrust between tribes on the western and northwestern boundaries of Yellowstone National Park and Anglo-Americans continues to color communications and mutual understanding between the two peoples in Idaho and Wyoming. The backdrop of intense hostilities and rampant frontier settlement, unratified treaties and territorial evictions described in this chapter seem to have left their mark on present-day attitudes of Indians towards the federal government and its authorities. Initially, for instance, our letters requesting

permission to talk with members of the official culture committee of the Shoshone-Bannocks at the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in the spring of 1994, and to commence interviews for this project, were frustrated. Before Indian representatives at Fort Hall would agree to any discussions, they insisted upon a face-to-face meeting with Yellowstone National Park Superintendent, Michael Finley. Two Yellowstone National Park staff (Laura Joss, Chief of Cultural Resources and Susan Kraft, Curator) traveled to Fort Hall to meet with tribal representatives and provide assistance with the Fort Hall Museum. Superintendent Finley met with tribal representatives at Fort Hall in November, 1995. While we continued to build preliminary working relationships with Fort Hall tribal members, we passed on their requests to Park officials for such a meeting at the earliest opportunity.

This meeting issue aside, it was also extremely hard to convince Indian officials and residents from both the Wind River and Fort Hall communities that they might have anything to gain from participating in a government-sponsored, fact-finding project on a federally-owned and protected landscape from which they felt estranged and which never seemed to welcome their presence. During the time left for the ethnographic survey, however, project consultants Dr. Sharon Kahin and Jan Nixon were able to obtain interviews with knowledgeable Fort Hall elders. As mentioned in the introduction, another consequence of the hundred-plus years of enforced unfamiliarity between these tribes and the Park has been the gradual erosion of tribal memory regarding any traditions and memories that fall under our category of "ethnographic resources."

1. Oral Narratives: Myths and Tales.

Especially rare to elicit from Northern Shoshoneans were examples of traditional narrative genres relating to the greater Yellowstone region. However, consultant DS, an 89-year old Bannock woman who was born in a tipi on Ross Creek in Idaho, did share what apparently was a widespread Shoshonean narrative about the old woman with the basket of salmon and the origin of certain landscape features - in this case for the origin of certain drop-offs and obstructions along the Snake and Columbia rivers. This account would seem to belong to the category of Shoshonean narrative which tribespeople themselves knew as lzapónabeguyap, or "stories about the coyote" (Hultkrantz 1972:345). As she began:

There's a lot of stories but I can't remember. When my grandpa and all of them started telling stories, I didn't pay attention to them...About this old lady with her basket. Had salmon in it. That Fox kept going around and she told him, leave it alone. Finally, he tipped it over, and that's where that river started, came down there. That Fox kept running, and that water followed him all the way, everywhere he went, it followed him, and that's what the Snake River started...Oh [remembering more details], the Fox carried that basket trying to hold the water back, and every time the water go over, and that's what Idaho Falls dam, American Falls dam, Shoshone Dam, all that was caused by from that he'd trying to hold that basket, you know, so water won't go over it, then water make falls. Then he'd go another way, and he'd try it, and that make American Falls and Shoshone Falls. Finally, he got tired way down then and he just

threw that basket in the river. That's what's sitting in the middle of Columbia River or Snake River [DS Interview]December 15, 1995].

Not surprisingly, it was through a man who happened to be a direct ancestor of our Bannock consultant that Robert Lowie, during his career's inaugural field trip for New York's American Museum of Natural History in 1909, was able to collect two other versions of this same story at Idaho's Lemhi Reservation. The first version takes place "below Teton Basin" (Lowie 1909:278) and the protagonist is Coyote rather than Fox. As Coyote upsets the old woman's willow fish basket, he frees the salmon. Then he performs the second important deed, which is to erect two rocks "below Ross Fork" creek, so that they could not descend any farther, and he instructs the salmon that they must now come upstream every spring.

In Lowie's second version, the old woman treats Coyote to his first taste of salmon flesh, whereupon he first steps on the basket to spill out its fish and then constructs the dam. Only this second version follows the Bannock account above, in that "the water broke the dam," causing Coyote to frantically run downstream and create another dam. After this, he instructs the salmon, "Every spring you must go up the mountains and spawn" (Lowie 1909:278).

But perhaps the most elaborated version of this basic narrative was collected in 1953 from a Northern Shoshone named Ralph Dixey, who was then living in southeastern Idaho. Dixey related the narrative to popular folklorist Ella E. Clark who added in the published version that Dixey's wife, a Bannock, had also heard the story from members of her family. Unlike the foregoing variants, it directly draws topographic features of Yellowstone National Park into its narrative. Here is the Dixey narrative:

Long ago there was no river in this part of the country. No Snake River ran through the land. During that time a man came up from the south. No one knows what kind of person he was, except that among his people he was always nosing around, always sticking his nose into everything.

He came through this valley, traveled north past Teton, and then went up on a mountain in what is now called the Yellowstone country. He looked around there and soon found an old lady's camp. She had a big basket of fish in water -- all kinds of fish -- and the man was hungry. So he said to her, "I am hungry. Will you boil some fish for me?"

"Yes, I will cook some for you," the old lady answered. "But don't bother my fish," she warned, as she saw him looking into the basket.

But he did not obey her. While she was busy cooking, he kept nosing around, kept monkeying around. At last he stepped on the edge of the basket and spilled the fish. The water spread all over.

The man ran fast, ahead of the water, and tried to stop it. He piled some rocks up high, in order to hold the waters back. But the water broke his dam and rushed over the rocks. That's where Upper Yellowstone Falls are now. The man ran ahead of the water again, and again he tried to stop it. Four or five miles below Yellowstone Falls he built another pile of rocks. But that didn't hold the water back either. The rush of water broke that dam, too. That's where Lower Yellowstone Falls are today. The water kept on rushing and formed the Yellowstone River.

Then the man ran to the opposite side of the fish basket, to the other side of the water emptying from it. He built another dam down the valley where Idaho Falls are now. By the time he got there, the flood had become bigger and swifter. And so, though the man built a big dam, the water broke it and rushed on down the valley.

Again he ran, overtook the water, and built another dam. "Here's where I'm going to stop it," he said to himself. But the water had become bigger and bigger, swifter and swifter. So it broke that dam and left the American Falls where they are today.

The man rushed ahead and built two piles of rocks in the form of a half-circle, one pole where Shoshone Falls are now and one where Twin Falls are now. "I'll really stop the water this time," he said to himself. But the water filled the dam, broke it, and rushed over the rocks in giant waterfalls.

The man ran ahead, down to near where Huntington, Oregon, is today. There the valley narrows into a canyon. "Here's where I'll stop the water," he said, "here between these high hills."

So he built a dam and walked along on top of it, singing and whistling. He was sure he had stopped the water this time. He watched it coming toward him, sure that he would soon see it stop. It filled the dam, broke it, and rushed on down the canyon. Hell's Canyon, its called today.

Just before the dam broke, the man climbed up on top of the canyon wall.

"I give up," he said, as he watched the water rush through the gorge. "I won't build any more dams. They don't stop that water."

After the river left Hell's Canyon, it became wide again and very swift. The water went on down to Big River and then on down to the ocean, taking with it the big fish that had spilled out of the old lady's basket. That's why we have only small fish up here. Salmon and sturgeon were carried on down to the ocean, and they have never been able to get back up here because of the waterfalls. Salmon used to come up as far as Twin Falls, a long time ago, but they don't come now.

The big fish basket that the man tipped over is Yellowstone Lake. The water that he spilled ran off in two directions. Some of it made the Snake River, as I have told you, and finally reached the Columbia and the Pacific. Some of it ran the other way and made the Yellowstone River and then reached the Missouri River.

Who was the old lady with the basket of water and fish? She was Mother Earth. Who was the man who wanted to see everything, who was always sticking his nose into everything? He was Ezeppa, or Coyote [Clark 1966: 174-177].

What is curious about Dixey's fuller version of the origin of the Snake and Yellowstone Rivers is how it seems to be a reversal of other, Plateau narratives in which the protagonist Coyote - the "man from the south," the narratives says, as if to emphasize that this is a Shoshonean and not a Salish or Sahaptin Coyote - is involved with maximizing the fishing opportunities for his Indian people. Now in all of these stories we are witnessing Coyote in his role as Transformer and protector of Indians, the aspect of Coyote's multiple personality which the scholar William Bright describes as "Coyote the Brocoleur," when the more positive accomplishments of this trickster figure may include "the slaying of monsters, the theft of natural resources for the benefit of man, the teaching of cultural skills, and the ordaining of laws" (Bright 1993:35). Folklorist Jarold Ramsey sets such activities in the middle stage of the three loosely defined and overlapping time periods of Plateau Indian narratives - the Myth Age, the Age of Transformation, and the Historical Age (Ramsey 1977:xxiv).

But in most plateau stories where Coyote is meddling with dams in the Age of Transformation for the benefit of his Indian people, his efforts are either devoted to unsuccessfully securing salmon for those "dawn people" on the eastern side of the Continental Divide who lack the benefit of well-stocked streams (Miller et al. 1974:16-19) or to tearing down preexisting obstructions so that western "sunset" Indians can have access to the spawning runs of salmon and other fish. In the Nez Perce version of "Coyote Breaks the Fish Dam at Celilo," for instance, Coyote is en route from fishing country of the plateau to the buffalo-hunting country of Montana and stops at a waterfall along the Snake River. When he breaks a fish dam used by five sisters, he admonishes them:

"You have deprived all the people of salmon and fish for such a long time by keeping them from going upstream. Now the people will be happy to get the salmon. Now salmon will go straight upriver and spawn, and the people will have salmon to eat"...This is how Celilo [Oregon] originated, where the Wasco people are today. Because Coyote tore down the fish dams, salmon could come upriver and spawn [Walker 1994:49].

As if Coyote were attuned to the different ecological niches in which different tribes find themselves, however, in the Dixey and Lowie variants above he tries unsuccessfully to engineer the exact opposite effect. On behalf of these Shoshone or Bannock ancestors of the higher altitudes he tries to construct a series of lasting dams that will contain what precious fish Indians could find in these upstream, more mountainous regions. As with the reversals and inversions which the French

anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss says are quite common among the Sahaptin-speaking Nez Perce, whose intermediate geographical position between "true" Plateau and Plains cultures is expressed in the fluctuating symbols of their stories, so here we may be seeing another subtle reflection of the attempt by Shoshoncans to rationalize why their high country contains smaller and fewer fish than those enjoyed by both the Salish and Sahaptins farther downstream - and at the same time providing an explanation for distinguishing features of the landscape that would become Yellowstone National Park (Levi-Strauss 1987:64-67).

2. Oral Narratives: Encounters with Government Officials

In the following accounts we do not make an effort to ascertain "historical truth", since these Indian memories of glancing encounters with government officials would probably have no evidentiary confirmation in the archival record. And even if they did, that would be beside the point. For they constitute part of the neglected "attitudinal history" that forms much of the "ethnographic resources" associated with the greater Yellowstone ecosystem, and provide some neglected Indian commentary on the background of Indian-white relations in the region which this report is dedicated to improve.

One of our principal Fort Hall consultants, for instance, GE, a 63-year-old woman, described her memories of the gathering of the root yampa in the area "starting from the Tctons clear up into Togwotee and clear up into Montana," and added quietly that "people still gather it when they know they are not going to get caught." To illustrate the conflict between her people and government authorities she provided the following family anecdote:

See, my grandmother used to do that and we got chased out one time. We were gathering over in West Yellowstone. It was back up in those mountains over there and we were gathering yampa. She was sitting on the ground and she had me with the shovel. She said I know we are going to get caught so hurry up. So I dug as much as I could and she sat down. Then she said put the shovel down. So I put the shovel down and she was sitting there with her back to the road. She was maybe fifty feet away from the road, the main highway. She was sitting there, she was just cleaning them and putting them in a sack. I said Grandma, here comes a Ranger. She said don't say anything. Pretend like you can't understand him. I said o.k. So I sat down with her and we were sitting there and he asked us what we were doing? Grandma looked at him. He kept talking to me and I just sat there and looked at him too. Then finally he motioned us to get off and go. She used to do some goofy things, I swear, but that is what we were doing. We were gathering some yampa, because we were going to bring it home [Interview, GE, November 18, 1995].

This prompted further discussion of relations between the Park and her people. Another of our Fort Hall female consultants, LV, recalled a woman named Circle Forehead who had been a Bannock and had helped raise her "like my Grandmother" (Interview LV, November 18, 1995). Without specifying whether the following anecdote transpired within or outside Park boundaries, she described her mother's recollection of an occasion when this Bannock woman and her mother were picking berries:

They went in the buggy with all of us kids, mother used to always pick up orphan kids too, put them under her wing and take them too. Here was this white man, and he said, 'You Indians get out of here. Get out of here.' Oh she was angry with him for telling them to leave. She told him in broken English, she said, 'this was our land, our place before you came. Before you came this was ours, these were our berries. They are still our berries.' Mother said she just went into a rage. She was this nice, tall, good-looking Bannock lady. Mother said they went on picking the berries but then not to cause any trouble they left. My mother used to pull that same trick that her [GE] grandmother pulled. Non-Indians would come to the place and ask questions, this or that or whatever, and she would just sit there with her Indian face. Sorry, she didn't know a word, not a thing that they were talking about. She could talk Bannock fluently, Shoshone fluently, and English fluently, [but] she always pulled that 'No Savvy' [Interview, LV, November 18, 1995].

Another interview, with a male consultant, CN, also from Fort Hall, yielded fragmented, broken-English memories of unpleasant interactions between Indians from the region and government officials (Interview CN, November 18, 1995). Indeed, he grew visibly upset when he recollected that "They wouldn't let Indians hunt any place, just the white people, that's the only thing." As for his own experiences, "[I] never been to Park to stop - just traveled through"... "get off like the white people, walk around." But "its too slow going through there... Uncle went through once long time ago, he's lucky...". But he also remembered that "a lot of Indians stopped going when they made them pay. Prior to that we used to go ... certain times of year to gather but seems like we were always going to Yellowstone, two or three times in summertime, spring and fall. All we had to do was show the blue card from the superintendent... But after they started charging evcrybody, people kind of stopped going - another government promise broken."

Lastly, the 89 year old Bannock consultant who related the story of the old woman and the fish basket, DS, also had a family memory that, she maintained, illustrated why "People got so they didn't want to go out there anymore [towards the Yellowstone region] because they got scared. This one whole family was killed... After that people sneak around but they won't go out in the open. Whole tribe found out about it and they were afraid to go back and hunt." The event is said to have taken place around Jackson, when the consultant's mother was about five years old:

One time a man came at night and he had a little baby with him. He told them, "I just came from my camp had the white men just killed all my family, all of them. I came late from hunting," he said, "and I saw their dead bodies laying around so I sneaked

away. I was afraid and as I was coming I heard a little baby crying in a cradleboard hanging in a tree. You fellas were the closest so I came here" [Interview, DS, December 15, 1995].

The consultant recalled that her mother remembered, "So we packed up the same night. We just packed everything [and] traveled by night, hid by day, no fire, anything." The young girls were tied behind the horses and hidden in the packs. [They] hid and traveled until they reached Monspelon, [where] they stayed with Mormons who "were very good to us, that's how we got away from there."

3. Gathering Mineral Resources in the Park

It remains for this section to close with the remaining, major natural resources which Indians might have collected within the greater Yellowstone ecosystem. Primarily these refer to mineral resources, of which the most unique was Yellowstone obsidian. Of Nez Perce rock gathering, Deward E. Walker Jr. claims that:

They regard the Park as a healthy place, they went there, they took the baths, they gathered certain kinds of obsidian in that vicinity. I can't tell you exactly where, but there's some pretty decent obsidian in the Park area [Interview, Deward E. Walker Jr., April 2, 1997].

The Shoshone-Bannock also used obsidian, although for additional purposes to projectile points, as one consultant from Fort Hall explained:

I know she [an older healer] used obsidian to poke your head with, because that is what she did for my headaches. She kept it very carefully. She had a little tin, like used to have chocolates in a long time ago, she always carried it in that. She had about four or five different sizes and shapes that she used to poke heads with...poke your head in different areas to drain the blood...It was her specialty to do that to other people. Just special people did that...Finally, something started dripping, like this color [dark blue] came out. Big blots, she kept pressing my head like that and pretty soon it started flowing, red [Interview, GE, Fort Hall, November 18, 1995].

During our Fort Hall interviews the topic of obsidian periodically cropped up in unexpected ways. Women recalled hearing older Shoshone-Bannock men complaining "about not being able to go into that [Park] area to get [obsidian] - mainly for skinning - because they said that you couldn't control the [metal] knives because they would cut the skin. But the obsidian was good because you didn't cut the skin like the knives did." In another interview, after sharing her version of the old woman and the basket of fish narrative given above, the Bannock storyteller said that after contracting the eye disease Trachoma at the government boarding school in Sherman, California, she was sent home. She recalled that to use the outhouse she had to keep her hands on a rope especially strong to lead her there. Her mother treated the disease with grass [described as "wyc grass" in other

interviews, which the Paiutes knew a kawonoo (Murphey 1959:32)] and "powder" made from crushed obsidian (Interview, DC, Fort Hall, December 15, 1995).

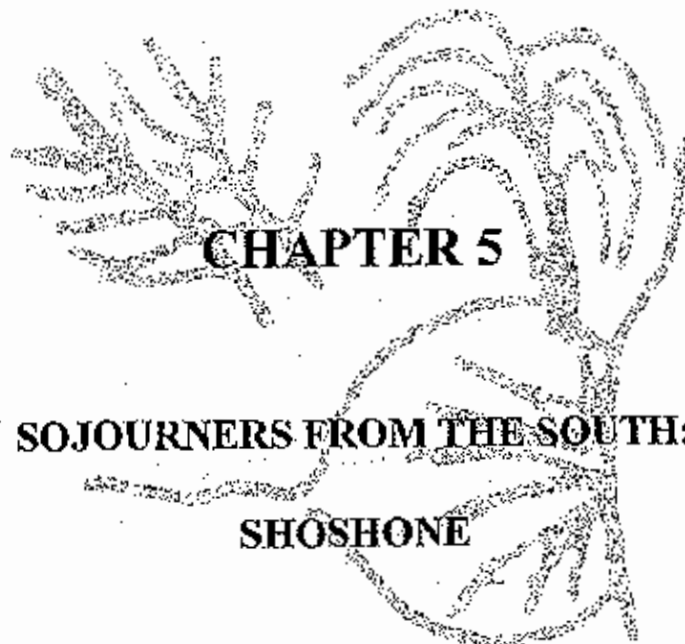
But the Shoshones and Bannocks exploited other Yellowstone rocks as well.

There were certain rocks that they used for certain things were in the Park...like for doing their hides there were certain rocks. They hit them and then they would break and then they would clean their hides with these rocks. One was for cleaning and the other was for going this way [Interview, LV, November 18, 1995].

Here she seems to be describing different lithic bifaces for the two separate tasks of fleshing and scraping a skinned, raw buffalo hide. As another Fort Hall interviewee, GE, added about her own grandmother during this same conversation:

She needed a certain kind of rock to do her hides at the certain time of the drying. The other rock was for when she was trying to get part of the membranc off. [She would use] the cold rocks, I call them cold rocks, and they would be cold and the warm rocks would be kind of warm...the warm rocks would be from the heated areas, and the cold rocks would be from the Salmon area or from the Blackfoot or Snake River where they have those boulders. ...Sometimes the rocks that have been heated through the geysers or the mud-pots break differently from rocks in the cold water that you get along the river beds. Sometimes they will break like a slice of bread, across a plane. Those rocks are generally used for aches and pains. If the rock breaks on an angle that rock is used for scraping or for grinding or pounding. Grandma used to teach me how to do those things. I haven't done those things for a long time so I don't remember [Interview, November 18, 1995].

