

The Port Madison Indian Reservation, like all Indian Reservations in Washington Territory, was initially a focus for the manipulations of politicians, missionaries, and the general settler population. All of these groups had their own imagined goals and ideals for the Suquamish Indians, and each intended to fit them into their own overarching scheme. While the goals of these three groups were different, they were united in their disapproval of the Indians' current mode of life. They were equally unanimous in their general goal to 'civilize' the Indians, meaning in general terms assimilation into the culture of whites. As time went on, however, this initial concentration of attention waned, the idealization of the Indians faded beside their everyday reality, and the 1870s and 1880s were characterized by less coercive policies, and a peaceful and productive coexistence in this region. This was a time characterized less by ideology, and more by the realities and exigencies of everyday life. The ideals and images of Indians developed by the early settlers had to make increasing accommodations in practice, and the Indians were also forced to deal with the everyday reality of the settlers. This period of relative calm and integration was ended by the influx of new settlers in the 1890s, and the generational changes that occurred in the population at the same time. These two factors revived the idealization of the Indians – not for the explicit and concrete goals of proselytizing missionaries or politicians, but for an ideological positioning of American nationalism and Victorian nostalgia. The interesting part of this changing pattern of interaction with the Port Madison Indians is the middle period, between eras defined by different idealizations of the Indians. In these two decades, in the area of the Port Madison reservation, settlers and Indians viewed each other with fewer preconceptions than in the periods before or after, and the two groups interacted in ways less governed by ideology.

The initial interactions between whites and the Suquamish Indians are best exemplified in the document which formalized the relationship between the two communities: the Treaty of Point Elliot signed in January of 1855. This agreement was primarily focused on setting down principles that ostensibly exercised geographical control over the tribe: it attempted¹ to force the population into a specific region and also cause the tribe to relinquish almost all rights to land outside the borders of this defined area.² This intended isolation of the Indians on reservations was instituted to achieve several goals: to allow for intense education and civilization of the Indians in a controlled environment, to effect the removal of Indians from other valuable lands for the use of settlers, and to streamline and simplify future governmental control over the Indian populations, which were scattered and decentralized at the time.

This treaty and other sources from this time displayed an intense involvement of the whites in Indian affairs. The policies contained in these documents were all directed towards the realization of an idealistic image: the Indians were to be quickly assimilated into American culture and society. The vision of the Indians that is evident in the treaty is that of a subordinate society that must “acknowledge their dependence on the government of the United States, and promise to be friendly with all citizens thereof...”³ The tribes were to be instructed and eventually absorbed into the body of citizens. Provisions were made for the individual parcelling of reservation land to “such individuals or families as are willing to avail themselves of the privi-

¹ Though it lacked any provisions for enforcement.

² US Statutes at Large. Treaty of Point Elliot, 1855. Volume 12, Statute 927, p. 927-928.

³ US Statutes at Large. Treaty of Point Elliot, 1855, p. 929.

lege....”⁴ In general, “territorial officers were making concerted efforts to take control of relations and show Indians where they would belong in an American-dominated world.”⁵

⁴ US Statutes at Large. Treaty of Point Elliot, 1855, p. 929.

⁵ Alexandra Harmon, Indians in the Making (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 74.

The initial Catholic missionary contacts with the Suquamish tribe were similar in their tone and expectations. While these were focused on a slightly different outcome than the comparatively secular goals of the treaty, the general focus on changing the Indians to make them fit into a new conception is consistent, as was the expectation that assimilative change would be rapid and easy. The primary goal of the Catholics was, of course, the religious conversion of the Indians; but both they and their secular contemporaries saw their efforts as leading directly to the civilization of Indians, and therefore their integration into white society at large as well. Early European Catholic missionaries to the Puget Sound area such as Father Pierre-Jean de Smet, Father Blanchard, and Reverend Eugene Casimir Chirouse baptized many of the Indians of the sound, including Chief Seattle and others of the Suquamish tribe. Reports from E.C. Chirouse while he was teacher at the Tulalip School indicate the synthesis that was intended in missionary endeavors: "...those who attend most to our religious instruction are doing more to improve their temporal condition by erecting comfortable houses and cultivating the soil."⁶ Secular sources at the time also display this explicit linking of religious conversion with cultural integration: a political speech published in the *Pioneer-Democrat* in 1856 in support of these 'alien missionaries' portrayed them as teachers not only of the gospel, but also of the very "principles of civilization."⁷ The Catholics, while not directly affiliated with the governmental organizations at this early date, were definitely involved with the general program of intended

⁶ Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the year 1864, p. 71.