The next chapter is on the Shoshone to the south of the Park. In it we will highlight exploitation of ground tubers by tribes within the greater Yellowstone ecosystem and discuss spiritual activities - and associated resources - that all relevant tribes conducted in the region.



CHAPTER 5

SOJOURNERS FROM THE SOUTH:

SHOSHONE

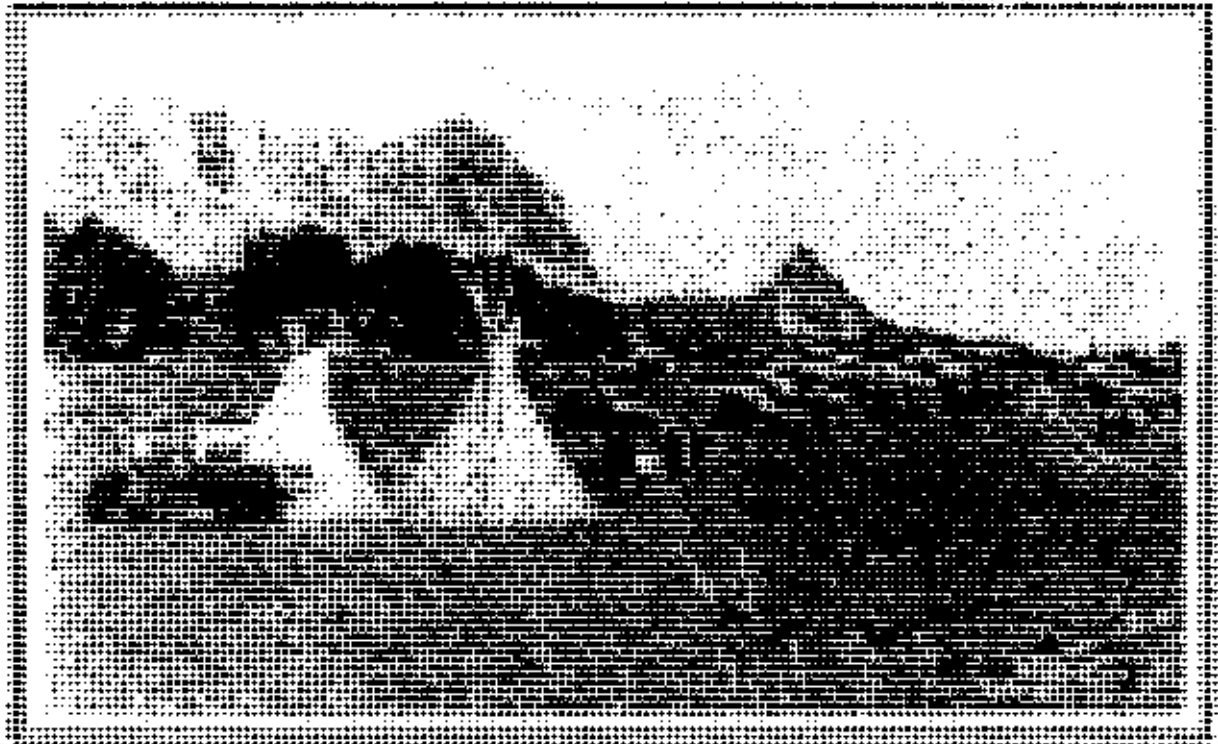


Figure 5.1: Indian tipis near southern entrance to Park, c. 1922 (Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives, catalog #YELL 37784).

The Indian nation whose relationships with the greater Yellowstone ecosystem are the main focus of this chapter are that eastern branch of the Shoshonean people who today occupy the 2,268,008-acre Wind River Reservation in Fremont and Hot Springs Counties in west-central Wyoming. As discussed in the previous chapter, however, the numerous Shoshonean peoples whose many treaties eventually situated them on reservations not far from the western and southern boundaries of Yellowstone National Park had quite a complicated earlier history. The extensive sway of their linguistic community and its dialects, combined with the small-scale nature of their autonomous social units and their regionally distinctive interactions with Euro-Americans, have left Shoshoneans scattered across at least six states. These Shoshone were closely related to the Shoshone-Bannocks, and during the treaty-making period of 1863-68 became known as the "Washakie band" because of their popular chief. Today they are officially known as the Eastern Shoshone Tribe. In this chapter we will provide an overview of their activities in and around the greater Yellowstone ecosystem, ending with a return to the ethnographic associations and historical role of the Wind River Reservation as a final refuge for the onetime Yellowstone residents, the Sheep Eaters.

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Southerly Trails into the Yellowstone Plateau

Few dramatic features of landscape announce the southern boundary of Yellowstone National Park; for many travelers heading towards the Park any appetite for drama has already been satisfied by the awesome skyline of the Grand Tetons and their jagged reflection in Jackson Lake. Visitors are startled to find themselves suddenly braking at the Park's southern entrance, since the buffer zone outside this edge of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem transforms almost imperceptively into Yellowstone National Park proper. Intermittantly gleaming with lakes, but thick with forest, at eye-level it can be hard for newcomers to get their bearings. That is why early travelers relied on Indian trails and Indian guides.

On September 1st, 1873, when the military engineer Captain William A. Jones and his exploratory party found themselves not far from the marshy inlet of the Yellowstone River, where it empties into the lake, one of his native guides, a Sheep Eater (possibly the famous Togwotoc, to be profiled below), had no problem remembering "the way back to Camp Brown by the head of the Wind River" (Jones 1875:39). In fact, throughout Jones' summer-long reconnaissance of the Park and its southeastern environs he was constantly crossing back and forth over a tracery of pathways which, as mentioned earlier in connection with the Bannock Trail, are better perhaps characterized as "systems" of trails than as single thoroughfares.

First off, Jones took pains to describe the major network of native routes which wound in and out and across Yellowstone National Park proper, that commenced at Fort Washakie (known until then as Camp Brown) and then followed the Wind River Valley nearly to its head. At that point the

pathway crossed the continental divide, and continued on to where the Gros Ventre Fork splits from the Snake River. According to Jones, it was here that the trail forked:

...sending one branch down the stream as far as Jackson's Hole, where it forks in turn, one portion leading down the Snake River to Fort Hall, and the other, bending sharp around to the northeast, follows up Pacific and down Atlantic Creeks to the Yellowstone River, down which it follows, passing, to the east of Yellowstone Lake, to the Crow country in Montana - a branch of it following Lewis Fork and the west side of the lake and river; the other branch leaves the Gros Ventres near its head, and bending to the south, crosses a low pass in the Wyoming Mountains to the headwaters of Green River, which it follows down to the open country and thence to Fort Bridger [Jones 1875:54].

But Jones also learned more about the old Indian trail to which his Sheep Eater pathfinder had apparently referred, an arduous passage that required the ascent and descent of two divides. It took off from today's Fort Washakie in the direction of the North Fork of the Wind River, then swung over the headwaters of the Snake River until it finally achieved the headwaters of the Yellowstone, at which time it paralleled the river to Yellowstone Lake so as to tie into the first trail linkage mentioned above.

Especially appealing to Jones was a third trail, apparently of considerable antiquity, which led his party into the inviting, secret "park" of Owl Creek canyon in the shadow of the Owl Creek Mountains. Although surrounded by rugged and unprepossessing scenery, here they descended into a well-watered little ecosystem of its own, featuring splendid sheep-hunting terrain and replete with signs of "numerous trails, old lodge-poles, bleached bones of game, and old camps of Cheyennes and Arapahoes" (Jones 1875:54), even though Jones' own Indian guides claimed ignorance of the little canyon. To find this "luxurious" spot Jones had headed from the "big bend" of the Wind River, following its left bank to Dry Fork, which he pursued to its head, surmounting a low divide to reach the headwaters of Owl Creek near the Washakie Needles, a stream which he then traced into the hidden canyon environment.

Jones also discovered that Camp Brown was the starting point for yet another, fourth Indian trail which cut northwards over the Owl Creek Mountains - the range which curves down the northeastern sector of today's Wind River Reservation. Leading hunters to the buffalo herds of the Big Horn basin, this route could also direct them to the north-northwest, where they entered the Shoshone River country with its distinctive landmark, the Buffalo Heart Mountain. From there a splinter trail veered up the North Fork of the Shoshone River, lifting Indian travelers over the divide and intersecting them with the path that drew them into Yellowstone National Park via its east entrance and the great lake.

In addition, Jones noted other early Indian trailways that sprang from these origin points, such as (1) the route possibly ridden by Shoshone raiders into Sioux country, that headed directly eastward from the Wind River's big bend and hugged the northern flank of the Sweetwater Valley before

following the Powder River towards the plains east of the Big Horns; or else (2) the native road which dropped south from the Wind River valley across the mountains above Union Peak and then led to the headwaters of the Green River; or, finally, (3) still another Indian trail that led from Camp Brown to the head of the Wind River, then lifted up and over Togwotee Pass before taking the northerly drainage of the Snake River and finally reaching Pacific Creek whereupon Indian wayfarers could take advantage of the route mentioned above which connected the Tetons to the eastern shores of Yellowstone Lake.

The curiosity of the William Jones expedition of 1873 towards evidence of Indian travel routes in the Yellowstone National Park environs stood in contrast to the Hayden party's relative disinterest in native ethnography the previous year. And Jones also remained alert to any signs of what Indians made with their hands or expressed with



Figure 5.2. Sign for Teton overlook, named after Sheep Eater guide and medicine man, Togwotee.

their words. While he may have been also open to learning about their belief system, the Shoshone themselves appear to have been ambivalent about allowing whites to view their rituals. When Chief Washakie was at his hunting camp in 1873, members of the Jones expedition were first invited to a forthcoming "buffalo dance," which involved abstaining from water on the part of both men and women. Suddenly, however, the Shoshone seem to have changed their opinion about the foreign presence, and made up an excuse to renege. Yet when some Shoshone returned from the Crow reservation with a captured Sioux scalp the Crow had given them, they not only staged an impromptu scalp dance inside the new Park, on the southwestern arm of Yellowstone Lake, but they welcomed the Jones crew to join in their celebration around the "disgraced" scalp (Jones 1875:276).

With the aid of a native informant identified only by the name of Pinatsi - whom we might safely assume was a Shoshone - Jones seemed to appreciate the distant native past, as evidenced by his

surface collections of lithic artifacts. But he also interviewed living Shoshones about their native language and compiled a working vocabulary. Also uncommon among Yellowstone explorers was the credit Jones gave to abiding ties between Indians and landscape. When Indians led him to "a perfectly practicable passage to the Yellowstone Valley, via Wind River Valley and the head of Wind River," Jones shortly dubbed it Togwotee Pass, explaining that he preferred "to attach easy Indian names, wherever possible, to the prominent features of the country" (1875:55).

Domain of the Eastern Shoshone - Era of Ethnogenesis

It should not be surprising that these Shoshoneans, or "Snakes" as they were commonly known, found along the southern fringes of the greater Yellowstone region were well acquainted with the ins and outs of this landscape. When ethnohistorian Omer C. Stewart began in 1952 to reconstruct for the Shoshone Land Claims Case the boundaries of aboriginal Shoshone territory, he painstakingly plotted onto a series of maps the known locations for the five major groups of Shoshone from over four dozen sources (Stewart 1966). In so far as these northeastern Shoshoneans were concerned, with the exception of James Doty's 1863 map all his major sources concurred that in aboriginal times these peoples claimed a portion of present-day Yellowstone National Park, as had been decreed in the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1851 (citing Royce 1899; Powell 1891; Kroeber 1925; Steward 1937; Stewart 1966). While most of his sources agreed that at least the lower southwestern third of the Park had clearly been Shoshone territory, both Kroeber (1925) and Steward (1937) pushed that boundary even farther north, placing more than two-thirds of the present-day Park within the aboriginal limits of Shoshone land.

Among the Flathead, we may recall from Chapter Two, it was generally understood, according to the well-informed pioneer ethnographer James Teit, that "Shoshonean tribes occupied the Upper Yellowstone country, including Yellowstone Park (Teit 1930:304, emphasis ours)." As Teit continued with the Flathead view of Shoshone territoriality: "Farther north Shoshonean bands occupied the country around Livingston, Lewiston, and Denton. How far east and down the Yellowstone they extended is not known; but they are thought to have at one time held the country around Billings, and most, if not all, of the country where the Crow Indians now have a reservation".

Summarizing the Shoshonean perspective, Brigham D. Madsen has described the broader Shoshone and Bannock historical domain (during the 19th century) as follows:

In the beginning they claimed and roamed over a territory extending from the Wind River Mountains, the Yellowstone Park country, and the buffalo plains of Montana on the west to the Weiser-Boise-Bruneau valleys of the west, and from Great Salt Lake and Bear Lake on the south to the Salmon River of the north. The twin hearts of this immense area were Camas Prairie and the Portneuf-Snake River bottoms, the first a summer home and the latter a sheltered haven against winter storms [Madsen 1980: 223, emphasis ours].

But as suggested by our parenthetical qualifier, "during the 19th century," to more accurately reflect historical and socio-political realities Madsen's territorial assignment for the Shoshones should first be placed in a number of contexts. For one thing, this vast domain was not exactly "owned" in the Euro-American sense of land tenure. Only the natural resources of this habitat could be claimed by Indian families who, at any given time, found themselves in an auspicious situation for harvesting them. And in the egalitarian ethic of these hunters and gatherers, it was only practical to share, as Sally Jean Laidlaw describes for the Fort Hall Shoshones:

When there were good crops in any locality, they ripened so fast and fell to the ground so quickly that the people who ordinarily lived in the area could not possibly gather them all. When a good harvest was promised they therefore spread the news abroad, so that people whose crops had failed could come to share their bounty with them [Laidlaw 1960:1-4].

A second reason that Madsen's broad delineation of the early 19th century Shoshonean homeland cries out for more precise contextualization is that despite his phrase that this land area was what the Shoshone claimed "In the beginning," any representation of the tribe's territory must be positioned within a very clear historical frame. For somewhat earlier than this purported "In the beginning," the Shoshonean brotherhood were actually to be found somewhat south of this area. In his attempt to summarize the protohistoric migrations of the early Shoshone, anthropologist Carling Malouf sees them concentrated in the "great reservoir" of the southern Great Basin, by which he means the large area we now know as southern Nevada and adjoining portions of Utah, California and Arizona (Malouf 1967; also Johnson 1975:16-18).

And instead of imagining these Shoshones moving en masse northward in some wholesale migration, Malouf has them percolating in small groups both eastward into Wyoming and northward up the Snake River system where he envisages pockets of Shoshonean settlers putting down roots, with one of the Wyoming offshoots even venturing still farther to become the Comanche. In the days before the horse, still others ventured "up the North Fork of the Snake River, and through Targhee Pass and Reynolds Pass into the Madison and Jefferson river systems...When horses did arrive, Shoshoni power to wage war increased, and soon they had reached as far north as Canada" (Malouf 1967:130). By this point, according to Kroeber, the "pretty pure" foundation of Great Basin culture began to assume "an overlay of Plains culture (Kroeber 1939: 80, 82)." After this the inventory of Plains-style markers such as "war bonnets, war honours, dancing societies and the Sun Dance now became parts of the Eastern Shoshone culture" (Hultkrantz 1968a:72).

Before long, however, Shoshonean expansionism seems to have been checked on both the north and east. Although evidence is strong concerning their extensive forays into Canada, by 1800 they became clearly outnumbered and out-armed by newly-mounted Blackfeet who began to press on them and force a southern retreat. That is around the time when the land base described by Madsen above seems to have been established. At about the same time scholars also point to the Crow putting a firm halt to any further Shoshonean spread into their territory on the east. Interestingly enough, after this adjustment of their mutual boundary, the Crow and Shoshone began forming a

fairly durable, long-term inter-tribal friendship, which even saw a joint Shoshone-Crow trading expedition visit the Mandan in 1805 (Hultkrantz 1968a:57), the transfer from the Crow of the idea of reconstituting the Wind River mens' warrior societies [now known as "dance groups"] in 1878 (Shimkin 1942:457), and has continued to witness other exchanges in the religious sphere right down to the present day.

Given their close proximity, it is not surprising that a review of historical relations between Shoshones and Crows discloses this alternating picture of antagonistic territorial competition and amiable cultural exchange. It was already thanks to the Shoshones that the Crows had obtained their horses in the early 18th century, and it would be from the Wind River Shoshone that over two hundred years later in 1938 they would receive a revived form of Sun Dance that still binds the two tribes on a summer ceremonial circuit (Voget 1984). At the same time, as neighbors who shared strong military codes in the midst of the volatile arena of 19th century Plains Indians jockeying for economic, political and territorial advantage, their warriors periodically drew the line against one another. According to Larry G. Murray, an Eastern Shoshone member of the Economic Development Committee and a tribal historian:

By the 1850s the Crows began hunting regularly in central Wyoming, and the Eastern Shoshones, under the leadership of Chief Washakie, challenged their right to hunt and camp there. In March 1866 the Crows were camped near the present site of Kinnear, Wyoming, on the north side of the Big Wind River, when the Eastern Shoshones drove them out of the valley, and thus ended the Crow intrusion into Shoshone country [Curriculum Development Workshop 1996:587].

But for any realistic portrayal of this "Shoshone country" we must also factor in a critical third context. We need a more dynamic, situational appreciation of how rapidly Shoshone forms of socio-political organization could adapt to changing circumstances. For it is safe to say that before the horse and the treaty-making era there was no widely shared notion of over-arching Shoshonean nationality or collective territory, as the Madsen quote above misleadingly suggests. Rather, in aboriginal times any Shoshone's political and economic allegiance would be to his immediate subsistence-based "kin and clique" group or band, which would probably be named for the colloquial designation of its primary food - as described in Chapter Four.

With the spread of horses and then, equally importantly, the bureaucratic reorganizations of Indian groups during and after the treaty era, an altered sense of collective identity took over. Instead of public association with primary food groups, now came a notion of group solidarity organized around specific, named leaders, or "chiefs." In former, more "traditional" years these notables might have only been what political anthropologists know as "big men:" forceful personalities who retained control of distributing food and resources so long as they enjoyed continued success in the hunt. But under the white-initiated demands that these select individuals negotiate with U.S. emissaries, ratify treaties and make choices about providing military assistance for the Indian wars, they suddenly found themselves elevated to the status of political figureheads for their ethnic flocks.

Hence, around the 1860s we begin to hear of Shoshonean groups who were located on the borders of Yellowstone National Park or were implicated in the region's history becoming publically identified by the personality of such leading chiefs, with their group's reputation often stamped by the degree to which that particular leader was friendly or hostile to whites. For instance, there were the accommodating followers of Taghee (or Tyhee) of the Bannocks, whom Chief Washakie permitted to live with his Eastern Shoshone people at Wind River but who preferred to relocate to Fort Hall in Idaho instead. Initially aggressive towards white emigrants, Taghee agreed to land cessation treaties, became a successful farmer, and sat out the 1878 Bannock War. There were also the Indians attached to Pocatello, who had achieved chieftainship of his Western Shoshones at about the same time as Washakie, but whose attitude towards white intruders was far more militant until his imprisonment in 1859. And there were friendly bands that gravitated towards Tendoy of the Lemhi Shoshone (whose father was a Bannock and mother a Sheep Eater), who has been described as "probably one of the last Bannock-Shoshone leaders to cross Yellowstone National Park on the Great Bannock Trail" (Whittlesey 1988:153). Tendoy shared Washakie's conciliatory strategy towards whites, despite enticements in the 1860s to join Ute upstarts or northwestern hostiles under the command of Pocatello and Bear Hunter.

By aligning themselves behind such leaders, tribespeople declared both their ethnic and political allegiances. But none on this roster of celebrity chiefs enjoyed so long a reign nor achieved the widespread prestige of the man named "Gourd Rattle," or Washakie. If ever the historical trajectory of an American Indian tribe's relations with the United States were dominated by a single larger-than-life individual, it would be hard to find a better example than this principal chief of the Eastern Shoshone.