⁷ William M. Morrow, "Speech of William M. Morrow in the house of representatives in opposition to the bill to prevent aliens from acting as teachers or missionaries in Washington Territory," *Pioneer-Democrat* (March 21, 1856), p. 1, col 2-5.

assimilation. In this photo of E.C. Chirouse and his students, taken at the Tulalip school in 1865,⁸ the Catholic goals of the conversion and civilization of these Indian boys are apparent in their uniforms, poses of prayer, and in their very removal from tribal culture to a boarding school environment.



All of the authorities in question, the federal and local government, and the Catholic missionaries were unilaterally disapproving of the Indians' current mode of life. They favored a policy aimed at cultural assimilation, preceded by focused education on the reservations. The time frame assumed for this process was relatively short when it was specified at all – the treaty gave a period of twenty years for education and civilization.⁹

Economic relations in the years immediately after the treaty were limited – many transactions were carried out by the Indian department for the Indians, and the few individual Indian accounts at local stores were tiny. Transactions were listed by William DeShaw, the proprietor of the Agate Point trading post, for “Old Man House - 1 doz. eggs,” and for “Lazarus - Old Man House - 1 pair socks.”¹⁰ The major economic transaction involving individual Indians in the 1860s was transportation: the earliest ledger contained many references to paying Indians for

⁸ W.F. Robertson, University of Washington Special Collections, Early Photographers Collection #334, NA1498, 1865.

⁹ US Statutes at Large. Treaty of Point Elliot, 1855, p. 930.

¹⁰ William DeShaw Papers, University of Washington Libraries Special Collections, Acc. #0383, Box 2, Folder 1.

“ferryage.”¹¹ This presents a marked contrast to later economic relations, which were rich and varied.

It is difficult to tell the Indian perspective in this period. The sources that discuss the natives in the early days of settlement are most frequently simply portrayals of white conceptions of the Indians, or goals described for them. One of the earliest sources of a Suquamish position in this period is the record of a speech by Jim Seattle at the funeral of his father, Chief Seattle, in 1866, though it was not published until 1870. In this speech as it is related, Jim Seattle reinforces the image that we have found in external sources. He said “...the priest came among us, and taught us the prayer. We are Christians now...the godly man learned us how to build good houses; how to cultivate the soil, and how to get money like the White Men.”¹² This example, in combination with the opinions of Governor Stevens, the early missionaries’ reports, and the six signatures on the treaty from the Suquamish tribe, all seem to indicate an actual accommodation on the part of the tribe to the new goals and programs of the various white groups involving themselves in their lives. Whether this view is fully accurate or not, the involvement of the whites in formulating alternative and externally contrived roles for the Indians during this period, and attempting to actualize them, is unquestioned.

As the 1860s progressed, some changes are apparent in my sources. The intense involvement of the white settlers in the Indian community is somewhat diminished, and there is increasing evidence of Indian voices and action in the community. The report to the BIA by E.C. Chirouse in 1869 presents evidence of the increasing difficulty of keeping Indians on the reservation: he refers to the Indians’ “indolent and wandering disposition,”¹³ and while he reports pro-

¹¹ William DeShaw Papers, Box 1, Folder 8.

¹² F.F. Victor, “Old Seattle and his Tribe”, Overland Monthly vol 4, no 4 (April 1870), p. 299.

¹³ Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the year 1869, p. 146.

gress with his students, he expresses the opinion that “the others will never make any solid progress in civilization, unless the government take some strong measures and force them to reside on their respective reservations, observing the articles of the treaty....”¹⁴ In other words, this was not being done at the time. In the same report, he records evidence of Indian dissatisfaction with their pay: “Some of them made the remark that it [clearing trees, making roads, etc.] was hard work to perform without remuneration.”¹⁵ Despite these facts, the Reverend Chirouse characterized the Port Madison Indians as “without exception the best conducted and most industrious Indians of the sound.”¹⁶ This last statement, combined with the earlier two, again leads me to believe that the Suquamish Indians had been truly involved in accommodation with the white communities, and that now they felt they could interact with them on a more equal basis. That this integration and increased parity with the whites was close to the original goal of the missionaries and government is reflected in the praise accorded the Suquamish tribe, while the dissatisfaction with persistent Indian attitudes is indicative of the Rev. Chirouse’s ideological bent towards integration. He was unwilling to accept anything short of complete assimilation – the continuation of some native behaviors frustrated him. He specified that this tribe “have no agent at their head,”¹⁷ but that they have “the advice of some good neighbors who take an interest in their welfare.”¹⁸ This again reflects increasing involvement of the Indians with the surrounding white community.

¹⁴ Annual Report, 1869, p.147.

¹⁵ Annual Report, 1869, p. 146.

¹⁶ Annual Report, 1869, p. 146.

¹⁷ Annual Report, 1869, p. 146.

¹⁸ Annual Report, 1869, p. 146.

In this same period near the beginning of the 1870s, a new agent, George D. Hill, was appointed to the Tulalip reservation, which had jurisdiction over the Port Madison tribe as well. A personal letter from George D. Hill in 1873 reveals his attitudes towards the job. In this missive, he displayed a lack of enthusiasm and no sense of involvement in any greater ideological project - he was just doing a job, and “writing reports ‘to suit,’ or be d___d.”¹⁹ He also derided the Commissioner of the Indian Department as being “a preacher” who derived his “Indian knowledge...from reading Cooper and Reports of Peace Commission – if you felt a determination to destroy your present reputation and future happiness, you would accept an Inspectorship if offered....”²⁰ His subsequent complaints about the pay match up with reports by E.C. Chirouse from that same year that indicated how difficult it was to retain employees because of lack of pay.²¹ This quibbling about the compensation also indicates a lack of enthusiasm for the idealistic elements of the project. The letter ends with a “God bless you all – and d___ the Indian Dept., far and near.”²² Further perusal of Hill’s unguarded personal correspondence led me to believe that this letter was representative of his opinions both of his job, and of the Indian agency in general. As a result of these personal attitudes, George D. Hill’s appointment and tenure certainly resulted in less direct oversight of the Port Madison reservation by the official Indian agent.

This decrease in the involvement of the agent and the priest (the Rev. E.C. Chirouse), both of whose focus was increasingly the Tulalip school and reservation, led to the apparent

¹⁹ George D. Hill Papers, University of Washington Special Collections, Acc. #4267, Box 1, Folder 17. Personal letter dated June 3, 1873.

²⁰ George D. Hill Papers, Box 1, Folder 17. Personal letter dated June 3, 1873.

²¹ Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the year 1873, p. 305.

²² George D. Hill Papers, Box 1, Folder 17. Personal letter dated June 3, 1873.

semi-official appointment of William DeShaw as the local representative of the Indian authorities.²³ DeShaw was a businessman first and foremost, and relatively sympathetic to the Indians. While some later sources represented him as “no Indian lover,”²⁴ these characterizations discount many of his earlier interactions with the Suquamish and other Indians. He built his store on Agate Point, almost directly between the Port Madison Indian reservation and the mill town. He had three Indian wives in succession,²⁵ and extended credit to many of the Port Madison Indians at his store, where they were some of his best and most consistent customers.²⁶ One ledger even contained a bookmark with Jim Seattle’s name on it, to make it easier to locate the current page for his accounts.²⁷