Wind River Shoshone History - The Washakie Years

From his birth in 1804 to a Flathead father and part-Lemhi Shoshone (and possibly part-Sheep Eater as well - Crowder 1969:41) mother, to his old age and death at the very start of the 20th century, Washakie's life would symbolically and literally be linked with the history of the greater Yellowstone environment. He was born only a year before his fellow tribesperson, the famous Shoshone woman named Sacajawea or "Birdwoman", became attached to the exploratory expedition led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Their triumphal journey would just bypass the Yellowstone National Park area as it linked the fledgling republic from sea to sea. And nearly four score years later Washakie would host the President of the United States, Chester Arthur, during his fishing and sight-seeing trip through Yellowstone National Park in 1883.

For many of the decades in between those henchmark dates Washakie served as his people's unquestioned leader. In the major transformation of the Shoshone from a free-foraging society of hunters and gatherers to subjects sequestered on a government reservation, Washakie would become one of the most important "transitional" chiefs in the great plains. During his rough-and-ready warrior days, between 1820 and 1840, the youthful Washakie reveled in non-stop guerilla warfare with Blackfeet (see Fowler 1964). The battlefield honors he earned during this period, plus his

physical charisma and oratorical gifts, elevated Washakie to the position of principal chief in the 1840s upon the death of the brother-chiefs, Padashawaunda and Moowoomhah.

The renown gained by Washakie for his loyalty towards Euro-Americans grew out of the largely amicable trading "rendezvous" of the early fur trade era, where isolated Rocky Mountain fur-trappers, whose swaggering lifestyle had borrowed heavily from Indians, exchanged horses, furs, muskets, knives, beads and kettles with Shoshone along the Green River. Later in life, Washakie enjoyed recalling when he herded the trappers' horses, learned to become a marksman with their firearms, and developed a taste for their bread and coffee (see Wright 1980). But just as overtrapping of fur-bearing mammals and decline in the beaver hat market caused this frequently-romanticized "mountain man" era to wane, other social, economic and political forces began to influence the Shoshonean world.



Figure 5.3. Eastern Shoshone Indians at Fort Washakie with Chief Washakie mounted at far right, August 1883 (Courtesy of Haynes Foundation Collection, Montana Historical Society, catalog #H-1011, photographer F. Jay Haynes).

First, the loosely organized Shoshones fell under new threat of tribal expansionism from other quarters, as their arch-enemies, the Sioux and Cheyenne, acquired the white man's weapons and horses and began aggressively pushing into Crow and Shoshone territories. Second, the discoveries

of gold in California as well as closer to home - just north of South Pass - intensified the traffic across the rutted wagon roads that ran south of their country. As an estimated 155,000 people and 100,000 head of stock crossed South Pass between 1849 and 1851, this not only increased the danger of angry brushes between Shoshones and settlers, more importantly it motivated the government to construct military posts along the Oregon and other trails to protect travelers from the Sioux and Cheyenne raiders, as well as to consider a national policy of consolidating Indians on reservations. Third, the permanent Mormon settlements that arose along the southern rim of Washakie's hunting grounds eventually forced Washakie to choose between his allegiance to these solicitous new neighbors and to the United States that soon found itself at odds with the Mormon threat to its sovereignty.

Over the decades of trying to keep his more impetuous tribesmen in check, Washakie also shepherded his Eastern Shoshone followers through the series of road-widenings, railroad track openings, valuable mineral discoveries, peace treaties and land cessation agreements that, one by one, gradually curtailed Shoshone freedom-of-movement and steadily reduced their land holdings. It was during the tribe's first treaty, the grandiose Fort Laramie Council of September, 1851, that Washakie's importance as paramount chief dramatically came to light. Outsiders saw the chief's cool demeanor in the face of one Sioux's direct challenge to hand-to-hand combat as a highlight of the Shoshone appearance there (Hebard 1995:698-70). Although the territorial boundaries assigned by U.S. officials in 1851 were rather loose, it may have been the Shoshone who lost most during this convocation, for the Crows were rewarded for friendship with the whites by receiving the Big Horn basin clear down to the Shoshones' Wind River mountains.

The following year the Mormons served as intermediaries for Washakie's peace treaty with the Utes. But it was not until 1863 that Washakie was invited to Fort Bridger for the next really important treaty-signing with the U.S. government; among the five peace treaties negotiated with Shoshonean peoples that year was one signed with Washakie at Fort Bridger on July 2nd. In exchange for the right to clear roads, establish military forts and to open telegraph lines, stage routes and railheads across Shoshoni lands, the government promised \$20,000 worth of goods (which the U.S. Congress quickly cut in half) for twenty years. Despite delays in receiving the promised goods, under Washakie's influence his people prospered and largely adhered to the peace treaty. The next U.S. treaty with Washakie and other Shoshone and Bannock leaders, negotiated five years later also at Fort Bridger, gave the chief the secure reservation for which he had been petitioning. Later this agreement would also allow the U.S. Congress to allocate funds for the building of a road in 1898 between Fort Washakie and the Buffalo Fork of the Snake River. Its purpose was to hasten the access of troops from Fort Washakie into the Jackson Hole area in the event of possible clashes between Shoshone hunters and white outlaws and game wardens.

Through the terms of the Fort Bridger Treaty of 1868 Washakie also allowed his Eastern Shoshone to be drawn into the government's new assimilation policy. Now heads of Shoshone families were encouraged to choose 320 acres for their farms and receive seeds and agricultural implements; a building and teacher were to be provided for every thirty children and every Indian was to receive cotton and flannel goods. Yet Washakie warned the Treaty Commissioners at Fort

Bridger that he would not accept the new reservation until the government proved it could protect his people from the Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho. His insistence forced the government to establish Camp Augur (named for its builder, General Christopher C. Auger) on June 28, 1869, at the present site of Lander, Wyoming, whose name was changed to Camp Brown (for Captain Frederick Brown, who was killed in the Fetterman Massacre) on March 28, 1870. So it seems appropriate that the old chief was honored on December 30, 1878, after the garrison had been relocated to the center of the reservation, with its new and present name, Fort Washakie.

Two other major land-cession negotiations were thrust upon Washakie. With the discovery of gold at South Pass he was pressured to sanction the sale of all Shoshone lands south of the Popo Agie in December, 1874. It was also fairly clear that Washakie was personally profiting from such agreements; this 1874 sale saw the United States promise annually \$5,000 worth of cattle for five years, with an additional \$500 a year earmarked for Washakie himself. In 1896, with much greater reluctance, the ninety-four year old chief agreed to share negotiating rights with Sharp Nose of the Arapahoe as they sold the ten square acres housing the precious Hot Springs of the Thermopolis area to the government for \$50,000. That was the last time Washakie would affix his "X mark" to an official document. By then the only faint reminders that tied Shoshone Indians to the Yellowstone environment would be a handful of Park placenames derived from their language, such as Dunanda Falls, Gwinna Falls, Ponuntpa Springs, Wabb Springs and Wahhi Falls.

Safeguarding his followers' political neutrality through these years was not always easy for Washakie. Younger upstart warriors decamped to join less conciliatory Shoshone and Bannock leaders, like Bear Hunter or Pashego, as they swooped down upon pioneers and ranchers along the Utah-Idaho border. Despite Washakie's stance of alliance with whites, which extended to lending warriors to serve as U.S. scouts, he was constantly being asked to concede more land and cede his authority. In 1878, when he was originally forced to accept a contingent of almost a thousand, near-destitute Arapahoes on the Shoshone reservation, he reminded the Governor of Wyoming Territory what it felt like to lose political freedom and larger homeland: "The white man, who possesses this whole vast country from sea to sea, who roams over it at pleasure, and lives where he likes, cannot know the cramp we feel in this little spot" (Hebard 1995:212).

One of Washakie's last government-sanctioned escapes from that cramped little spot had actually occurred four years earlier, when the Commissioner of Indian Affairs allowed him to lead a buffalo hunt in the fall of 1874. Accompanying the old-style expedition would be a "roaming school" for Indian children, with instructor (and later Indian agent) James I. Patten packing along a circus-size tent to serve as his mobile classroom, "a comfortable place for 25 to 35 scholars." On October 16 the large party of pack and hunting horses and outlying scouts departed from Fort Washakie to ford the Big Wind River just south of the present Diversion Dam. Waiting three days for their scout reports, they finally learned the Big Horn basin was teeming with game. Yet when they spied numerous signs of a large hostile group of Indians they struck out on the Red Canyon Trail across the Owl Creek Mountains. Snowbound for another four days, they eventually descended into the basin to camp at Red Springs.

It was then that schoolteacher Patten "saw the Indians in another light." What follows is Patten's eye-witness cameo of Shoshones relishing a taste of the old days. This is the sort of communal hunt they must have conducted throughout the greater Yellowstone ecosystem for centuries:

They were not the same people who a few days earlier had left the agency complacent and mild. Huge fires were burning throughout this camp. Harangues were made by old men, incantations made by medicine men, drums were beaten, and rattles shaken. Washakie himself seemed another being on this wild and weird camping ground. His voice, loud and clear, rang out on the night air as he addressed his people. His face lighted up and caused great enthusiasm among the young and old and they joined in singing their old war and hunting songs [Patten 1926: 298-299].

After Shoshone runners located some buffalo about 40 miles west of present-day Worland and just southeast of Meeteetse, the hunters readied their special buffalo horses and gave chase. In less than an hour they had killed 125 animals, and shortly crossed the Shoshone River a few miles west of present-day Emblem to continue on to the Big Horn River. On their return home about a month after they had left, they crept up on a small buffalo herd about 18 miles from the Wind River Agency. As Patten and his Indian friends watched from hiding, the animals blissfully rolled on their backs in a muddy buffalo wallow. According to Patten, "This was the last herd of buffalo seen near the [Wind River] agency for already the vast herds of buffalo were beginning to disappear" (Patten 1993: 34).

Given the fact that six years later there existed an unwritten ban that strongly discouraged Eastern Shoshone, along with all other Indians, from entering Yellowstone National Park, the best evidence we have that some intimate knowledge of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem was being transmitted from generation to generation are the hints of Shoshone Indians functioning as hired hunting guides, or even as hunt predators, during visits by white sportsmen. In the winter of 1880-81, for instance, William Baillie-Grohman noticed that when he left Fort Washakie for the "Sierra Shoshone," hungry Indians often pursued and butchered those wounded deer which he found too troublesome to track down on his own (Baillie-Grohman 1882: 263-277). Packing in with his elk and bear hunting party, in 1887 the author Owen Wister was led first over the Continental Divide for some elk and bear hunting in Jackson Hole, and hence up into the southern reaches of the Park all the way to Mammoth Springs by his guide, a "full-blood Shoshone" named Tighee, or Tigi. As Wister evoked his woodsmen skills in a journal:

But it was necessary to follow Tigi like his shadow. I tried to make as little noise as he does. Whipping by jagged rotten boughs, letting his shoulder go an inch from them and stepping over twigs that lay thick in the timber. His moccasins slipped over them with never a crack [Wister Notebook, Tuesday, August 16, 1887, University of Wyoming, Special Collections, Accession #290].

And when the British hunter Edward Buxton wanted to locate game around the Jackson Hole and southern Yellowstone region he sought out local Indians because he had heard that they still hunted

up there. But he had to be satisfied with second-best in the person of a white man named "Indian Dick" who had been raised by the Wind River Shoshone (Buxton 1892:75). Other information suggests that well into the 20th century, if times got tight the Eastern Shoshone could fall back upon their older hunting expertise and their first-hand topographical knowledge of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem.

As late as autumn, 1929, for instance, when the Shoshones and Arapahoes were suffering slim government rations on their reservation, they conducted what almost sounds like a repeat performance of Washakie's 1874 hunt. A body of about 25 to 30 Indians slipped away from their Agency and trespassed upon the Washakie National Forest, pitching their canvas tents on Green Creek which lay just to the west of Trapper Creek. While on his regular patrol, a timber sale ranger named Carl G. Krueger spied the band and felt he was glimpsing "the way they had been preparing meat for hundreds of years." As Krueger recalled the scene of this Shoshone food-processing encampment:

They came by team and wagon, and had a bunch of extra horses, so made quite a procession. They built pole racks at their camp, and it looked as if a half an acre of land was covered with strips of meat hanging in the sun to dry. This was fairly early in the fall; there were still lots of flies, and around their camp there was also a good strong odor. I expect this was the way they had been preparing meat for hundreds of years. Moose were protected at that time too, but I think some of them got on the drying racks; there seemed to be fewer of them around after the Indians left. I did not take any pictures of this; maybe I thought the Indians wouldn't appreciate it. There are both Shoshone and Arapahoes on the reservation, but I don't know which tribe these belonged to [Krueger n.d., p. 11].

Washakie's waning years as principal chief of the Wind River Shoshone witnessed increasing tribal impoverishment and collective uncertainty, as government rations were trimmed, the agricultural promise which saw Shoshones managing their own farms with some success by 1872 then turned sour within a few years, and a measles epidemic killed many of their children (Vander 1986:5). As faith in their old modes of maintaining psychological balance and physical health began to falter, many were attracted to the messages of Mormon and Episcopalian missionaries, as well as to new native ceremonies like their version of the Ghost Dance, the Native American Church, and a form of Sun Dance which blended old beliefs, Christian symbols and placed a special emphasis on curative rituals (see Shimkin 1942: 456-461 for Shoshone religious change).



Figure 5.4. Dick Washakie (left) guiding Owen Wister Party into Buffalo Fork, just south of Yellowstone National Park, 1887 (Photo courtesy of American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming).

Today all three of these rituals still survive in various forms on the Wind River Reservation, with Sun Dancing and Peyotism actually flourishing (Liljeblad 1969:41). But the tribe's wider domain has shrunken, with the surrounding federal lands largely off-limits to hunters and the Camas Prairie where their northern brethren once harvested the onion-like roots - to be described in the next section - now under agribusiness cultivation, and the only stray camas to be found sprout like weeds out of roadside ditches (Statham 1976:65). Yet the Shoshone-Arapahoe land base, extending seventy miles

from east to west and fifty-five miles from north to south just east of the continental divide, remains a sanctuary where a handful of elder Eastern Shoshone and Sheep Eater descendants still retain some knowledge of religious and social practices that link them to the greater Yellowstone ecosystem. Surrounding the river valley settlements occupied by these Indians is an encircling wall of snow-capped mountains. Within their embrace exists this cultural world apart, Shoshone and Arapaho Indian country, in which, writes anthropologist Loretta Fowler, "There is a pervasive stillness and, despite the clusters of extended family settlements, a sense of great space" (Fowler 1982:228).

Camas among Yellowstone's Indians

Although many different natural plant resources were harvested by Shoshoneans along the southern reaches of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem, such as the tiny leaves from thistles and heath for their tobacco mixtures (Nickerson 1966:49-50), this section will focus exclusively on the widespread use of the Camas bulb in or around the Park region. Reputed to be "the great northern Plateau staple" (Turney-High 1941:33) or the "queen root of this clime" (Father Pierre De Smet, in Chittenden and Richardson 1905:488), we have delayed until now from summarizing the cultural role of this principal major Plains-Plateau food source in their lives in much the same manner that we reserved Chapter Two for synthesizing much of our data on big-game hunting. Our information on camas originates from archaeological, historical, ethnographic and folkloristic sources.

1. Camas: Archaeology. It is around the southern skirt of the Yellowstone Plateau that the preponderance of our archaeological data about camas comes in the form of the pit roasting hearths in which it was cooked. Not far south of the Park, for instance, at the Henn site in the southern Jackson Hole region - one of the most recent and sophisticated archaeological episodes in the region - University of Wyoming archaeologists in 1992 discovered nine of these rock-filled hearths.

According to the Henn investigators, "pit roasting is an extremely labor intensive, messy, space consuming activity that typically requires 1-3 days to complete. As a result such activities are often conducted in areas peripheral to the main habitation area" (Rapson et. al. 1995:235-236). Since almost none of the hearths betrayed evidence of animal remains, archaeologist David J. Rapson concluded that in all probability they were evidence for the reliance of Indians on plant resources like camas for at least 300 years during the Late Prehistoric and Protohistoric periods. As Rapson points out, however, blue camas was only one of many edible root and tuber resources eaten by Indians in the area, such as White Mules-Ears, Arrowleaf Balsamroot, Wych Biscuitroot, Wild Hyacinth, Sego Lily, Tobacco root, Arrowhead, Wild Onion, Cattail and Yampa (Rapson 1995:77).

By the time of the Henn excavations, botanical archaeology in the Jackson Hole-Yellowstone National Park ecosystem had been underway for a dozen years, thanks to the work of Stuart A. Reeve. In 1980 Reeve first perceived how native food-foraging practices of this region reflected a blend of the three culture areas we have described in our introduction: Great Basin-Shoshone, Plateau-Salish and Plains-Blackfoot traditions. Of the many plant species used by early Indians here,

he argued that the blue camas found in the lowland meadows was clearly most prominent, whose gathering "focused migratory patterns and structured band territories" throughout the region (Reeve 1980:378). During his following doctoral research, Reeve came to realize that while "the number of potential plant resources are vast...the task of attributing prehistoric significance to one or more plants can be risky" (Personal Communication, December 4, 1993). Despite other scientific opinions to the contrary (see McIissa Conner reports from Jackson Lake), Reeve felt confident enough about pinpointing camas as a key plant for prehistoric peoples "occupying the Snake River headwaters of northwestern Wyoming" to devote his Ph.D. dissertation to the topic (Reeve 1986:iii). In this work Reeve also speculated on the complementarity of gender division of labor for native food-gathering in the region. Looking most intensively at the Lawrence site at the northern end of Jackson Lake, Reeve hypothesized that:

...the eastern biogeographic boundary of the liliaceous root crop blue camas (*Camassia quamash*) provided an ecological context for surplus root harvest and for social aggregating. Female root gathering activities may have provided economic and ideological bases for ceremonialism, trade and political alliance central to the reemergence of a high country adaptive system since perhaps 10,000 B.P. in the mountains of north-western Wyoming....Lithic assemblages from meadow and non-meadow sites are compared to demonstrate both the sequence of seasonal subsistence and settlement patterns, and to differentiate work activities at female-oriented meadow sites and presumed male fishing sites [Reeve 1986:iii].

When Reeve's next important assignment moved into the heart of Yellowstone National Park, he kept his eye out for evidence of camas use. The only promising meadows for gathering were in the southwestern corner of the Park, but he did turn up earthovens at a Fishing Bridge site (48YE304). The cracked rock features used to cook large quantities of roots, and the grinding stones for reducing them to flours or cakes which mobile Indians could carry as they moved, made him wonder again whether, since plant gathering was largely woman's work, the residential camps "may have allowed direct access to female exploitative environments" (Reeve 1989:32).

On the southern fringes of the greater Jackson Hole-Yellowstone ecosystem the hundreds of large cobble-filled fire pits found in Wyoming's upper Green River Basin provide a better sense of the extent of Shoshonean dependence upon wild plants (Francis 1995: 2). To these wet meadow environments the mountain dwellers would have probably descended on foraging expeditions in spring and fall. Analysis of one of their roasting hearths in this floodplain environment was conducted in 1991 by Wyoming State archaeologists as part of a Wyoming Department of Transportation survey. It yielded a detailed glimpse of the nutritional value to Indians of the Yellowstone Plateau of not only camas but other edible roots and tubers such as wild onion, biscuitroot and yampa (Francis 1995).

Near Duck Creek, a tributary of the New Fork, the archaeologist Julie Francis worked on a cooking pit, known as "feature 5", a little over a hundred miles south of the Park, which would have held about 9 bushels of roots. When Francis examined ethnographic writings on the Flathead and

other Plateau groups, she discovered that it was estimated that a single root-digger could collect about one bushel of camas roots a day (Malouf 1979:26; Ray 1932:98), but that an average of only 30 kg, or 0.7 bushels of biscuitroot, might be collected each day. This meant that one person would take about nine days to fill the cooking pit with camas, and 13 days to fill it with biscuitroot (Hunn 1981:129).