The involvement of this less idealistic, and considerably more down-to-earth character in the Indian community was quite a change from the earlier Indian agents or priests. He brought with him less of a preset agenda of imposed change, and was more open to equitable relations with the Indians. Of course, he did still make some efforts to influence the ‘civilization’ of the Indians, but mostly in ways that would directly improve his business: on the request of the Indian Department, he supervised the destruction of the remnants of the Old Man House on the beach at the reservation.²⁸ This removal cleared the way for the construction of the first ‘Boston’ house on Port Madison reservation - built entirely at DeShaw’s expense as a demonstration of ‘civi-

²³ Annual Report, 1873, p. 305.

²⁴ J.A. Costello, The Siwash, p. 26.

²⁵ J.A. Costello, The Siwash, p. 25.

²⁶ William DeShaw Papers, Box 1, Folder 9, also Box 1b, 2, 3.

²⁷ William DeShaw Papers, Box 1, Folder 9.

²⁸ Fredi Perry, Port Madison, Washington Territory, p. 125.

lized' building practices.²⁹ Later in life, DeShaw related that "this was a reform very much desired by the government at that time, but towards the accomplishment of which it did very little."³⁰ The effect of this reform on the Indians was evident in the subsequent sales of considerable building materials to Indian customers such as Jack Adams, and Port Madison Tom.³¹ Interactions of this sort demonstrate the changes that occurred when the ideology formulated in the 1850s and early 1860s encountered the realities of the evolving societies. In this case, a governmental policy of demolishing the tribal past in order to force 'progress' on the Suquamish became an opportunity for an interesting and confusing combination of advertising, charity, commerce, and mutual interaction.

These significant changes in the management and oversight of the Port Madison reservation, combined with the change brought about in the community by significant Indian proponents of integration such as Jim Seattle, set the stage for a time of mutual accommodation and cohabitation. This period was characterized by less coercive behaviors on the part of white settlers, for whom the Indians were no longer a novelty and who were developing methods for more peaceful coexistence, and also by many apparently voluntary changes in behavior by the Suquamish to integrate with the whites.

The interval of real coexistence between the Indian and white communities in the Port Madison area lasted from the early 1870s until the late 1880s. This period offered continued evidence of growing economic integration: trade with the whites was becoming more important, and was conducted on a larger scale. A

²⁹ J.A. Costello, The Siwash, p. 29.

³⁰ J.A. Costello, The Siwash, p. 29.

³¹ William DeShaw Papers, Box 1, Folder 9.



photo from 1885 depicted Duwamish Indians, who were supposed to be located on the Port Madison reservation at this time, trading on lake Union.³² Note the significant quantity of goods, and the completely American clothes, in combination with a traditional canoe with what appear to be oarlocks added to make it easier for one man to propel. American technology, Indian technology, and traditions of trade derived from both cultures blend seamlessly in this image.

There is also continued evidence of economic integration from William DeShaw's store accounts. He continued to serve an increasing number of individual Indian customers, who purchased many of the same types of items as the white settlers. DeShaw continued to allow these Indian customers to buy items on credit, and he was almost always repaid.³³ During the years 1876-1879, Port Madison Tom, a Suquamish Indian, purchased many items such as hardware, windows, a saw, a knife, sheeting, and food. He took these items on credit, and repaid DeShaw in dogfish oil.³⁴ See below for an explanation of this commodity. Chief Kitsap bought large quantities of food, clothing, and tobacco, and paid mostly in cash.³⁵ Port Madison Sally purchased thread, fabric, and prints, and paid back months later in a combination of cash and dogfish oil.³⁶ In another ledger, dated 1882-3 and maintained by "Mrs. E. M. Thompson, for W. DeShaw Agent," a transaction was listed where two Indians helped her to butcher a cow received in payment from another customer in exchange for credit on their accounts.³⁷ These varied

³² Seattle Historical Society Negative #2228, University of Washington Special Collections, Seattle Historical Society Collection, 1885.

³³ The vast majority of DeShaw's bad customers were white settlers, and his impressive invective is directed at them.