Next Francis wanted to learn how beneficial this cooking oven might have been to its Indian users. Already she knew that Hunn had estimated that 0.1 kilograms of fresh camas roots yielded 113 kilocalories (1981: 13), and therefore that 200 kilograms of camas cooked in the pit she had excavated would yield about 226,000 kilocalories. As she continued:

Assuming an average [human] requirement of 200/kcal/day, camas cooked in feature 5 would have supplied the total caloric needs of one person for 11 days or a family of four for nearly 30 days. One must also consider that roots processed in feature 5 would have constituted only a portion of the total diet. For a family of four, camas cooked in feature 5 would supply 56,500 kcal/person. Spread out over one year, this would amount to 8% of the daily caloric requirement [Francis 1995:10].

From the lack of animal and other plant remains Francis concluded that this particular hearth had been exclusively devoted to roasting root products. Not necessarily associated with a residential camp of any duration, she believed that this hearth and others like it were more likely reflective of Indians who organized themselves to undertake food-gathering expeditions with specific products in mind that they would process on site and then transport to their homes at some other locations.

2. Camas: History. For the region west and northwest of Yellowstone National Park, much of our information about this crucial food source is historical in nature. It was Lewis and Clark who first named the camas plant on September 20, 1805, during their trek through the country of the Nez Perce Indians. Finding it growing at Quawmash Flats in northern Idaho, where they learned that it was a vital part of the native food supply, they dubbed it accordingly (Thwaites 1904-1906, V:119).

Subsequent visitors to Shoshone and Bannock country did not ignore these Indians' special dependence upon camas. While visiting Fort Hall in 1839, T.J. Farnham learned that natives to the west of Fort Hall "are said to subsist principally on roots" and then, on the Bear River divide, got a chance to see for himself how "This valley is the grain-filled and root-garden of the Shoshonie Indians; for there grow in it a number of kinds of edible roots, which they dig in August, and dry for winter use" (in Thwaites 1906:293). And travelling across the same landscape only a few years later, Theodore Talbot met Shoshones bearing "Kooyah or Black root" to trade. Initially Talbot looked with some distaste at the "black, sticky, suspicious looking compound, of a very disagreeable odor" until he was told that "when you have overcome the prejudices which its appearance and smell create...it is a very palatable and soon a favorite mess" (Carey, ed. 1931:45).

During the historical period, the horse-riding Shoshone and Bannock Indians were distinguished from other Plains peoples by their seasonal alternation between hunting for large mammals and foraging for plant staples. Indeed, their favored areas for harvesting tubers, roots and seeds appear to have been just as central to their sense of cultural identity as were their big game-hunting grounds. Only nine months before the establishment of Yellowstone National Park, in June of 1871, families from the Idaho Bannock tribe undertook their customary spring expedition to their favored camas meadows to the west of Fort Hall. They were bent on foraging for camas roots, which they knew as pasigo (Statham 1976:60), and which they habitually unearched using antler digging sticks and leather sacks and then dried prior to heading out on their spring buffalo hunts.

Already these Bannock were aware that the Oregon Trail was cutting across the fertile bottomlands of the Bear, Snake and Portneuf rivers where they were accustomed to finding camas. But what the Indians discovered on the Camas Prairie that spring brought home the shocking ramifications of white penetration like never before. Great swatches of the moist rich loam where they expected to find two-foot high stalks, supporting delicate blue flowers and springing out of sweet-tasting, highly-nutritious bulbs, had been torn up and the plant remains strewn about by packs of the white man's hogs.

Since their earliest treaty discussions the Bannocks and Shoshones had always insisted that this particular food-gathering region be set aside for their exclusive use. And during treaty negotiations with the Fort Hall Bannock and Shoshone in 1868, the Government had vowed to allow the Indians:

...retention of "reasonable portions" of the Portneuf River valley and the Big Camas Prairie, the best root-digging grounds in southern Idaho. Their chiefs had been firm on this point; whatever else they would have to give up, the habitats of their most important food plants they would not give up...The Fort Hall band leaders took great pains to convince the agent that Camas Prairie was essential to the economy which he wanted them to maintain [Liljeblad 1957:70].

The heavy concentration of camas in the Bannock and Northern Shoshone region seems to have led to the importance of the Camas Prairie as a trading center, in addition to the fact that it was also an optimal staging place from which to launch their large-scale buffalo hunts (Steward 1938:328; Murphy and Murphy 1960:320). As Statham has written, "Although surpluses sufficient to foster the emergence of a well-developed trade were unusual for the native people of the Great Basin (Steward 1938:321), the localized abundance of camas in the northern Great Basin made the potential of trade a reality" (Statham 1976:78). Because the well-watered Big Camas Prairie, that extends north of today's Mount Bennett Hills in south-central Idaho, was such a first-rate foraging ground, it also became a crossroads where Bannocks, Shoshones, Nez Perce, Flathead and Pend d'Oreilles might exchange deer hides, horses, buffalo robes, pine nuts, seeds, otter furs, tanned buckskins, along with a host of root resources, with camas foremost among them (citations summarized in Statham 1976:78-79).

But in 1871, after the Bannocks complained of the hog invasion into their prime camas fields, they were informed that a clerical error in the written transcription of their Fort Bridger Treaty had actually altered the wording of "Camas Prairie" to "Kansas Prairie," and thus the region had not been protected. We have no record what the Indians thought of this feeble explanation. However, even their own government agent, M.P. Berry, later confessed that "White men were merely using the mistake as a subterfuge for claiming the Camas Prairie as open for settlement and use by the whites" (Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871, pp. 540-43; Berry to Walker, Fort Hall Agency, January 1, 1872, in Fort Hall Agency Letter Book, quoted in Madsen 1958: 182-183).

Not long afterwards dignitaries such as Idaho governor W. J. McConnell and U.S. Army General and Indian fighter George Crook fully admitted that the Bannocks considered their traditional ties to this Portneuf/Camas Prairie region so vital to their food supply that it was perfectly understandable why, seven years later, they would take up arms to defend this stretch of ground - which could be likened to their bread basket (Madsen 1958:228-229). Indeed, a former Yellowstone National Park official also compared the importance of the plant - known scientifically as camassia quamash - for tribes in and around Yellowstone National Park to that of "bread" for the non-Indian (Beal 1942:46). While other causes can be cited for instigating the Bannock and northern Shoshone hostilities of 1878, today's Fort Hall Indians often point to this wanton destruction of their fundamental food source as the major catalyst.

Our emphasis in this section on historical information should not give the misleading impression that we know nothing about Northern Shoshone or Bannock gathering and preparation practices for camas. Although there has not been any systematic ethnographic review of the root and bulb resources exploited by the Shoshone-Bannock peoples (Statham 1976:60), the ethnographic literature contains such frequent references to its use within the Great Basin and Plateau that by historic times it must have been a staple of the Shoshonean diet for centuries, if not millennia (Anastasio 1955:18; Liljeblad 1957:15,26,65; Curtis 1907-1930, VII:xi; Steward 1938: 10, 167; 1943:364; Kroeber 1953:49; Murphy and Murphy 1960:319,321).

Almost certainly, when spring in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem was in its fullness, any Bannocks or Shoshones moving into the southwestern corner of the Yellowstone Plateau would ascend the broad grand steps of the Bechler meadows with their eyes alert for its telltale blue flowers. Most northern Plains and western Plateau native peoples responded with gratitude when those flowers announced that this abundant food staple, the camas root, was ripe for the digging. But flats of flowering camas and yampa could also be found intermittently throughout the Plateau. In the very core of the present-day Park, for instance, one favored harvesting place lay alongside Fishing Bridge. Wherever the Shoshones moved in the months of June and July, a large part of their attention was paid to favored spots for digging out these hyacinth-shaped, bulbous roots, which were generally buried no more than about four inches into the ground. They unearthed them with the aid of fire-hardened wood or antler digging sticks - later to be replaced by metal hay rake tines with metal, horn or wood pushing handles.

3. Camas: Ethnography and Folklore. For more fine-grained ethnographic detail on how camas was gathered, prepared and celebrated, however, it seems more fruitful to return to literature on tribes to the north of Yellowstone National Park. From such material we get a sense that dependence upon camas and other ground tubers was not uniform among the tribes surrounding Yellowstone National Park. While the Blackfeet did not rely on camas to the extent of the so-called "West-Side tribes" like the Kootenai, Salish and others, they too occasionally roasted them in stone-lined pits (for the Blackfeet method, see Schultz and Donaldson 1930:42-43). Yet some anxiety seems to have attended its processing which, although camas was abundant in their region, may have inhibited its use by the Blackfeet, as explained by Schultz and Donaldson:

It was a belief of the Blackfeet that, if a pit of camas proved to be improperly roasted, overcooked or undercooked, death would soon come to the roasters or to their relatives. For that reason they did not gather and roast it. But when at peace with the West-Side tribes, as sometimes happened, they eagerly traded buffalo robes and buffalo leathers for all of it that they could possibly obtain" [Schultz and Donaldson 1930:43].

While a wide range of Yellowstone-connected Indian peoples depended to a greater or lesser degree on this plant, one of the most detailed tribal summaries has been compiled on camas use by the Flathead and their neighbors by anthropologist Richard T. Malouf (1979). Attempting to understand the place of Flathead camas practices within their annual subsistence pattern, Malouf first quotes Indian Agent R.H. Lansdale from around 1860,

They go to buffalo every year -- first in April, "to Bulls," as it is called, returning the latter part of June; the second, or fall hunt, "for Cows," they start in August, and get back generally in December or March following. The "bitter root" is dug and cured in May; the "camash" in June and July [Weisel 1955:112].

Known by a number of terms to delineate whether or not the plant was raw, cooked, or of the smaller, sweet sub-species, these bulbs were so vital to the Flathead diet that they dubbed the month of June, "Camas Moon" (Curtis 1907-30, VII:185; Turney-High 1937:24,252). Throughout the Inter-Mountain region, Indians kept a ready eye for the ripening of the black seeds in the camas pods after the wet meadows became covered with carpets of swaying flowers that looked "like a blue lake" (Murphey 1969:14). For some tribes around Yellowstone National Park, such as the Shoshone and Flathead, this harvest was generally a family affair; for others, like the Nez Perce, it was more communal, with up to a hundred or more Indians joining together in a summer root-digging camp (Curtis 1907-30, VIII:43).

No sooner had the camas petals begun to wilt than the ready pods indicated that the bulbs' stored energy was at its peak and that their black skin was easiest to peel off (Malouf 1979:15). As Flathead families returned each year to their favored digging grounds, it was largely women who did the work, with much of the effort by grandmothers and their grandchildren poking two-and-a-half foot-long elk antler or fire-hardened digging sticks made from serviceberry wood to loosen the ground around

the bulbs and uproot them (see citations in Malouf 1979:19). From sunrise to late afternoon each woman covered about a half acre a day and could accumulate a bushel's worth of roots which they stored in special baskets or rawhide bags (Malouf 1979:26).

Once stripped of their onion-like skin, the crisp bulbs could be enjoyed raw on the spot, but the bulk of their crop was cooked in round roasting pits which were dug right at their temporary gathering camps. These underground ovens could range from 14 to 235 cubic feet (Malouf 1979: 31). Exactly how they were preheated varied considerably, depending on whether the firewood or river boulders came first, or whether the rocks were heated elsewhere before being laid inside. Once the firewood had burned down, however, and the floor was cleared of its ashes, some grass or other foliage was laid upon the hot rocks that were left inside, and the sacks of camas roots were laid inside, with black tree moss (*Alectoria* sp.) sometimes added for flavor. Often the camas were placed in layers, with intervening tiers of grass and moss, the whole topped by moistened moss, bark or rocks with a final cap of a buffalo robe to seal in the steam. Or a final fire sometimes burned atop the pit as well.

From many bits of data summarized by Malouf we know that any of the moist, soft and sweet camas which were not eaten immediately were dried - often pounded first with pestles - in the form of loaves or cakes (Malouf 1979:34). If kept dry, camas could store in rawhide bags indefinitely, with the explorer David Thompson remembering some that were edible after thirty-six years on the shelf (White 1950:57a). But the plant could also be boiled and eaten in a gelatinous stew, or when boiled with meat broth or powdered with black moss and simmered in blood it made a prized hot beverage. All these methods yielded a starchless, fructose-rich, energy-intensive food source for Indian peoples.

Among the Flathead, Salish and Kutenai the cycle of camas harvesting and processing culminated in special ceremonies. Immediately after the harvest, the Flathead staged an outdoor thanksgiving Camas Dance back in their home village. But a more important celebration associated with the plant opened their Midwinter Festival in January, and was immediately followed by the Bluejay Dance. An anticipatory ritual for maximizing an adequate supply from the camas meadows the next June, this celebration also provided a time for sealing marriages and social interaction (Malouf 1979:41).



Figure 5.5. Drawing of Camas plant from *Guide To Common Edible Plants of British Columbia* by Adam F. Szczawinski and George A. Hardy, illustration by Frank L. Beebe, Victoria, B.C.; *British Columbia Provincial Museum*, Aug. 1967, page 50.

As for narrative traditions connected with the plant, Malouf found them hard to come by. Wherever he was able to turn up folklore, however, the origin of camas was always attributed to the culture hero, Coyote. An unpublished M.A. thesis by Ron Stubbs contains the Flathead comment that as Coyote traveled along he distributed their bulbs across the landscape out of a bag he carried, like an Indian version of Johnny Appleseed (Stubbs 1966:53). But the more common motif has Coyote creating them out of his backside, from his excrement. The Blackfoot word for camas, noted Edward Curtis, also means dung (Curtis 1907-30:(6),169). Then Malouf repeats a story heard from a Kootenai in which the places where Coyote defecated become camas prairies (Malouf 1979: 41). From the same tribe Teit had already collected a story, "Coyote Goes Visiting", in which Moose "slapped his backside," boiled up the camas that came out and fed it to Coyote (Boas 1918:11). The fullest version of this puzzling equation between camas and excrement was published early on by W.J. Hoffman in 1883 (Hoffman 1883:24-40), and which Willard rewrote in 1992 as follows:

Coyote and his five sons went travelling one day to visit Elk, who also had five sons. When they arrived at Elk's lodge they found no one home and nothing to eat. They were quite angry and put out because they were very hungry. Shortly Elk arrived and after greeting his guests leaned over and picked up a stick and started digging his backside with it. Out came camas roots. Coyote was very disturbed. He felt it was impolite to serve one's guest dung and so he loudly complained. Elk said, "that is not dung but delicious camas root. I often carry them that way when I travel". Coyote tried them and found them quite tasty. He and his sons ate their fill.

When Coyote departed, he asked Elk to visit him some day. The next day Elk showed up. Coyote went over and picked up a stick to dig at his own backside, only to cause a wound. Elk said that only he could do it so he took the stick and produced another feast of camas from his backside. As a form of friendship, Elk spread material from his backside all around the area to form camas roots [Willard 1992:48].

The two alternative explanations for this association between excrement and camas might be termed the mimetic and the psychoanalytic. Willard offers the explanation based upon mimesis, or similarity, when he adds at the end of his rendition of the narrative, "To this day, camas roots appear a little bit like elk or moose dung when they are first dug up, and after they are roasted". While Malouf concurs that from such narratives "one could conclude that the allusion was due to the similar appearance of cooked camas bulbs and the excrement of large members of the deer family," he confesses puzzlement at the fact that the Stubbs comment mentioned above refers less to Coyote's excrement than to the camas prairie landscape where his defecation took place (Malouf 1979:41).

But the psychoanalytic interpretation of such a story is unconcerned with similarities in physical appearance and instead with psychological mechanisms for responding to cultural dynamics. Whether it relates to the creation of human beings or to their most precious foodstuffs, the "creation out of excrement" motif has been noted by folklorists in quite a number of American Indian narrative contexts (see Thompson 1966: 356, Motif #285, for summary of Indian citations involving "Trickster creates men of excrement"). In the best summary of this Freudian-based approach, folklorist Alan

Dundes has tried to make sense of the overwhelming number of narratives in which human beings are created by males out of their anal passages (Dundes 1984). To a psychoanalytically-minded folklorist, the explanation for this recurrent motif is that this is the male form of "penis envy;" that is, that men are jealous of the female power to give birth and hence through such stories they project a fantasy of being able to do so all on their own. In the narrative above, this line of explanation might suggest that men are envious of the prerogatives women enjoy in Plateau or Great Basin societies on supplying the primary foodstuffs. This explanation would even equate the "stick" mentioned in the above story with a male organ, and it would argue that in the kind of auto-erotic act for which Coyote is hilariously famous in American Indian folklore (Bright 1993:70-72), he manages to impregnate himself with it and "give birth" to the precious substance that is camas, thereby reclaiming for men both the power to give life and the credit for this life-supporting plant. Most native people, it must be added, would probably disavow such an explanation as a ridiculous example of non-Indian theorizing. For them Coyote is simply performing one of his defining tasks on their behalf, offering laughter along with sustenance.

Rise and Reconsideration of the Yellowstone "Taboo" Theory

It was while working among the Wind River Shoshone whose traditions impacted on the southern and the southeastern reaches of Yellowstone National Park that the Swedish historian of religions, Ake Hultkrantz, first developed his theoretical position which valued the ecological dimension of Indian belief-systems. His Eastern Shoshone and Sheep Eater researches began in 1948, when the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography's Vega Fund provided Hultkrantz with a stipend for fieldwork in Wyoming over that summer and fall. The following year Hultkrantz wrote a brief comment on "Cultural Formations among the Wyoming Shoshone Indians" for the European publication, Ymer (1949), and an essay on Shoshone concepts of the soul for Ethnos appeared two years later. But his summary treatment on "The Indians and the Wonders of Yellowstone" for Ethnos would first appear in 1954.

Realizing that it would take more than a few months in the field to do justice to the Shoshones' social and religious culture, Hultkrantz applied for additional Vega funding, and also received a grant from the States Social and Law Scientific Research Council. Returning to work in Wyoming from



Figure 5.6. Ake Hultkrantz at Norris Geyser Basin, Yellowstone National Park, July 26, 1994.

June, 1955 to January, 1956, Hultkrantz focused his interviews upon the Wind River community, especially the so-called "Sage Creek" group of Sheep Eater descendants and traditionalists. Yet he also spent time with the neighboring Arapaho in the community of Ethete, and accompanied the experienced Yellowstone hand, Jack E. Haynes, around the mountain haunts of the Sheep Eaters. At the same time he conducted archival research at the Indian agencies of Fort Washakie and Fort Hall, dug into the Yellowstone National Park files at Mammoth Hot Springs, the Library of Congress materials in Washington, D.C. and the Wyoming state archives in Laramie. For help with hard-to-get documents Hultkrantz was aided by Dr. Robert F. Murphy, of the University of California, who with his wife Yolanda had conducted a study of Shoshonean bands.

From this data base Hultkrantz launched a prolific and distinguished writing career, reconstructing the subtle differences between the lifeways of fishing, buffalo and sheep hunting Shoshoneans, interpreting their oral traditions, and refining what he called an "ecological" interpretation of native religious practices. As an example of such an interpretation, Hultkrantz seemed to stay fixated on the impact that the Yellowstone geysers had on the belief systems of Indians, and undisputed from his conviction that they considered the Park region to be taboo because of their fear of its natural thermal phenomena. "And this tabooing rendered impossible, *inter alia*," he concluded, "a more intensive exploitation of the Park for transit and for settlement" (Hultkrantz 1954:66).