³⁴ William DeShaw Papers, Box 1, Folder 9.

³⁵ William DeShaw Papers, Box 1, Folder 9.

³⁶ William DeShaw Papers, Box 1, Folder 9.

transactions represent many different economic accommodations, and a bustling and involved economy between the whites and the Suquamish Indians.

Another major economic factor in the area of the reservation was the Port Madison sawmill owned and operated by George A. Meigs. Many Suquamish Indians worked at the sawmill, and sold logs from the reservation to the mill as well. According to the reminiscences of Robert Ross Sr., a resident of Port Madison who grew up in the 1870s, “a settlement of [illegible] Indian camp that contained 40 or 50 Indians was across the bay from Port Madison Sawmill and some of them worked for the Mill Company. These Indians called themselves the Mister Meigs Indians, and one squaw took the name of Sally Meigs, Mr. Meigs being the owner of the Mill.”³⁸ Even allowing for a certain amount of skepticism of these accounts describing close relations, there is clear evidence for involvement of the Suquamish tribe in the lumber trade. The account books for DeShaw’s store in 1873 record many credits towards the ‘Port Madison Reserve’ for logs delivered.³⁹ Mr. Meigs himself was a close friend of Chief Seattle, and this fact was reported in several sources: “Mr Meigs, the proprietor, and Seattle, from their first acquaintance, were mutual friends. The old Chief took great pride in paying frequent visits to this gentleman; and many a long and pleasant conversation ensued at these meetings.”⁴⁰ Seattle also requested that Meigs attend his funeral, at which “A large concourse of whites and Indians were assembled.”⁴¹ William DeShaw paid for the funeral.⁴²

³⁷ William DeShaw Papers, Box 2, Folder 3.

³⁸ Transcript of an article written by Robert Ross, Sr., read by Ray Parfitt, Bainbridge Island Historical Society, archival subject file ‘Suquamish’. Oral History tape BIHS #35B. Editors brackets in original.

³⁹ William DeShaw Papers, Box 1, Folder 9.

⁴⁰ F.F. Victor, “Old Seattle and his Tribe”, p. 298.

⁴¹ F.F. Victor, “Old Seattle and his Tribe”, p. 299.

⁴² William DeShaw Papers, Box 1, Folder 9. Account is inside front cover of the ledger - a total of \$96.38.

There are also records from this time that detail Indian involvement in non-traditional entrepreneurial activities – sometimes in direct competition with whites, and certainly not at their instigation. Robert Ross, Sr. records the production and sale of socks to the mill workers: “The [Indian] women made hand socks from yarn carded and spun by hand from virgin wool. The socks found a ready sale to the lumbermen and sawmill hands for winter wear, and could be purchased at the sawmill store or various trading posts, and were of good quality as I can certify.”⁴³ Port Madison Sally, whose accounts are listed above, was almost certainly engaged in sewing clothing for sale. Many of the Indians paid for their goods at the DeShaw store in dogfish oil. This novel currency was apparently used as skid oil to lubricate the skids for lumber at the mill, and the Indians provided a cheaper alternative to anything commercially available for the purpose. The evidence presented by the DeShaw accounts was reinforced in an economic history of the county: “The Indians caught dogfish and put them in troughs and threw hot stones in with them, thus rendering the oil which was used to grease skids and was sold by the Indians to the Mill stores at about 50 cents a gallon.”⁴⁴ These activities on the Indians’ part represent true integration with the emerging economy of the sound region.

There was also evidence of substantial social integration in these decades. Marriage of white men to Indian women was a common occurrence, according to Robert Ross, Sr., William DeShaw, Ina Buchanan, and the local court records. While some of these arrangements were represented as completely commercial as far as the whites were concerned, efforts were made during this period to change this:

Many of the early settlers were squaw men, a young squaw being purchased for two blankets and an older one for one blanket. In 1882, a law was passed that all

⁴³ Transcript of an article written by Robert Ross, Sr., read by Ray Parfitt.