Now Hultkrantz became aware that the greater part of what he termed American Indian "popular tradition" regarding Yellowstone National Park had come from Shoshone peoples, most particularly from the Eastern Shoshone at Wind River (Hultkrantz 1954:42). However his opening example of second-hand ethnohistorical data was actually vague as to tribal derivation, and it also contained some internal contradictions. It was a quote from a letter he found in Hiram Chittenden's famous history of the Park, which the famous Jesuit missionary Father Pierre De Smet wrote from St. Louis in January, 1852, where the priest described the geysers he had heard about but never seen:

The hunters and the Indians speak of it with superstitious fear, and consider it the abode of evil spirits, that is to say, a kind of hell. Indians seldom approach it without offering some sacrifice, or, at least, without presenting the calumet of peace to the turbulent spirits, that they may be propitious. They declare that the subterranean noises proceed from the forging of warlike weapons; each eruption of the earth is, in their eyes, the result of combat between their infernal spirits, and becomes the monument of a new victory or calamity [Chittenden and Richardson 1905:661].

And a dozen years later DeSmet reiterated this impression of Indian attitudes towards the region:

The Indians pass these places in profound silence and with superstitious dread. They regard them as "the abode of underground spirits always at war with one another, and continually at the anvil forging their weapons." They never pass without leaving some offering on a conspicuous point of that mysterious region" [Chittenden and Richardson 1905:1377-78].

For all his growing knowledge of Shoshone belief-systems, Hultkrantz never seems to have analyzed the inconsistencies in De Smet's remarks. For example, we never hear whether or not the Shoshone cosmology included any kind of "hell," if there was any ethnographic documentation that their "infernal spirits" fought against each other [most epic wars in American Indian mythology are between proto-humans and supernatural beings], in what way such evil spirits might be also "propitious," or how they might have had metal weapons that required "forging" prior to the advent of white society.

These problems with De Smet's report lead one to wonder how much of this picture might have been a projection of Euro-American society rather than any reflection of Indian thought. Indeed, even before the Park's infancy and early years it is not exactly clear which ethnic group may have treated these hot pools and spouts with greater trepidation and terror.

Euro-American Demonizing of Yellowstone's Thermal Field

The following series of comments by early non-Indians visiting Yellowstone underscore attitudes which might well have been projected onto native cultures.

Item. In what editor Leroy R. Hafen calls the "fictionalized history" of George Ruxton's western travels in the late 1840s, there is an account of white responses towards the country just over the divide from the deep Yellowstone Canyon, which was "full of beaver, as well as abounding in the less desirable commodity of Indians." As Ruxton continued:

This was the valley lying about the lakes now called Eustis and Biddle, in which are many thermal and mineral springs, well known to the trappers by the names of Soda, Beer, and Brimstone Springs, and regarded by them with no little awe and curiosity, as being the breathing places of his Saranic majesty - considered, moreover, to be the "biggest mind" of "Medicine" to be found in the mountains. If truth be told, old Bill hardly relished the idea entering this country, which he pronounced to be of "bad medicine" notoriety...[Ruxton 1951: 117].

Item. Just before his comments above on the unspecified Indian fears regarding hot spots in the general Yellowstone region, Father P.J. De Smet wrote of the "Colter's Hell" [probably DeMaris Springs, near Cody, Wyoming (Mattes, 1949)] that, "This locality is often agitated with subterranean fires. The sulphurous gases which escape in great volumes from the burning soil infect the atmosphere for several miles, and render the earth so barren that even the wild wormwood cannot grow on it. The beaver-hunters [Euro-American mountain men] have assured me that the underground noises and explosions are frightful" (Chittenden and Richardson 1905:79).

Item. During his expedition of 1870, Nathaniel Langford could not avoid similar language in his description of a thermal area south of Mount Washburn:

The spring lying to the east, more diabolical in appearance, [was] filled with a brownish substance of the consistence of thin mucilage, emitting fumes of villainous odor... This was a most perfect realization of Shakespeare's image in Macbeth-and I fancied the "black and midnight hags" concocting a charm around this horrible cauldron [Langford 1905:97].

Item. To Lord William Blackmore, a British anthropologist, the thermal springs he saw during his 1872 trip through the Park were "horrible and appalling." He could well understand the impression "that you have at length come to the entrance to the infernal regions. I have never seen anything so thoroughly diabolical in my life" (Blackmore 1872).

Item. During the Jones reconnaissance into the Park in the summer of 1873, the scout who seemed most afraid of the geysers turned out to be a white man, not an Indian. And Jones invoked Christian and not Pagan cosmology as a way to contextualize the man's reaction: "The spot has most of the physical characteristics of our best authenticated conceptions of hell; and one of our guides, who discovered it, did not tarry, for he felt certain that 'the devil was not far off'" (Jones 1875:28).

Item: Should we deduce anything about America's ambivalent relationship to "wilderness" from the fact that few locales in the United States are as plastered with demonic place-names as this symbolic center of our national park system? Writes Merrill D. Beal, "Surely [the Park founders] concepts of Christian theology rendered them acutely conscious of the attributes and environment of His Satanic Majesty" when they provided such placenames as Devil's Slide, Hellbroth Springs, Brimstone, Devil's Hoof, Devil's Den, Devil's Kitchen, Hell's Half Acre and Hell Roaring Mountain (Beal 1956:122), among the over fifty-five such diabolic toponyms once used in the Park tallied by Lee Whittlesey (Whittlesey 1988:xxxix, a figure which the author has currently updated to "56 devil, 6 hell, and 3 satan place names"- personal communication, July, 1999).

Item. Reviewing such early comparisons between these thermal hot spots and Christian cosmology led Yellowstone aficionado Gary Ferguson to conclude that:

Clearly, infatuation with hell and evil is much more a trait of white visitors and explorers than Native Americans. And given the Christian preoccupation with wickedness, it's easy to see how one might interpret the offering of gifts [by Indians] to a geyser basin as an attempt to please an angry, fearsome god. Indeed, this tendency to project a European view of the cosmos on other cultures is found in much of our so-called "Indian lore" [Ferguson 1995:137].

Attitudes About Yellowstone Imputed to Indians

What is revealing about the Euro-American citations listed above is how many of their analogies, rhetorical turns and moral implications are reflected in attitudes about the Yellowstone thermal area that are attributed, often by the same writers, to Native Americans. For a sense of this remarkable similarity here is a representative sample of comments about American Indians and their alleged feelings about the area:

Item. Contended Walter Trumbull, a member of the Washburn Expedition of 1870, "...the unscientific savage finds little to interest him in...places [like the thermal hot spots]." Instead, Trumbull argued that Indians "would give [such places] ...wide berth, believing them sacred to Satan" (Trumbull 1871:436).

Item. When General Philip Sheridan was contemplating visiting the Park in 1877 - during the very same year when the Nez Perce would cause havoc as they cut through the place - he reassured his superiors that he envisioned no problems with Indians since the region was "to their superstitious minds associated with hell by reason of its geysers and hot-springs (quoted in Ferguson 1995:136)."

Item. Looking back on her tragic experience with the Nez Perce in the Park in 1877, Mrs. G.F. Cowan reiterated the prevailing opinion at the time:

We are told that the Indian is superstitious. To him anything out of the ordinary must be possessed of the Evil One. The phenomena of the geysers account for the fact very probably that this land is not now and never has been an Indian country. Few Indian trails are found within the boundaries of the Park, as they are in other parts of the West. Yet, this year, of all others, the Indians are very much in evidence in the National Park, as we found to our evidence [Cowan 1903:159].

It is possible that after her Park experience Mrs. Cowan accepted what she was "told," and made exactly the causal connection between Indian beliefs about the Park and the lack of Indian presence there which Superintendent Norris hoped for in his soothing annual reports.

Item. This sort of reliance on what Norris construed to be Indian beliefs was evident in his comments in 1880, when he claimed that the Shoshone and Bannock were "deterred less by these natural obstacles [the high mountains and deep snows] than by a superstitious awe concerning the rumbling and hissing sulphur fumes of the spouting geysers and other hot springs" (Norris 1880:35).

Item. Entering the Park from the south with his Shoshone guide seven years later, the Owen Wister party "scaled our rifles" because of the ban on hunting, and then "took our way into the haunted land, the domain possessed of devils, shunned by the Indians of old" (Wister 1936:473).

Item. Writing his historical sketch of the Park in 1907, John H. Raftery attempted to synthesize Indian attitudes towards the region as follows:

Out of the vague, unwritten lore of Indian tradition come the remote rumors of an enchanted land among the mountains where the rivers boiled, the earth burned and haunted lakes tossed spectral plumes of scalding steam into the zenith. Here in cauldrons of gypsum or jasper or jade the evil spirits mixed their war paint, and from peak and promontory, in the valleys, and on the hills could be seen the spiral smoke of their bale fires. The nomads of the Northwest shunned it as a land of evil haunt of prowled around its margins in awesome fear and reverence [Raftery 1943:101-102].

Item. We are informed by historian Grace Hebard that the Shoshones, along with:

all other tribes who knew of the mysterious nature of the Yellowstone National Park, believed that the geysers, paint pots and weird rumblings were a real conflict of the evil spirits as they fought within the recesses of the earth; for this reason, the wonder of the park was shunned and feared by the red man [Hebard 1995:307].

Apparently recycling De Smet's comments without any cultural critique or contextualization, Hebard here compounds her errors of 1) lumping "all" tribal beliefs in the area and then, 2) without any documentation stating that they share some belief in combat between underworld evil spirit by 3) the following implausible scene almost certainly borrowed from Father de Smet:

When acting as escorts or scouts for military or exploration forces marching into the Yellowstone country, the Shoshones always offered up a sacrifice before entering the land where were "the rumbles within the earth that heralded the geyser eruptions, which the red man regarded as the forging of warlike weapons by the spirits; each eruption bespoke a victory or defeat of one band of spirits" [Hebard 1995:307].

As we have seen, well before Hultkrantz entered the debate, this matter of Indian reactions to the Yellowstone National Park thermal fields and geyser basins became politicized. Early Park boosters used the dubious comparisons to substantiate the idea that superstitious, terrified Indians steered clear of entire geyser basins and detoured around the heart of the Park (see early Park guidebook entries following this line such as: Harry J. Norton [1873:31], George W. Wingate [1886:139], A.B. Guptill [1890, 1896, 1908], Emerson Hough [1933:13] and more recent examples - Carl Schreier [1983]). By the late 19th century the notion of Indians staying away from the Park because they feared its spirits had become a truism of Yellowstone history. It permeated popular consciousness and was often invoked when the topic of Indians in the Park came up.

So far we have briefly sketched the spectrum of Anglo-European a) emotional attitudes towards Yellowstone's hot spots, and b) their portrayals of Indian responses to those same places. Now let us resume the efforts we have made in Chapters 1 and 3 to see the thermal wonders of the region through Indian eyes.

Native Beliefs and Practices re. Hot Springs and Geysers

We will begin this review with our recent inquiries into Plains, Plateau and Great Basin Indian attitudes toward hot springs and geysers. As for thermal pools, virtually all the Shoshonean consultants to our study concurred that they held positive curative benefits.

To SW, a Shoshone elder from Fort Washakie, the thermal outlets such as those at Thermopolis, Wyoming, "got some kind of good power." He went on to emphasize that different tribes passing through would camp there because its hot waters were "good for the bones" and alleviated the pains of *rheumatism and arthritis*. Furthermore, "if you can swim in here with the muskrats you'll never get a cold." This consultant also perceived a subterranean connection between the Yellowstone geysers - most specifically "that place where the water came out," or Old Faithful - and other thermal pools further away. "This [the Fort Washakie hot spring] is a branch of it [Old Faithful]," he claimed, "and [also] down through Thermopolis." Or as he would later elaborate regarding Old Faithful, "it's a vein" (SW and BS Interview, Fort Washakie, November 14, 1995).

According to other Eastern Shoshone advisers, soaking in such waters - known in their language as bow-we-ran or "steaming water" - not only assuaged aches in the bones, but drinking the liquid also alleviated problems with ulcers and gall stones - "Even today when they have the reenactment for the Gift of Waters, they drink that water in the reenactment" (FT, MJG and ZE Interview, Fort Washakie, February 4, 1996). In addition to the waters, the earthen byproducts at the hot springs were considered healthy. Said FT, "[Our grandparents] even told us that they would go down there just to be in that water. There is also what they call mud-bath, in Thermopolis, by the river. They would go in there and cover themselves with mud. That used to cure sores or things on your body; it would bring out that sickness in your body."

That interview session revealed other uses of minerals at hot springs as well. The paste-like "white clay build-up" found there was used to whitewash buckskins, or was packed around swollen joints to draw out the pain. Mixed with water it was ingested - "like Alka-Seltzer" or "Milk of Magnesia" - for indigestion. And it was part of a decoction drunk when water is permitted for the fasting participants at a Sun Dance:

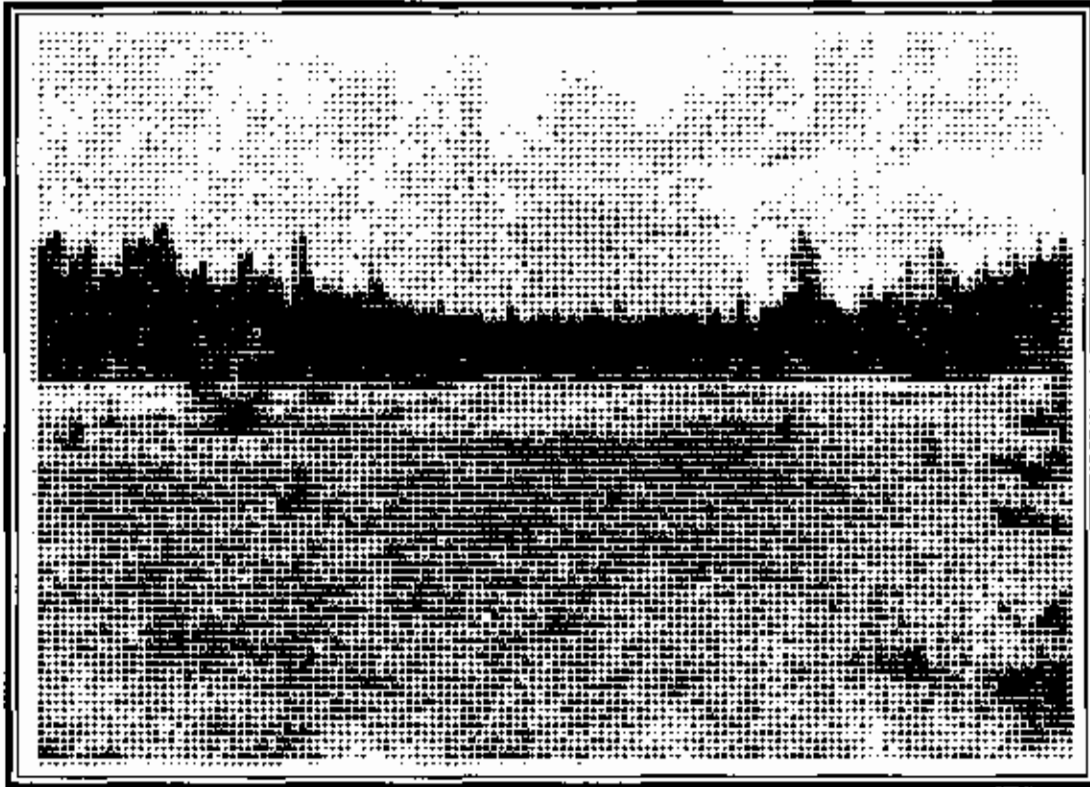


Figure 5.7. Old Indian campsite in Yellowstone thermal area, near Lone Star geyser (Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives, Catalog #YELL 37824).

And then for a religion that meets secretly, they also took that clay, and mashed it up into a fine clay powder. After Sun Dance they put that in their fresh drinking water...Then you don't get sick and get cramps in your stomach after your first drink...[They collected it] in the special place. Most of the people here either get it in Idaho now and in Yellowstone ["At Mammoth Springs. That is where they usually get it at, at Mammoth Springs" - MJG]...But you have to get permission from the Park Service...It takes quite a lot to get permission [FT Interview, Fort Washakie, February 4, 1996].

These conversations with contemporary Eastern and Northern Shoshones also disclosed a highly personal use of these thermal areas. After some warm-up discussion with Fort Hall elders, one consultant, who maintained her own great grandfather had been buried within Yellowstone National Park, confided:

In some of those areas, too, up in the high country Yellowstone area, people buried Bannock in those areas. Some of the people, depending on who the individual was, his ranking in the band or the tribe or the group, whoever he was with...they would bury them right in the springs, the hot springs...They would just drop them down in there. Then, depending on who it was and what kind of ranking they had, whether they were a warrior or just an elderly person or one with medicine powers or other powers, they were buried in the springs, up in the hills, in lava beds...Generally, the chiefs were the ones who were dropped into the hot springs, the leaders you might say, because that was the quickest way for them to get where they were going [GE Interview, Fort Hall, November 18, 1995].

Joseph Weixelman was told by a Shoshone consultant that the hot springs were "a natural jacuzzi for us ... It's healthy ...there is a lot of value to these springs" (Weixelman 1992:57). When consultants suggested to him that offerings, such as arrowheads, might be left at such sites, with the understanding that they were to remain there undisturbed, Weixelman wondered whether that might explain the stone point found by George Marler while cleaning a hot spring in the Firchole Geysir Basin in 1959 (Weixelman 1992:55; Marler 1973).

Such contemporary statements have their resonance in the ethnographic and ethnohistorical literature on the Shoshone and their neighbors, which is peppered with observations on the positive value of springs, both hot and cold. The affinity of the Wind River Shoshone for the "healing waters" at Big Spring and Washakie's Plunge has been well documented. Located at the northern end of the reservation, here Chief Washakie and his people bathed to relieve their rheumatism and muscular pains (Trenholm and Carley 1964:286-311). Working among the Northern and Gosiute Shoshone, for example, Juliam H. Steward learned that "a hot spring near Yellowstone was favored [for obtaining powers], but was dangerous because of proximity to Blackfoot," and that "Powers whose identity were unknown to SB [his consultant], were acquired, however, at Soda Springs near Lava Hot Springs" in Idaho (Steward 1943:286).

As Hultkrantz himself found while doing research in the Bureau of Indian Affairs archives at Salt Lake City, the Shoshone Indians known as "Walkers" were noted for seeking out hot springs for their warmth. As the Salt Lake Valley Indian agent wrote to the Secretary of the Interior in 1849:

There are many warm and hot springs throughout this country, and it is said to be no uncommon thing to see the Indians sheltering themselves and their children from the bleak and terrible storms which prevail in these grand and rugged mountains, by lying during a great part of the day and perhaps night too in water [Letter of John Wilson, quoted in Hultkrantz 1979: 34].

In the broader Plains region the mutual recognition of the power of a sacred spring could even temporarily quell animosity between blood enemies. In the late 1840s the chronicler George Ruxton heard the following story from a Brule Lakota:

One evening he drew near a certain "medicine" spring, where, to his astonishment, he encountered a Crow warrior in the act of quenching his thirst. He was on the point of drawing his bow upon him, when he remembered the sacred nature of the spot, and making a sign of peace, he fearlessly drew near his foe, and proceeded like-wise to slake his thirst. A pipe of kinnik-kinnik being produced, it was proposed to pass away the early part of the night in a game of "hand" [Ruxton 1951:101-102].

In this context we might reiterate the suggested Crow Indian use of such healing springs cited in Chapter One. In 1830 a Frenchman named Henri Bleau heard from a fellow countryman, known only as Robaire, regarding some "wonderful boiling springs, not far distant, whose waters he said were a cure for all diseases that man was heir to" (Sharman 1902: 31). Their conversation occurred on present Henry's Lake in Idaho, but to Park Archivist Lee Whittlesey the spring site sounds more like Mammoth Hot Springs. Along with about fifteen Crow Indian families, who may or may not have been his guide, when Robaire went to the springs:

...he was so badly crippled up with rheumatism that he could not take a step without crutches, and now he was as straight and active as a young man. There were several in our party who had been suffering from this disease, and I was among the number. We were delighted and determined to visit the medical springs and test their healing qualities before another month had elapsed [Sharman 1902:31].