⁴⁴ Ina Buchanan, An Economic Survey of Kitsap County, excerpted in photocopies at Bainbridge Island Historical Society, archival subject file ‘Suquamish’.

white men must marry their squaws or dispose of them. The county sheriff started out in a rowboat. If the white man did not want to marry, he had to give the squaw money and things from the house that she desired and then she was landed at the nearest reservation. If he wanted to marry the sheriff performed the ceremony.⁴⁵

This policy reveals that this intermarriage was a common occurrence, but that it was also somewhat controversial within the white population. The resolution, while not entirely evenhanded, reveals at least an attempt at fairness to the Indian women. Many men, like DeShaw himself, kept their Indian wives.

There is also evidence of Indian involvement in what are typically white social pursuits: An article in the Seattle Times from 1947 highlighted an interview with Sam Snyder of the Suquamish tribe who had been pitcher for the Port Madison Reservation baseball team in the 1880s. He said that the Port Madison Stars “travelled all over Puget Sound by steamer and canoe, and other teams came to meet them on their grounds,”⁴⁶ which were close to the site of the Old Man House. The team beat a Seattle team six times in 1886 – it was not clear from the article whether this was another Indian team, or a white one.

Holiday occasions also brought the communities together. This image from Seattle depicts members of many ‘Puget Sound Tribes’ together with white settlers for a Railroad Jubilee Barbecue in 1883.⁴⁷ Other social occasions such as the Fourth



⁴⁵ Ina Buchanan, An Economic Survey of Kitsap County.

⁴⁶ Ernest B. Bertelson, “Walkin’ est Old Injun”, Seattle Times (Oct 5, 1947), Pacific Parade Magazine section, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Theodore E. Peiser, University of Washington Special Collections, Prosch Washington Views Collection no. 28, 1883, NA1390.

of July,⁴⁸ and many other community celebrations brought Indians and whites together as elements of an integrated whole during this time. Meigs hosted picnics for the mill workers, and all of the Indians were invited – they returned the favor, inviting many whites to gatherings on the reservation.⁴⁹ Ina Buchanan provides evidence of Christmas celebrations on the Port Madison reservation: “In 1878, the Old Man House Indians were going to have a grand Christmas celebration. Had paid a fiddler \$13 for two nights dance.”⁵⁰ These special occasions contributed to the familiarity of the two communities.

This period was also one of continued religious integration for the Suquamish tribe. St. Peter’s mission continued to be the focus of reservation religious life. Until 1878, the Rev. E.C. Chirouse was still involved, though indirectly, with the church. After 1878, this position was taken over by Father Jean Baptiste Boulet, who visited the reservation every three months.⁵¹ Throughout these decades, the Indians of the Port Madison reservation were consistently referred to as Catholics in the reports of the agents, and this religious continuity was certainly an element in the integration of the tribe with the settler community during this time.

Legal actions and interactions with whites were limited in these decades. Every reminiscence the Bainbridge Historical Society had for Port Madison in the 1870s contained a reference to the Indian hanging of 1874.⁵² This occurrence stood out and was always remembered because

⁴⁸ Lucille McDonald, “Cora Finds Fun - and Fear - in Port Madison”, Seattle Times (August 6, 1967), Seattle Times Magazine section, p. 12. Describes material from a scrapbook dated to the 1930s and assembled by a resident of Port Madison. Located clipping in Bainbridge Historical Society archival subject file ‘Port Madison - General Mill Period’.

⁴⁹ C. T. Conover, “Port Madison Once was Bustling Center”, Seattle Times (June 30, 1955), p. 47. Located clipping in Bainbridge Historical Society archival subject file ‘Port Madison - General Mill Period’.

⁵⁰ Ina Buchanan, An Economic Survey of Kitsap County.

⁵¹ Julia Bandeleian, et al, Seeing a New Day: a 150 year History of St. Peter Catholic Mission, Port Madison Indian Reservation, Suquamish, Washington (Poulsbo, WA: St. Peters Mission, 2005), p. 26.