In addition to their use for curative purposes, we also have documentary backing for assertions by our consultants that Shoshones chose such springs as prime spots for human burials. Before his death in October, 1884, the famous Shoshone chief Pocatello made arrangements for his interment at a sacred spring near the American Falls. As Judge Walter T. Oliver described this remarkable ceremony:

First we took the chief and wound all his clothing around him, then tied his guns, knives, and all his hunting equipment and relics to the clothing with willow things and tossed him out into the middle of the spring, and he went to the bottom quickly. Then the Indians took the eighteen head of horses, killed them one by one and rolled them into the spring on top of the old man, and they too were soon out of sight, for the spring is said to have no bottom [quoted in Madsen 1986:112-113].

An even more astonishing example of a similar-sounding burial on Utah's Shoshone-Ute boundary was reported in 1855 by George W. Bean, a Mormon missionary to the Indians. Leaving Redden's Springs and heading for the Rush Valley, Bean and his group came upon a warm salt water spring which was used for burial by Indians whose camp remains Bean could detect on nearby hillsides. What Bean saw in the warm waters was almost unbelievable:

This crust of elevation had been formed by the continuous overflow of the mineral water, hardened by its contact with the cold air and projecting over at the top. What was most curious, was the six Indian bodies standing bolt upright and crusted over with the salty deposit in this lake, giving them the appearance of mummies. It was evident that they had heavy weights attached to their lower extremities, thus keeping them perpendicular with their heads three or four feet below the surface of the water. It appeared that other corpses were back of these [Home 1945:114].

Some reinforcement for this practice of burial in the vicinity of hot springs also comes from the Wind River Shoshone elder, Rupen Weeks. At the end of a story about obsidian, Weeks described a trade between his father and white traders in which knives and flintlock rifles were exchanged. As for the ultimate deposition of the rifle, Weeks told his grandchildren:

It is buried with your great-grandfather near Wonzee Kawdec, the place where male antelope feed on top of a high plateau south of Dea Pa Qee Wuana, the little hot springs. We lowered him into a deep hole and covered him with stones, so that the coyotes and wolves would not dig up his resting place [Weeks 1981:31].

And early Indian fascination for the process of calcification is underscored by a curious anecdote from a Washington D.C. architect who, as a twenty-five year old, accompanied a trading expedition in 1839-40 which explored the volcanic field around the headwaters of the Yellowstone. Wrote E. Willard Smith in his journal entry for December 20, 1839:

Mr. Vasquez told me he went to the top of one of these volcanoes, the crater of which was filled with pure water, forming quite a large lake, There is a story told by an Arapahoc chief of the petrified buffalo standing in the lake on the east side of the mountains. It was in a perfect state of preservation, and they worship it as a great medicine charm. There are also many moccasin and buffalo tracks in the solid rock along the side of the lake. Nothing would induce this Indian to tell where the sacred buffalo is to be found. Great presents were offered to him in vain [Bury 1939:36].

It may be precisely because the Indians were inspired rather than repelled by the Mammoth hot springs, hints Yellowstone ranger Dan R. Sholly, that outsiders had to discover them for themselves:

It was easy to see why the Indians had never told the white man of such spectacles. They looked supernatural, especially with their vapors writhing so thickly in the cold [Sholly and Newman 1991:37].

Finally, there is the conjecture of geologist George Marler that one important Indian hot-bath was located directly in the Lower Geyser Basin. A circular pool about sixty feet in diameter, Marler believed that the thickness of its mineral deposit suggested that it had been purposefully constructed sometime before 1870, known variously as Tank Pool, Ranger Pool or Old Bath Lake, he considered it one of the Park's "most important archeological sites" (Marler 1973a:462).

In the face of citations such as these, and persuaded by Carling Malouf's additional archaeological evidence that Indians had not shied away from Yellowstone's hot spots, Hultkrantz tempered his "Yellowstone taboo" hypothesis to draw a distinction between geysers and hot springs. As he narrowed his argument for a 1979 reappraisal Hultkrantz wrote that, "The indications of dangerous spots in Yellowstone Park all refer to the geysers, not to the less dramatic hot springs"



Figure 5.8. Crow Indian Max Big Man and wife at Yellowstone National Park geyser (Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National Park Archives, Catalog #YELL 37806).

(Hultkrantz 1979, emphasis ours). For the moment we will ignore the fact that sensible members of many cultures might be expected to experience awe, apprehension, caution and perhaps even fear in the face of boiling hot waters, steaming vapors and life-like growling sounds that emerge out of deep holes in ashen-colored ground that breaks like crust beneath their feet. And if they had children with them they might be expected to agree that such places are just as dangerous as Yellowstone National Park signs with slashed red circles warn us they are today.

As with hot springs, however, so with geysers. Once again, documentary information suggests that when they wanted Indians could approach Yellowstone's even more explosively volatile thermal locations. We know, for instance, that George Harvey Bacon, a miner from Montana, was led to the Upper Geyser Basin by "a friendly band of Indians" in 1865 (J.H. Bacon, "Letter regarding George Harvey Bacon's visits to Yellowstone area from 1864 to 1873", Yellowstone Research Library, in Weixelman 1992:70). On August 12, 1935, a seventy-four-year old Nez Perce elder from Idaho named White Hawk visited the Park to reminisce about the old days and to visit key sites associated with Chief Joseph's famous retreat. At the time White Hawk had been a teenager in charge of herding and feeding the rebels' horses. With him on this nostalgic return was Many Wounds, whose

father had been present when the Nez Perce attempted to burn down of Baronett's Bridge. In Yellowstone National Park naturalist W.E. Kearns' description of their tour, at one point the old man was questioned about Indian reactions to the thermal areas:

When asked if the Indians were afraid of the Geysers or hot springs, Chief White Hawk replied that they were not, and implied that the Indians used them for cooking food. They were a source of wonder, undoubtedly, but even these startling manifestations of "Mother Earth" did not alarm them [Kearns 1935:41].

In retrospect, White Hawk's comment echoed the Nez Perce reaction to the area that was made by the warrior Yellow Wolf ("The hot smoking springs and the high-shooting water were nothing new to us" - McWhorter 1940:30). It also followed the observations of native attitudes made by Frank Carpenter at the actual time of the Indian invasion of the Park. To Carpenter it seemed that the Nez Perce had no hesitation being in the vicinity of geysers in Fire Hole Basin, and one man even "sprang from his horse and picked up a piece [of smelly hot sulphur] and began a critical examination of it" (Carpenter 1935:128). For further evidence that Indians were not exactly adverse to this Fire Hole area we have signs that, for some purpose or other, Indians were converging here five years earlier. In an article he wrote for a Montana periodical, James H. Mills recalled his party of travelers meeting with the "Helena Press Expedition" just north of the Upper Basin on the Firehole River:

Expressing some astonishment at our having come through 'the Indian country on the Madison' we learned they had encountered two trappers bound down the Yellowstone with hair on end and horses on the run, who had 'seen two Indians and counted twenty ponies grazing at the mouth of the Fire Hole' [Mills, October 12, 1872].

Hultkrantz himself heard about the popularity from J.G., one of his part-Sheep Eater consultants, whose grandfather, Rabbit Feet, had been a well-known band chief and who had regularly summered inside the Park:

They raised their tents close to the Firehole Geyser Basin (the geysers there as well as the other hot springs were called pa:gusuwinot "water-steam-standing up"). They watered their horses down at the river. The men themselves bathed in the geysers whilst they directed their prayers to the spirits. J.G. had not heard they were afraid of the geysers, but could not maintain the opposite either [Hultkrantz 1979:37].

prayers

buffalo

visions

A sacred place

& Yellowstone Park

By John Penland

In the quiet third section of the Sun Dance site in the back country of Yellowstone Park, last Sunday night, 211 young men of many tribes, through early

hours of the night, were gathered for a Sun Dance. The sun dance is a traditional ceremony of the Plains Indians, a religious and social event that is held annually in many parts of the West.

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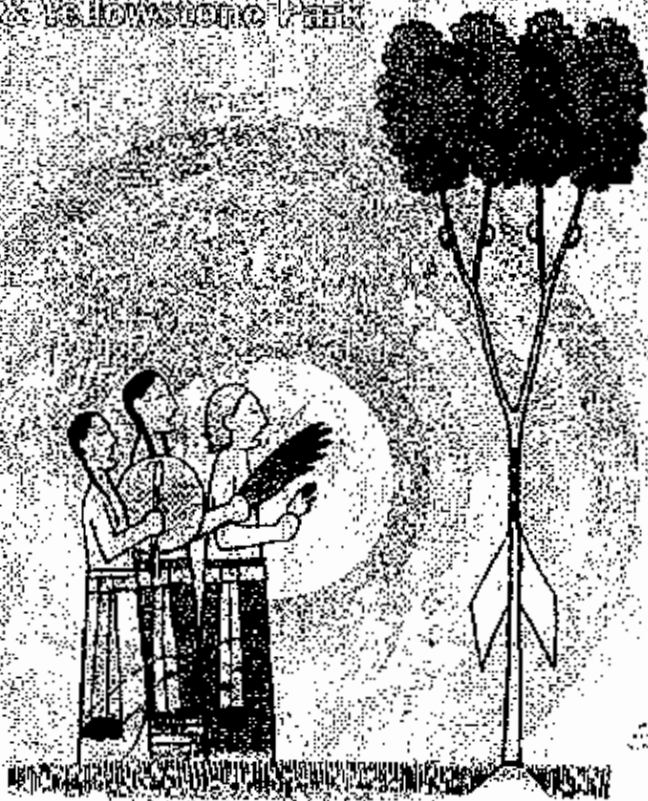


Figure 5.9. Indian rituals return to Yellowstone Park. In an effort "to restore the harmony between animals and men and the earth" which an Ojibwa, a Sioux-Crow and a non-Indian friend of theirs believed had been "disrupted by recent events such as the killing of bison who wander out of the Park," they were permitted to hold a Sun Dance above Blacktail Deer Creek in late June, 1997 (*Billings Gazette, Sunday Magazine Section, p. 1E-2E, June 29, 1997*).

And contemporary Indians often respond with a chuckle when they are told of the theory that their ancestors cowered before these places. As our leading Salish-Kootenai consultant said:

These white historians stated a long time ago when Yellowstone Park first opened up that the Indian people were afraid of the geysers, that they just couldn't understand them and that they'd run and hide whenever these things would go off. I talked to some of our elders when I got back (from the Park) and they just laughed. They thought that was funny. Because the only reason an Indian person would move away from that area is maybe they had children with them, and they didn't want them to be burnt by that hot scalding water. Our people had a very good common sense. Once one person got burnt they didn't go back and stick their hand back in it again [TT Interview, Pablo, Montana, August 22, 1995].

Despite the mounting evidence, already presented in this document, that argues for ancient and historical Indian travel through most corners and core locations of Yellowstone National Park, the question of Indian relations to its thermal fields remains a matter of some debate. To a great extent this is because of the tenacity of the Swedish scholar, Ake Hultkrantz, who nonetheless has modified somewhat in recent years his earlier insistence that Indians held the entire geyser region as a "taboo" area. Both his strident and softened viewpoints are combined in one of his most recent statements about this issue when, as our documentary overview hosted Dr. Hultkrantz and his wife for a tour of the park on July 26, 1994, Dr. Hultkrantz offered the following comment on videotape:

The other [Plain Indian] tribes were very much surprised [at the geysers] when they came into the Park, many of them at least, while the Sheep Eaters were quite familiar with the features here... The information I received from the last Sheep Eaters still alive who had roamed up in the mountains was that they were afraid of the geysers. This was quite definite. And I don't think that this is a late superstition that was introduced among them. This is what they thought. And we know from the early sources, practically all early sources, that the Sheep Eaters had this respect and fear for the geysers and consequently they didn't live exactly close to the geysers but out more in the woodlands. This didn't stop them from visiting the geysers now and then. And I think particularly for religious purposes, to have visions there, to give offering to the spirits, because they believed in spirits in the geysers [Yellowstone National Park Archives, Interview with Ake Hultkrantz, July 26, 1994].

For their part, the officials of Yellowstone National Park itself had already been modifying their 19th century endorsement of imputed Indian "fear of the geysers" and hence on the purported absence of a traditional Indian presence in the Park heartland. In 1927, for instance, its Ranger Naturalist Manual seemed willing to remind Park employees and interpreters that in 1870 the Washburn-Langford expedition had found along the east bank of the Yellowstone River an old dismantled pit or trench - which could have been an Indian hunting blind of the sort described in Chapter Three (Ranger Naturalist Manual of Yellowstone National Park 1927:19). By 1949, Yellowstone Ranger-

writer Merrill Beal was not buying the notion that Indians stayed away from Yellowstone because of their fear of the place. Something of a romantic where Indians were concerned, he argued that:

After all, Indians were children of nature; the earth was their mother. In Yellowstone Mother Earth was especially intriguing. They might not understand her; they might entertain great respect for her strange manifestations, but cringing trepidation? Hardly (Beal 1949:89)!

And by the summer of 1961 the Park's official approach had advanced to the point that its press release announcing the donation of a soapstone pot to the Mammoth museum included the following statement:

The National Park Service now believes that the Yellowstone Park Area may not have been taboo to the nomadic Indian tribes which frequented the Northwest in prehistoric times. Evidence collected over the past several years seems to indicate that many tribes have been more or less permanent residents of this geologically mysterious area [Department of the Interior Memorandum, National Park Service, Yellowstone National Park, August 4, 1961].

It is probable that this declaration was drafted by Aubrey L. Haines himself. For Haines had been sufficiently impressed by Dr. Carling Malouf's preliminary conclusions after his survey of the Park during the summer of 1958 - when Malouf identified over forty native occupation sites near thermal areas, at such locations as Sulphur Mountain, Gibbon Basin, Norris Basin, Thumb, the confluence of the Lewis and Snake Rivers, Mammoth, along the Firehole River, and even behind the Inn at Old Faithful (Malouf 1959:5-6) - to state for an in-house draft of his History of Yellowstone National Park that:

There is no indication as to how the restlessness of the Late Prehistoric Period affected life on the Yellowstone Plateau. According to Dr. [Carling] Malouf, the evidence indicates that the people who occupied the northern part were culturally associated with sequences characteristic of Montana, while the occupancy of the southern part appears to have had its origin in Western Wyoming and Southeastern Idaho. He points out that use was continuous and relatively heavy, and that it included the thermal areas [Haines n.d.:87, emphasis his].

But a more cohesive summary of evidence against the Hultkrantz thesis came in late 1991 when the Yellowstone Association, with additional funding from the Wyoming Council for the Humanities, assigned a Montana State University graduate student named Joseph Weixelman to conduct a short-term, ethnographic and ethnohistorical study on the relationships between "Native Americans and the Thermal Features of Yellowstone National Park." Under the direction of Yellowstone National Park historian Tom Tankersley, Weixelman interviewed representatives from various tribes and researched the relevant historical literature on Yellowstone National Park from October 1991 to July 1992. His carefully-footnoted, 101-page report concluded that:

...the thermal wonders of the Park did not frighten the native peoples of the region. Euro-Americans originated this idea and it must be dispelled before we can understand the true nature of Yellowstone's human past. Native peoples held varied beliefs concerning Yellowstone and different tribes used its resources differently. Each tribe found something of value here. The religious beliefs of a tribe and their proximity to the park shaped individual responses to the geysers. Many tribes approached Yellowstone as a sacred land for prayer and meditation., Some tribes found the thermal waters useful for healing, bathing, cooking and other activities [Weixelman 1992:60].

Refuges for the Sheep Eaters

In this final section we return to the subject of the fate of the Sheep Eaters, presumably the only full-time residents of Yellowstone National Park. We have waited until this chapter to add a sixth misperception about these mountain-dwelling Shoshone to the five we itemized already in Chapter Three. This sixth misrepresentation is one which remains alive and well today, the impression that the Sheep Eaters died out from smallpox, were totally annihilated by aggressive Plains tribes, or lost their separate identity through intermarriage with other Indians - in other words that they "vanished" or became "extinct."

As early as 1870 the broader Yellowstone region was witnessing a get-tough policy towards any and all surrounding Indians. When a fairly implausible rumor of possible Crow raids in the Gallatin and Yellowstone valleys reached James Stuart, for instance, he seized the opportunity to advocate no quarter, "I would like it better if it was a fight from the start; we would then kill every Crow that we saw, take the chances of their rubbing us out" (quoted in Haines 1974:63). At almost the same time a fabricated story in the Helena Daily Herald already referred to earlier, reporting the slaughter of 18 Indians at the Falls of the Yellowstone, revealed the tenor of the times. According to Aubrey L. Haines, anti-Indian sentiment was "common among the prospectors," who were swarming into the northern reaches of the Park. In this false report the Sheep Eaters were singled out as target of both white rifles and inflammatory rhetoric:

We felt no great uneasiness however, knowing full well that with our improved firearms, we would be enabled to overcome fifty of the sneaking red devils. It is proper to add, that the 'Sheep Eaters' are those of the Snake and Bannack tribes, who would not live with their brethren in peace with the whites....A body of savages who would gladly welcome death in preference to capture...[quoted in Haines 1974: 41; Helena Daily Herald, May 18, 1870].

In 1871 at the time there was so much hatred toward Indians in Montana, J.A. Viall was appointed Superintendent for Indian Affairs in Montana for the Shoshone, Bannock and Sheep Eaters. This mixed group of mountain Indians, banded together for survival, gained their subsistence by fishing in the Salmon River region during the spring and summer before moving to the

Yellowstone region to hunt buffalo in the fall and winter. Viall first tried to place these Indians with the Crow, an arrangement the Crow approved, and he sent A.J. Simmons to:

Stinking Water Valley, Virginia City, Beaverhead, and other places, to gather together the scattered remnants of these tribes, who were prowling around the country half starved, and in deplorable condition, for the purpose of taking them to the Crow reservation [Viall 1971:831].

Apparently a few families did join the Crow but the majority, especially the Bannock, were not welcome because during the fall and winter buffalo hunt of 1870, they apparently stole some Crow horses and the deal went sour (Pease 1871:836). So Viall had Simmons take the assembled group to a valley about twenty miles above the mouth of the Lemhi Fork of the Salmon River. Although not identified as such by Viall in his annual report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the valley was probably within the two townships of land described in the 1868 unratified treaty as the location for a Shoshone, Bannock, and Sheep Eater reservation. The location was also important as an access route through the mountains via Lemhi Pass and very near the route taken by Lewis and Clark when they crossed the continental divide. Mir Simmons entrusted the Indians to A. I. Smith who set to work building fencing and plowing about 400 acres of land. Mr. Smith reported that the Indians were willing workers and that in the year they had dug nearly two miles of irrigation ditches, erected three log dwellings and two root cellars (Smith 1871:848). The fruits of their labor were reported as 3,000 bushels of potatoes, 160 bushels of wheat, and about the same of barley (Viall 1871:832). In addition they had caught, dried and stored 30,000 pounds of fish.

All in all the Lemhi farm, as it was sometimes identified, had a pretty successful beginning for its small group of about 600 mountain Indians. Things were not so good in 1872 when the crops were severely damaged by grasshoppers and a new agent, J.C. Rainsford complained that obstructions on Columbia River were limiting the number of fish (Rainsford 1872:666). Crops were also destroyed by grasshoppers in 1875 (Fuller 1875:813) and the location of the agency buildings was moved a few miles in 1876 (Fuller 1877:448). Nonetheless the Lemhi Valley agency, also known as the Ross Fork agency, continued until 1880 when the mountain Indians were instructed to move to Fort Hall. Ten Doy, a Shoshone leader and the person usually recognized by the United States, was infuriated by this order, declaring that he would go to war before moving to Fort Hall (Wright 1879:160).

In 1907, one year after the noted anthropologist Robert Lowie had been to visit them, most of the Shoshone, Bannock and Sheep Eaters moved from the Lemhi Agency to Fort Hall (Clemmer and Stewart 1986:53).

Other Sheep Eaters remained in Yellowstone National Park and eventually joined Chief Washakie's Eastern Shoshones (Thompson and Thompson 1982:96). One has only fragmentary hints concerning who instigated this later Sheep Eater removal. Aubrey Haines, citing a letter from the Wind River Reservation agent of August 12, 1929, writes that at least some of the Sheep Eaters who had become isolated in the Yellowstone region entered the Wind River reservation about the

year 1871, but we are given no details (Haines 1996:29,333). There is Washakie's strongly-worded objection during a council meeting called by Agent James Patten in June 1879 to propose the transfer of Tendoy's band of Western or Lemhi Shoshone to Wind River. "Washakie rose and without hesitation," recalled Patten, to express his vehement opposition to the plan (Patten to Commissioner of Indian Affairs E. A. Hayt, June 11, 1879). According to the old chief, the Tendoy group "are mixed up with the Bannocks and there are a good many bad Indians in his band," and all his sub-chiefs concurred with their leader. Possibly some of these "bad Indians" were also Sheep Eaters, but they would have hailed from the Western group.

And yet from a letter by one D.G. Yeager, dated 1929, which Hultkrantz apparently perused in the Wind River Reservation files, one gathers that there was no such objection to the removal of the last Sheep Eaters from Yellowstone National Park to join the Washakie group at Wind River in 1879, but again no details are provided concerning the group's size or specifics concerning the transfer (Hultkrantz 1957:145). And one hears from anthropologist Joel C. Janetski that as both a consequence of the "Sheepeater War" and the worries of Park superintendent Col. P.W. Norris, that "the presence of Sheepeaters was perceived as a potential deterrent to tourist traffic," most of the Yellowstone Sheep Eaters were relocated at Wind River, Fort Hall, with a few quite likely transferred (presumably on or after 1879) to the Lemhi reservation on the Idaho-Montana line (Janetski 1987:54), but once again specifics are woefully absent.

Following the Sheep Eater removals, Norris and subsequent superintendents remained concerned about maintaining an Indian-free environment. As Norris wrote in his Fifth Annual Report:

The recent sale of the National Park and adjacent regions by these Indians insures future freedom from any save small horse-stealing bands of these tribes also. To prevent these forays, in council at their agency on Ross Fork of Snake River, in Idaho, and in Ruby Valley, in Montana, early in 1880 I obtained a solemn pledge from them to not thereafter go east of Henry's Lake, in Montana, or north of Hart Lake, in Wyoming, to which, as stated on page 3 of my report of 1880, they faithfully adhered. This pledge was renewed at Ross Fork when I was en route from Washington this year, and has again been sacredly observed [Norris 1881:45].

Although the hints of Sheep Eater dispersal present a different picture than that of mysterious extinction, we still need to know more precisely when, why and how the evacuation of Sheep Eaters from Yellowstone National Park took place. But what is almost as interesting as what actually happened to the Sheep Eaters, is what writers, bureaucrats and the general public wanted to think about what happened to them. The absence of hard facts about their fate provided ample opportunity for the image of the Sheep Eaters to become absorbed into iconic representations and self-serving stereotypes which were part of American consciousness concerning Indians during the late 19th century.

Sheep Eaters as "Vanishing Indians" and "Last of Her Tribe"

In the Euro-American imagination, the end of the old western frontier was often conveniently equated with the end of old Indian ways of life. In print and picture, the latter offered a poignant, sentimental symbol for the former: sad paintings and moody photographs depicting various renditions of Indians as a "Vanishing Race" became commonplace images, trickling down from fine art to mass-produced advertisements (see O'Brien 1996 and Simmons n.d. for the New England origins of both the "Vanishing Indian" and "Last of the ..." motifs in local histories and popular culture). The theory of the "Vanishing Indian" fit the wishful thinking of government bureaucrats, social planners and popular writers alike (Dippic 1973). It held that the demise of traditional Indian culture was a natural consequence of disease, depopulation, depression, an innate inability to evolve beyond the level of savagery, and, as U.S. Senator James R. Dolittle put it in 1867, "the natural effect of one race replacing another" (quoted in Nabokov 1991:188).

The romantic lament for bygone Indian days was an artistic accompaniment to this cultural and political prediction. But this "Vanishing Indian" theme was actually turned around so that early representations often portrayed the Indian as lamenting his own demise. This sentimental image in American popular culture can be heard in the "Rising Glory" genre of nationalistic poetry, such as the example written for the opening of the New York Theatre on September 1, 1821 where Charles Sprague rhapsodized about the growth of America, during which "The startled Indian o'er the mountain flew/ The wigwam vanish'd, and the village grew" (quoted in Lubbers 1994:214). Although the 1820s were so replete with such sentiments that literary scholar Klaus Lubbers calls it the "last-of-the-Mohicans' decade," he documents how this icon of the "Indian's lament" over an irretrievable past had already been in the air for decades. Popular nostalgia for the Redman as dying race was also reiterated in the visual arts (Beikhofer 1978:537). Fine paintings, such as "The Last of the Race", an oil by Tompkins Harrison Matteson in 1847, showed dislocated Indian families looking disconsolately over the Pacific Ocean, having been rendered homeless at the very edge of the continent, or their demise was often pictorially equated with that of their mainstay, the doomed buffalo (As Joseph Dixon would lament in his The Vanishing Race: "The buffalo has gone from the continent, and now the Indian is following the deserted buffalo trail" - Dixon 1925:5).

A closely related icon, the "Last of his Tribe," often allowed for the localization and personalization of this "Vanishing Indian" stereotype. Poets revisited the birthplace of a famous local Indian chief, or described an old graveyard or pond where the ghosts of departed Indians evoked their vanished past, as Isaac McLellan, Jr. wrote in "The Fall of the Indian": "Yet sometimes in the gay and noisy street/Of the great City, which usurps the place/Of the small Indian village, one shall see/Some miserable relic of that race..."(quoted in Lubbers 1994:220). But it was novels which most powerfully engraved this image into American consciousness, especially, of course, James Fenimore Cooper's Last of the Mohicans (1826), although N.M. Hentz' less well-written Tadeuskind, the Last King of the Lenapes had come out the previous year. Even into the 20th century, this theme continued to fascinate non-Indians, as the story of "Ishi, the Last of the Yahi Yana" captivated readers from 1911 until the present day. That was when the nearly-naked, sole Indian survivor of his band's virtual extermination turned up in a slaughterhouse corral in Oroville, California (Kroeber 1961). Across the nation these "Last of..." Indians continued to function as protagonists of novels, or

the stuff of local legends, as still today one hears about or sees evocative photographs depicting the "last" Indian full-blood, the "last" speaker of an Indian language, the "last" Indian medicine man.

These images offered a psychological mechanism for outsiders to symbolically justify any physical removal or elimination of Indians that had occurred or which appeared imminent. With such sentimental requiems for the "passing of the Redman," by offering praiseworthy laments for their nobility, nostalgia for their heyday as Noble Savages and poignance at their extinction, non-Indians at the same time paved the way for their elimination and freed themselves of any guilt for it. One can readily grasp how neatly the fuzzy and mysterious finale to the Sheep Eater story could be manipulated into these preconceived themes and images.

Writing of his guide and key informant, Wesaw, Yellowstone National Park's second Superintendent, P. W. Norris, was one of the first writers to hint at the fact how the Sheep Eater situation might fit with into the "vanishing Indian" theory of his day. He wrote in his first report:

Owing to the isolation of the Park, deep amid snow mountains, and the superstitious awe of the roaring cararacts, sulphur pools, and spouting geysers over the surrounding pagan Indians, they seldom visit it, and only a few harmless Sheep-eater hermits, armed with bows and arrows, ever resided there, and even they now vanished [Norris 1877:842].

And in his official report three years later Norris added a reason for their absence, in a comment that his Indian guide:

had made several trips before the one with Captain Jones, one of which was, as I understood him, to assist some friends who had intermarried with the Sheepeaters to leave the Park after the great small-pox visitation some twenty years ago [Norris 1881b:38].

Following the Norris commentaries, explanations for the scarcity of Sheep Eaters due to smallpox would become widespread over subsequent years. One principal proponent of the "smallpox extinction" theory was W. A. "Doc" Allen whose book for general readers, The Sheep Eaters, was published in New York in 1913 by the Shakespeare Press. Unfortunately the work appears to be something of a fraud, as it is filled with inaccuracies that seem to be the product of Allen's imagination. Yet the book was the source of numerous other uninformed publications that dutifully reproduced its misinformation. Even today, nearly every summer some Montana newspaper carries a story about the "extinct Sheep Eaters" and their demise from small pox. As Allen quoted an old Indian woman about their final days:

...white man got lost and his ponies come into our camp. White man very sick. Medicine man put him in big tepce and take care of him, give much bath in hot water. Man got very red like Indian man, face much all over spots. By and by he die. Then sickness all over camp. Sheep Eater mn off in forest and die. Sheep Eater all

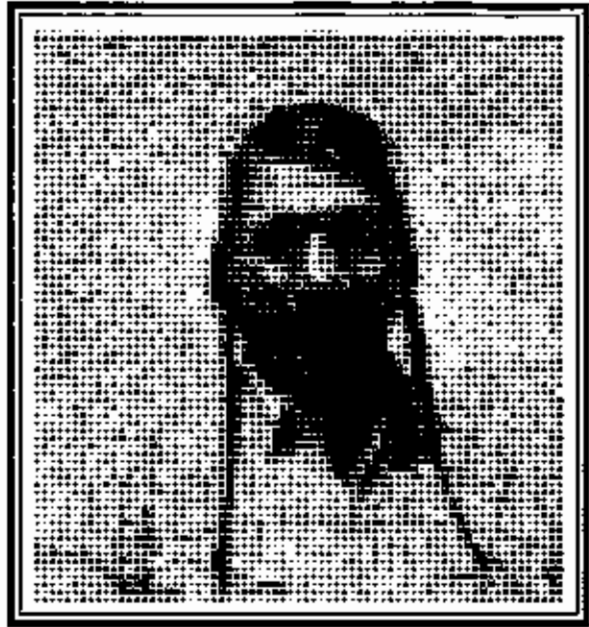


Figure 5.10 Wind River Reservation consultants of scholar Ake Hultkvantz who were either Sheep Eaters or in-laws to Sheep Eaters: (upper left) DT, Sheep Eater, 1948; (upper right) JG, part Sheep Eater, 1955; (lower left) TD, married to Sheep Eater woman; (lower right) CS, Sheep Eater, 1948. (Photographs courtesy of Ake Hultkvantz).

much scared and run away. Many tepee standing alone, all dead inside [Allen 1913:74].

Allen's text then explains that a handful of survivors descended into the valleys to be given refuge by other tribes. As noted above, this quote has been repeated so often that it has fused into an explanation for the virtual disappearance of all Sheep Eaters. Other authors merely stated that they were extinct, without providing any further explanation. As "Bill" Daniels wrote in 1953, "There are no known survivors today, but small bands of the Sheep-Eaters were common as late as 1880" (Daniels 1953:25). Historian Grace R. Hebard gave inter-tribal warfare as an explanation for their disappearance:

They were a timid and fugitive people, who lived in the most inaccessible part of the Absaroka, Ten Sleep and Teton mountains, and who, in their rare contacts with whites, showed themselves generally friendly. Ultimately the Sioux penetrated to their recesses and virtually exterminated them. Of their history we know little, for though they left on the mountain walls many engravings and bright-colored paintings that may tell their story, the characters have never been interpreted [Hebard 1995:118].

Some authors have added more purple prose, such as magazine journalist Keith Barrette who offers the sort of sentimental eulogy to which other "vanishing" Indians like Mandans of North Dakota or the Yahis of California are often subject:

Civilization proved too much for the Tukudeka . . . The plague was thorough -- so thorough that the only memorials remaining are the empty campsites, the conical skeletons of abandoned lodges, the empty and silent sheep traps. Not even the saga of a battle has come down to us. The names of their great chiefs, or elders, if they had any, are unknown. The Tukudeka stand in the vague mists of western history, ghostly, almost formless shapes. Only the mountains are their remaining glory [Barrette 1963:58].

This dewy-eyed mixed-message, which writes an epitaph to Sheep Eater society so as not to be forced to deal with the complexity of their inter-mixed history, continues to be recycled today. For example, under the headline, "Sheep eaters were doomed by smallpox," in the July 9, 1979 issue of the Billings Gazette, feature writer John Bonar goes:

Beware of the white man's smallpox. The terrified cry echoed through what is now Yellowstone National Park. It was the early 1800's. This warning came from a shy tribe of small Indians known as the Sheep eaters [Bonar 1979:6].

The "smallpox extinction" idea promulgated by W.A. Allen is also perpetuated in a videography entitled "The Sheep eaters: Keepers of the Past" (Smith 1990), which is sold in Yellowstone National Park. A softer variant on the theme, in which most Sheep Eaters reportedly succumbed to European diseases once they were moved onto reservations, is also found in a recent Montana newspaper's

feature story on these Indians (Bellinghausen 1995). The story's final scene has Sheep Eaters losing all separate identity as they are absorbed into the general population - despite the fact that the Idaho census continued to list them separately for years after they moved onto the reservation, and that when Hultkrantz and others conducted fieldwork among the Shoshones, everyone on the reservation knew which tribal members claimed Sheep Eater ancestry. The evidence is thus persuasive that claims that the Sheep Eaters disappeared from European diseases to which they were exposed after they moved out of the mountains, or lost identity after they intermarried with other Indians, are without credibility. But historical accuracy was ignored when the need arose for a popular cliché to wind up a book or news story.

When the book by W.A. Allen, *The Sheep Eaters*, was reprinted in 1989, however, it lacked any updating or critical commentary. In the book's front matter was only a brief note informing the reader that the book concerns Wyoming Sheep Eaters, and refers anyone interested in the Sheep Eaters of Idaho to the University of Idaho archivist. But the new edition did include - without the author's permission - a reprint of "The Sheepeaters", a fine article written by David Dominick and originally published in *Annals of Wyoming*, October 1964. Reliable and well researched even if it lacked more updated information, it is still cited as a valuable source for Sheep Eaters aficionados. It should be noted that Ake Hultkrantz discredited the Allen book (Hultkrantz 1970b). But perhaps because Hultkrantz referred to these Indians by their Shoshone name, the *Tukadika*, instead of as Sheep Eaters, his critique has been ignored.

In addition to entering the Sheep Eater story under the "Vanishing Indian" myth, Allen also added his own version of "The Last of his Tribe" stereotype. For he claimed that the Indian-spoken account of the tragic end of the Sheep Eaters - the quote reproduced above - came from a woman named "Woman Under the Ground" who was the last living Sheep Eater Indian, and he even provided a frontispiece photograph of the individual, taken by the O.S. Goff. Allen claimed to have met this woman through the Crow Chief Pretty Eagle. Known locally as "Doc Allen," William Alonzo Allen practiced dentistry in Billings, Montana at the turn of the century, but by trade he was a blacksmith (Wagner and Allen 1936:150). Born in 1848, he had arrived in Montana Territory about 1876. Shortly after his arrival, he claims to have heard of a Sheep Eater woman still living in the mountains and maintained that he finally stumbled upon her by chance, while hunting in the Bighorn canyon in 1877 while she was living among the Crow. It was through sign language that she reportedly communicated the sad tale of her tribe, "the ancient Sheep Eaters."

During photographic research for this overview we probed the origin of the uncredited photograph of "The Woman Under the Ground" which appeared as the frontispiece to Allen's book on the Sheep Eaters. In the Montana Historical Society we found a duplicate of the same image, but according to handwriting by O.S. Goff himself on the back of the historical print it was identified as the picture of an "Old Crow Squaw." Goff had taken the image in Fort Custer, Montana where he served as the post photographer. Were we to assume that Goff was actually wrong, and she was indeed a Sheep Eater, there would then be a problem with her age. For Allen informs us that Woman Under the Ground was 115 years of age in 1877 and thus would have been 126 in 1888 when Goff made his picture, which seems highly unlikely. More probable is that Allen found a photograph of

an old Indian woman to match his "invented Sheep Eater" and used it to enhance his credibility. Since Goff retired from the photography business in 1900, moving to Idaho until his death in 1917 (Watson 1962), perhaps Allen felt the photographer would never dispute his claims that she was the last living representative of her people.

So smitten was Superintendent Norris, too, by the sentimental image of the presumed demise of these mountain dwellers that he weighed in with his own poetic treatment on the theme. In his assortment of odd writings that swing between allusions to the "bloody raids" by Yellowstone's "superstitious" Indians and condemnations of white greed for Indian lands, one finds these verses under the title The Mystic Lake of Wonderland, which also betray a sense of guilt about Sheep Eater treatment at the hands of their evictors:

And here by lonely rill I find -
Sad trace of race to pale-face kind,
But feeble, few, and shy of men -
A wick-e-up of brush in glen,
And (blanket-robed for want of grave),
Last of his band, "Sheep-Eater" brave.

And now I pause and sadly think
Of cruel scenes ne'er traced in ink;
Of kindly words and acts of those --
We curse and treat as savage foes,
Yet practice crimes that dark disgrace
Our Christian creed and bearded race [Norris 1884;47].

Survival of the Sheep Eaters

Such misrepresentations to the contrary, the Sheep Eaters did not vanish or become extinct. Among the most obvious refutations to premature declarations of their demise was the continued presence in southern Wyoming of a famous Sheep Eater guide and renowned medicine man named Togwotee. Prominent among the Sheep Eater contingent which was granted refuge on the Wind River Reservation around 1872 by Chief Washakie, throughout the early record of the Wind River Reservation the man's name periodically crops up. And yet in the following summary of our documentation on this somewhat mysterious character we also have an illustration of the contrast we often discover between outside, or public knowledge regarding an Indian figure which has been gleaned from written documents, and the more inside, private or even "esoteric" information which provides an Indian perspective that has been compiled largely from oral sources.

Insofar as the written record is concerned, we know that Togwotee was among the Sheep Eater minority of Shoshonean guides who led William A. Jones of the Corps of Engineers into

northwestern Wyoming in the summer of 1873. With Togwotee personally leading the way, the Jones party navigated the mountain pass between the head of Wind River and a small tributary of the Snake River. During the journey one of the group's members, a geology professor named Theodore B. Comstock, got the impression that when his "mountain Shoshone" or Sheep Eater status caused other Indians to look down upon him or make derogatory remarks, the man known as Togwotee merely looked "annoyed" and generally paid them little mind, for "he was then of much importance on account of his superior knowledge of the country through which he was guiding us" (Jones 1875:275).

Clearly this Sheep Eater guide also made a favorable impression on the expedition's leader, for Jones made sure the man's name would live on. After being led across the pass known to Shoshone Indians as simply *pia wja:wi* or "Big Gap," Jones renamed it "Togwotee Pass," in line with his preference for attaching easy Indian names, wherever possible, to the prominent features of the country (Jones 1875:55). Another story for this placename harkens back to the literal meaning of Togwotee's Indian name - *toḡoti* is said to translate as "Shoots with a Spear," referring to his keen marksmanship. When he guided the Jones expedition through the "Big Gap," it was said to be as though he was sighting the white men towards a "bull's eye" with the same skill that made him always strike the center of his target (Sharon Kahin, from Charlie Beck, personal communication, 15 July 1996). This information ties the name to the arrow-throwing contest, a form of Indian competitive sport which is still practiced within Crow Indian reservation districts of south-central Montana each spring. To play the game, the Sheep Eaters first hurled a target arrow, which usually landed anywhere from fifty to seventy-five yards away. Then each contestant threw three, javelin-sized arrows tipped with heavy, unbarbed heads, aiming as close to the target as possible. According to one account, Togwotee was exceptionally adept at the game, and during a particular meet all his throws were said to actually touch the target arrow (Esther Mackler manuscript, p. 15, Dubois Museum, courtesy of Sharon Kahin, Museum Director).