⁵² In one account it was given as 1878, but given the preponderance of evidence for the 1874 date I accept it.

it seems to have been the only one during this decade. The event is depicted in the best account as follows: the Indian had been convicted of killing another Indian over whiskey, and on the day of the hanging the sawmill closed early. “A large number of Indians arrived in canoes, and the whites feared there might be some trouble...[but] all passed off in an orderly manner as planned.”⁵³ Of the four murders in Port Madison during the 1880s, an Indian was only involved in one - and they were the majority of the population in the area at the time.⁵⁴ I found no evidence of any Indians murdered by whites during this period. In cases other than capital ones, the Indians seem to have been accorded decent treatment: a telegram from George D. Hill in 1871 passed on Judge Jacob’s decision that “Indian evidence is sufficient” for convicting whites of selling whiskey to Indians,⁵⁵ and I found other references to successful suits by Indians without even researching very deeply in the legal records. A case is mentioned in Perry’s history where Chico, a Suquamish, brought suit against Impett, a settler, for selling him three forty acre tracts of land and only providing two deeds.⁵⁶ The outcome seems to have been successful for the Indian, and also provides a picture of greater Indian wealth and legal acumen than is usually assumed for this period.

There were many events and circumstances that specifically encouraged Indian and white integration in the Port Madison area. Initially, the sawmill was a draw for the Indians, offering them opportunities together with the whites for labor employment,⁵⁷ and also a market for their

⁵³ Robert Ross, Sr., Letter to the Bremerton Sun, Nov 19, 1951. Bainbridge Historical Society, archival subject file ‘Port Madison - Washington Territory’.

⁵⁴ Fredi Perry, Port Madison, Washington Territory, p. 93.

⁵⁵ William DeShaw Papers, Box 1, Folder 30.

⁵⁶ Fredi Perry, Port Madison, Washington Territory, p. 93.

⁵⁷ The owner, George A. Meigs, was friends with Chief Seattle, and seems to have been a proponent of the Indians, who formed a valuable component of his workforce. C. T. Conover, “Port Madison Once was Bustling Center,”

timber and their dogfish oil. It also attracted a population of white settlers who lived in very close proximity to the reservation and provided limitless opportunities for interaction. The subsequent reduction in the economic success of the mill over the course of the 1880s brought about the decline of the white population of Port Madison as a result.⁵⁸ The very reduction in size of the local population may have served to bring the remaining residents of both groups closer together, as they were engaged in the same pursuits through much of the period – logging, and fishing.

Governmental policy during this period was also seemingly aimed at the eventual dismantling of the reservation system. The original treaty had established the possibility of individualized distribution of the reservation lands, but this was presented as one of several options, and was to be carried out “at his [the President’s] discretion.”⁵⁹ In 1875, a more immediate division of the reservations into individual lots of property to be owned by individual Indians was proposed in Congress.⁶⁰ This matched up with the twenty year period initially specified in the treaty. It made specific mention of the Port Madison reservation, and the goal seemed to be the integration of the Indians into the United States population. Policies of this period continued to emphasize integration, not separation, as an eventual goal.

The character of this period of the Port Madison reservation’s history is substantially different from the early era of settlement on Puget Sound, when policies and goals were set by the whites with less basis in long term, actual interaction with the Indians. It is also dissimilar from

Seattle Times (June 30, 1955), p. 47. Located clipping in Bainbridge Historical Society archival subject file ‘Port Madison - General Mill Period’.

⁵⁸ Fredi Perry, Port Madison, Washington Territory, p. ?.

⁵⁹ US Statutes at Large. Treaty of Point Elliot, 1855, p. 929.

⁶⁰ Serial Set Vol. No. 1646, Session Vol. No. 13, 43rd Congress, 2nd Session, H.Exec.Doc. 87, 1875. Indians in Washington Territory. Letter from the Secretary of the Interior.

the period immediately following it, which was characterized by different idealizations, similar to the policies of early settlement only in their lack of connection to the reality of Indians at the time. The 1870s and 1880s stand out as a period of relative toleration by both the settlers and the Indians, when both tried to live with the other with more open attitudes, and more understanding of the reality of each community than was the case either before or after.