Despite their assistance to Jones, in 1878 Togwotee and his followers were accused of participating in the Bannock War in Jackson Hole, and were rounded up by U.S. authorities. Since they were discovered in a large camp at the "Big Gap" pass, not far from the scene of those hostilities, it was assumed they had joined the Bannock rebels. In fact, they were only hunting elk. But a decade later Togwotee was characterized by an Episcopalian minister as a "veteran mountaineer," "reliable guide," "sub-chief" and "old scout of the Indian wars, trustworthy and intelligent," and cited by name as among the "Mountain-Sheep-Eating Shoshones" who helped to guide President Chester Arthur on his horse ride from Washakie Springs to the Yellowstone National Park along Indian Paths and wild game trails "through the primeval forests and mountain passes" (Reverend John Roberts manuscript, quoted in Hultkrantz n.d., p.87. ms. in possession of Roberts family). Not long afterwards, Togwotee was assigned the job of chief of the Indian police at the Shoshone Agency.

That fairly exhausts the written record for Togwotee. When it comes to what we learn from oral traditions, however, the emphasis is often less on physical prowess or scouting skills and more on metaphysical knowledge or the inner, supernatural dimensions of his personality. From the

interviews of Ake Hultkrantz with Wind River Reservation consultants, for instance, we learn that among his own people Togwotee had a darker reputation as "both a medicine-man and witch doctor" than as a "chief." We may remember from Chapter 3 that only an especially strong and brave Sheep Eater might seek puha, or medicine power, from among the category of dangerous water spirits. And Togwotee was especially noted for his association with the most fearsome of these supernatural beings, the pandzoavits, or "water ghost woman."

As for his physical appearance, Hultkrantz' Shoshone friends described Togwotee as "tall, slim and crook-nosed." Hultkrantz also learned that the man was known by two other names: pa:yorowo, or "making mark in the water," and suga b ganigent, meaning "home in the middle of the bush." When she was working among the Wind River Shoshone from 1977-1988, ethnographer Judith Vander gathered the suggestion that Togwotee might even have been instrumental in the subtle transformation of the older Shoshonean Round Dance into the tribe's expression of the Ghost Dance, which became known as the Naraya, as described in Chapter 3. At the core of the early version of Shoshone Ghost Dance doctrine was the theme of the resurrection of the dead. And as described by one of Vander's elder Wind River consultants who was well into his eighties, Togwotee devised his own sort of Jack O'Lantern to trick his people into participating in this new dance:

One ole man, he was going to make them believe that there is something to that. So I guess he - that was old Togwotee - he's the one. They said they was having a Round Dances and he was kind of with them ones that's have that, in that belief. I guess one time he went and got old rotten wood. He took all that rotten stuff - the top was alright - rotten stuff out, that loose stuff, he push it out. He must of made it just part of it. And he made a hole and he cut eyes in it, where the nose is and the mouth. He must of made some kind of a thing in it so it would hold up that light, I guess, in there - candle. He put that in brush somewhere where he lived. I believe close there they have that Naraya - where they see it themselves. I guess there was a Naraya. And they saw that. Light down in the eyes, somebody down that. And then he told them, "You people dance hard." he said, "The dead is coming back. That's the leader over there."

Judith Vander: "He fooled them."

Consultant: "Old Togwotee" [Vander 1997:210].

Along with his endorsement of the Shoshone Ghost Dance, Togwotee also possessed special powers which he employed during the Sun Dance. According to what Hultkrantz learned, it was actually Togwotee's use of his destructive rather than curative powers which embroiled him in the sort of "shamanic duel" which has been reported from other parts of native America as well. The following account, from Hultkrantz' unpublished manuscript on the Sheep Eaters, also accounts for Togwotee's eventual death:

He used to carry a doll that was clad in buckskin and tied to his necklace. He used his power to injure people, for example, by depriving them of [their] navuzieip ["free soul"]. His guardian spirit was pandzoavits ["water ghost"]. He was also feared in the Sun Dance. If he [someone] danced forward [he became afraid], for then Togwotee might take his navuzieip. Especially was he feared when he stood at the center pole and whistled eagerly. His doll represented pandzoavits. Many good men and women were killed with this medicine. There was only one way of overcoming Togwotee and thus curing his victim: to call for a medicine-man who had still stronger medicine.

Now Togwotee was living in the vicinity of [the present town of] Dubois. After many appeals from people a Ute [yu:ta] medicine man promised to out maneuver Togwotee. The Ute arrived at Fort Washakie, rolled up his sleeve and suck his arm, with his gaze steadily fixed in the direction of Dubois [about 50 miles to the northwest]. In this way [he] deprived Togwotee of his medicine. The Ute sucked the medicine into his body, both the necklace and the doll.

He then vomited up the two objects and held them out in his hands, so that all those standing round about could see them. At his request he was now handed by my grandfather an old muzzle-loader used in buffalo hunting. With a knife he cut the doll into little pieces, loaded the gun with powder, stuffed the doll into the barrel of the gun, and fired. People could then hear the shriek of a child.

The Ute said, however, that this was Togwotee's own voice, and he also said that Togwotee's puha was now destroyed, and that Togwotee himself would now fall ill little by little, turn blue and waste away. This actually happened. The name of the Ute Indian was Little Doctor, and he was known as a very clever medicine-man [Hultkrantz n.d. II:88-89; also in Hultkrantz 1951:36-37].

Togwotee may have been the best-known of the Sheep Eaters who survived on the Wind River Reservation. But there were other Sheep Eater families who sustained themselves in quiet obscurity for generations. At least one federal employee reported rumors of Sheep Eater persistence; former Washakie National Forest Ranger, A.G. Clayton, wrote in 1926:

Several theories are advanced as to the final disappearance of the sheep eater. One is that diseases of various sorts entered their ranks; another that tribal Indians destroyed them, but it appears that the most likely one is the coming of the white man who, in subduing their enemies the lowland Indians, made it possible for them to return to their former homes and take up the life of the normal Indian. It is said by some that a few are still living on the Wind River Indian Reservation. In any event these people can justly be considered as the first users of the Washakie National Forest [Clayton 1926:278].

Completing research on the Wind River Reservation twenty-eight years later, Hultkrantz interviewed a half-dozen self-identified Sheep Eaters, including the old woman profiled in Chapter Three, who was said to have been born in the mountains. Although today their numbers are not large, descendants of these individuals continue to live and work on both the Wind River and Fort Hall reservations. As a reminder of this fact, this overview closes with a telling moment that occurred during our third and final field season.

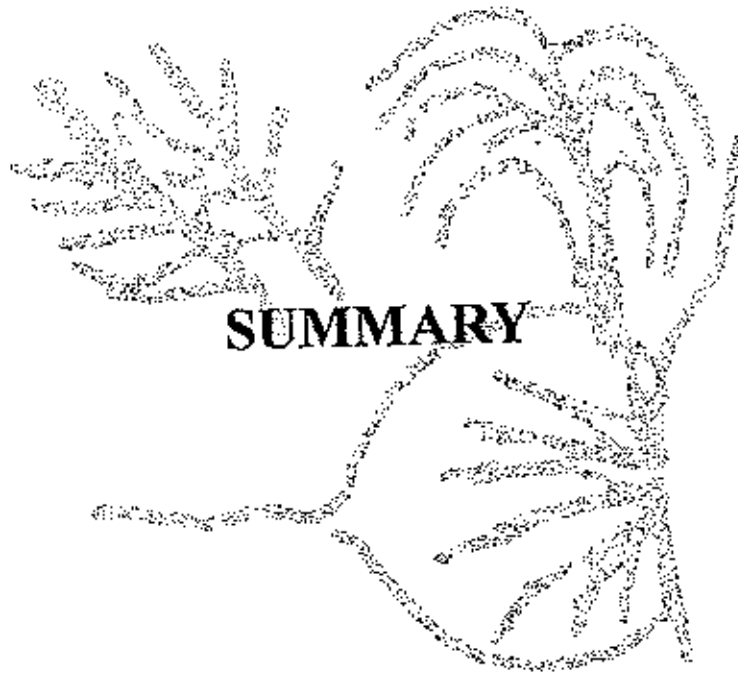
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On June 25, 1996, during the last of our three summer field seasons, with the help of the Branch of Cultural Resources, we sponsored at the Park Headquarters in Mammoth a round-table discussion between Yellowstone National Park officials and twenty members of the Fort Hall Shoshone and Bannock and the Wind River Shoshone Indian communities. At the outset of our morning session, each of the Indian visitors were asked to introduce themselves, giving name and some identification. When this well-intentioned request was made we were in innocent ignorance of a deep-seated reluctance by these particular tribespeople to expose this sort of personal information. "The Wind River Shoshone do not like to tell their names," wrote Demitri Shimkin, the anthropologist who had interviewed the parents of some of those very same Wind River individuals who were now struggling with the assistant superintendent's invitation, "a man rarely does so - more readily if alone than in the presence of other tribesmen - a woman never" (Shimkin 1947a:303). And while working among the Lemhi Shoshone to the west, then residing on the Fort Hall reservation, anthropologist Robert Lowie also learned that "The Lemhi people still show great reluctance in divulging their native names; a middle-aged man who had lived with the whites for many years obstinately denied having a Shoshone name, though it was subsequently discovered by chance" (Lowie 1909: 211).

Realizing that we were uninformed about their forms of etiquette, however, and wanting to avoid starting off on the wrong foot, the Indian visitors graciously complied with the official's request. But when they did introduce themselves, it was remarkable that a number of them not only stated that they hailed from this or that Shoshone or Bannock community. About a half-dozen of the visitors also volunteered that they were of mixed descent - "...and Sheep Eater," both men and women added emphatically. It was as if this ethnic identification, which for so long had occupied the most denigrated Indian status in the Anglo-American literature on Shoshone peoples, was now holding its head high and claiming its rightful place as an indigenous presence within the Yellowstone heartland.



In this ethnographic overview we have investigated numerous features of the different relationships between a range of Native American groups and the greater Yellowstone ecosystem. This has been no easy task, and not only because of the deep-seated misconceptions about those interactions which we have attempted to address. It has also been difficult because about a hundred and thirty years ago many of those traditional relationships began to be undermined by the federal government. Coincident with the sequestering of Plains and Plateau Indians on reservations in the late 19th century was the forced cessation of native hunting and foraging, open travel, and religious or other cultural endeavors in and around Yellowstone National Park. It is ironic that in the same era that wildlife were being protected against extermination from hunters through the creation of National Parks, in the government's view Indians were being "protected" against their extinction from Indian-white warfare by means of the official assimilation policy and the creation of Indian reservations to which they were forcibly relocated. This break between Indians and their traditional environments led to a diminished body of oral traditions conveying mythical or historical information, place-names and other geographic knowledge as well as personal memories regarding the greater Yellowstone region.

Yet we hope to have assembled and sequenced into meaningful mosaic-like narratives enough bits and pieces of data from archaeological, ethnographic and ethnohistorical sources to bring the misconceptions into serious question. Specifically, we hope to have persuasively suggested that 1) the Yellowstone Plateau was not a *terra incognita* prior to the coming of Euro-Americans into its confines; 2) that the "Eaters of the Bighorn Sheep" were somewhat more than the timid, stunted outcasts hiding out in their mountain haunts as much of the literature conveys; 3) that Plains and Plateau Indian peoples did know the Yellowstone ecosystem with varying degrees of intimacy and were not deterred from exploring and exploiting its diverse habitats because of the geyser activity - which was regarded every bit as awesome by Euro-Americans as it was by Indians; and finally, 4) that most of these same native groups today retain an interest in their histories related to the Park as well as in reconstructing some sorts of special, "traditional" relationships with its resources.

It has not been our job to assess or suggest, in any manner, just which of these native peoples might have stronger or weaker historical or cultural ties or claims to the Park and its immediate environs. The state of our knowledge still remains too thin or fragmentary to hint at such differential relationships, and each of these groups also had qualitatively contrasting relationships to the Yellowstone Plateau which make the question akin to comparing the proverbial apples and oranges. In addition, much research clearly remains to be done on the subjects addressed in this study: government records, regional newspapers, and other data still need to be plumbed, detailed field notes of earlier ethnographers are still worth exhuming from often obscure archives, the archaeological picture of the Park deserves a major effort, and, surprisingly enough, our own experiences during the work on this document have demonstrated that the possibility of narratives still being held within tribal memory needs to be left open. As with the case of the excellent Miwok Indian museum and library-archives within California's Yosemite National Park, with the more open and inviting policy towards Indian history and cultural interests which the Park has been initiating over the last few years hopefully native peoples will be inspired to come forward and contribute to a comparable archive at Yellowstone. Indeed, our experiences with American Indian consultants in

the Park demonstrated that they were exceedingly interested in the Mammoth collections, photographic and otherwise.

To continue to document this wider cultural contribution to the evolution of Yellowstone National Park by American Indians, however, and for the diverse Indian cultural story to become belatedly integrated into the Park's self-presentations and interpretations, will take not only an appreciation of the sort of data which we have begun to unearth. It will also necessitate a profound reassessment of the field of symbols, associations and ideas which has developed around Yellowstone National Park. This task means that this unique Park whose origins and legacy have been largely associated with the non-human aspects of the natural environment as seen through the eyes of one particular culture will now have to explore the cultural and historical aspects of its environment as seen through Native American eyes as well. This, too, will be no easy task, since the special personalities of institutions such as our National Parks are born in their beginnings and harden over years, and Yellowstone is, of course, the father of them all.

To shift ever so slightly the perspective from Yellowstone's traditional focus on wildlife and natural wonders is not unlike contemplating the expansion of associations tied to America's battlefield "Sacred Ground" Parks so as to reach beyond their entrenched, fundamental themes of "martial sacrifice and national regeneration" (quoted from back jacket copy of Edward Linenthal's Sacred Ground: Americans and their Battlefields, 1993). Transforming an institution's personality is difficult to do. Expanding the self-definition of Yellowstone, and truly factoring Indians into its equation, also means shifting away from the underlying patriotic symbolism of such sites with their earlier nationalistic agendas. For in the wake of the divisive Civil War, one of the underlying reasons for creating such Parks was that they produced sacred landscapes which all American pilgrims could visit in order to see their shared God manifest his powers and heal their wounded nation (for such use of National Parks like Niagara Falls, Yosemite and Yellowstone as centers of nationalistic tourism, see Sears 1989).

But as soon as Yellowstone National Park scholars and the Albright Visitor Center exhibits began to create and promote their own stories of why and how Yellowstone became a park in the first place, the Park itself opened the door to such a redefinition by adding themes of human culture history to the earlier emphases upon natural history, wildlife preservation, and scenic grandeur. And once it fleshed out the human personalities, administrative as well as artistic, who advocated for, painted pictures of, and fashioned the Park's mandate and image, and put them into historical context, it thereupon left the safe realm of leave-it-alone wilderness and entered the realm of public relations and self-conscious discourse. While it seems a small step from this self-reflective, often self-congratulatory focus to bringing the complex stories of Indians more fully into the panorama of the Park's culture history, the fact is that, as the debate over establishment of the Pajarito or Cliff Dwellers' National Park demonstrated years ago, national parks designed around the allure of American Indian culture, prehistoric and historic, have had a hard time appealing to legislators and tourists in the past (Altherr 1985). But the failure of the Pajarito effort occurred in another era (1900-1920), when Indians history was not of as general interest as they are today. We would hope today, with Americans seeking for "a dramatic new park ethic" (Los Angeles Times, August 3, 1997, p.

M4), that Yellowstone would become a pioneer in viewing its custodianship of a well-aged, multi-stranded American Indian past as an educational and promotional asset.

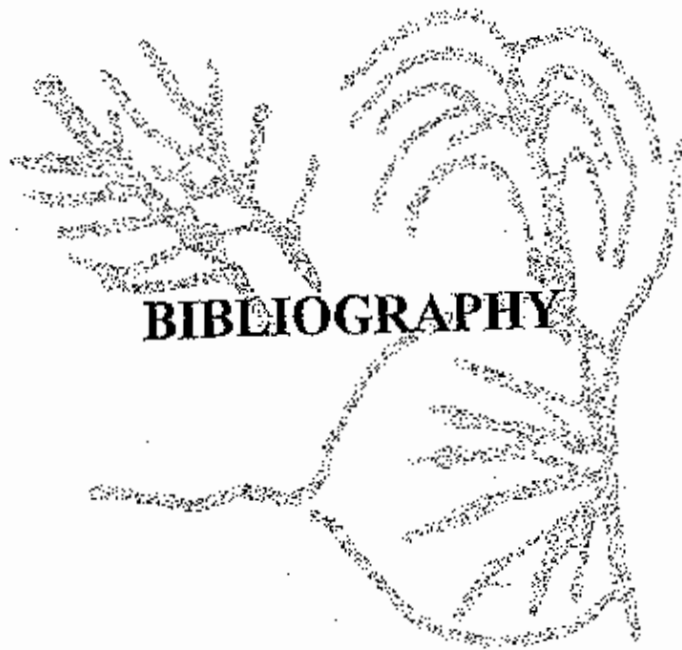
We would hope that just as everyone is now aware that notions of parks as pristine "wilderness" are antiquated, and that human beings have been shaping their environmental surroundings for thousands of years, that the pre-contact, historic, and contemporary relations between Indians and the region not be hampered by externally-imposed criteria for what are "pristine" and "traditional" Indian data and what are not. The on-going Native American history in the entire Yellowstone region runs deep and wide and deserves to find its place in the Park's autobiography.

The moral and intellectual imperatives to initiate such a redefinition of Yellowstone's presentation of itself, comprehensively embracing and representing the Indian culture-histories and not just window-dressing them, seems different for this Park. Certainly different than Parks in other cultural and ecological settings, where the protective nets of national preserves or game refuges have been thrown over resident, indigenous peoples who still subsist in traditional ways and were never removed from the area (for a useful, comparative range of international case studies about this convergence of natural preservation, cultural preservation, and rural development, see West and Brechin 1991). In such situations, as with the Havasupai in Grand Canyon, the living native peoples are generally considered an essential part of the area's cultural resources (Hough 1991:228). Yet even here the struggle to create dialogue between Indians and Park officials has been no less difficult for Grand Canyon than it has for Yellowstone; as John Hough has written, "Historically, the relationship between the National Park Service and the Havasupai has been one of distrust and enmity. This has improved considerably in recent years...However, there is still a certain level of distrust and, consequently, misperception of the other's intent" (Hough 1991:229).

To relieve such misperceptions and to contribute to improved working relationships between Indians and Yellowstone National Park officials, as well as to augment the story and significance of Yellowstone National Park by incorporating the intimate and ancient associations between Indians and the greater Yellowstone ecosystem, we offer the following areas of concern. These discussions and recommendations are based on information gleaned during the three summer field seasons of our study, and on our gradual appreciation of the native experiences and attitudes that extend beyond those data.

This study reflects ethnographic and ethnohistorical work on relationships between American Indian peoples and Yellowstone National Park which, like all such commissions, has been of necessity restricted by time and funding. This document must be regarded as an interim report covering our best research efforts conducted between 1994 and 1998. But as so often happens with a topic of this magnitude and complexity, its vast subject has not been definitively covered through the time-bound scope of our work. Just because our compilation of available information has herein described certain Indian peoples as having particular associations with the Park must not preclude the emergence of new ethnographic or archival information which might identify other Indian nations with such claims or which might corroborate or refute our proposed reconstruction of tribal activities in the region. Any historical reconstruction such as this is a provisional contribution; any

multi-cultural exploration of this nature is always a work-in-progress. Given these important provisos about the contingent nature of such cultural research and reconstruction, it remains our conviction, however, that a narrative summary rather than a "checklist of sites" has been the most constructive way to present our data. Only this way can we call attention to the human nature of the "data beneath the data," the motivational structures and cultural and historical contexts and circumstances by which any of it makes sense. Only then can we invite Park visitors into the processes by which history itself is constantly enriched, revised, interpreted and transformed into fuller-bodied understandings of our often separate pasts and how they influence our shared present.



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