The 1890s were the beginning of a new idealization of the Indians in the Puget Sound area. These years ushered in a new influx of immigrants to the Sound region, due to the Gold Rush in 1897, the generally increasing economic prosperity of the region, and the increasing ease of travel across the country. The simple process of aging and generational change also meant that the first generation of the children of the first pioneers was now grown up, as were the children of the Indian communities. “By the 1890s the overwhelming majority of Western Washington residents were recent arrivals, unfamiliar with indigenous people and likely to see them as exotic curiosities.”⁶¹ Nostalgia, both individual and communal, generated images of the Indians as they were before the integration and accommodation had occurred. These images led to the impression that Indians were being ‘lost’ because they no longer really acted as Indians ‘should’ in their new images. The exemplar of many of these portrayals is Princess Angeline,⁶² the last surviving daughter of Chief Seattle. A colorful and prominently visible local figure, with a direct lineal connection to the idealized pre-contact past, she served as a perfect focus of this nostalgic imagining. The



⁶¹ Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making*, p. 144.

⁶² Frank LaRoche, University of Washington Special Collections, Frank LaRoche Collection #283, NA896, 1893.

artificial setting for these photographs was often consciously pristine and natural.

There was a certain amount of cognitive dissonance between the new images of Indians that the whites created in the 1890s, and the reality of the Indians themselves at that time, whose actions and communities were the result of the changes brought about by the actions of earlier whites and the interactions of the two communities – this integration was closer to the actual goals of the earlier generation. These changes, while they had been brought about by the interactions of these very same white communities with the Indians, and were in many ways what had been intended by these settlers in the first place, did not fit with the new, romanticized image of Indians created by the new generation. In describing an interview with William DeShaw in the early 1890s, an early writer lamented the passing of the Indians: “Yet a little while and there will not be a solitary individual left alive to remind those today that such a people ever lived.”⁶³ While the author voices this remark, he completely ignores the presence of DeShaw’s three daughters, whose mothers were Suquamish Indians.

This early ethnographical work fit in with the new romantic image of the Indians. In 1903, Edmond Meany visited the Port Madison reservation, intent on preserving information about the Indians. He took many photographs, but this image of the last standing post of the Old Man House⁶⁴ exemplifies the romantic image that had been generated of the Indian past by the turn of the twentieth century. The Catholic mission, visible in the upper right of the photo, is representative of the current, integrated reality of the Suquamish community, but Meany’s focus



⁶³ J. A. Costello, *The Siwash*, p. 23.

⁶⁴ Edmond S. Meany, University of Washington Special Collections, Edmond Meany Collection #132, NA1182a, May 30, 1903.

is on the last remaining elements of a past which had been changed by the earlier generation of settlers and was indeed virtually gone. This romantic focus, while admirable in its attempts to preserve fading legacies, ignored the actual communities which had developed in tandem with the white settlers over the previous decades, often achieving or approaching the goals of integration that had been imagined by the original generation of settlers and missionaries.

The period from the early 1870s until the late 1880s was one of greater mutuality in relations between the Indians and the settlers in the Port Madison area. As such, it was probably a good example of what the original groups involved with the treaties, the active missionaries, and the economically oriented settlers had wanted to generate, though the methods they originally envisioned for creating it were substantially different. This success is reflected in the depictions of Port Madison as the “most civilized” reservation on the Sound, and the characterization of many of the Indians as ‘Good Indians’ by various observers. The paradoxical element of this is that the development of this intended community of integrated Indians and whites did not really take place until the forcible attempts by various white groups to create it died down somewhat – the community had to be at least partly created by the Indians themselves, and not simply imposed on them. During the 1870s and 1880s, while the Port Madison Indians were not explicitly granted this freedom, they took the initiative when their community was given more space to develop through an accumulation of circumstances. The direction that the Suquamish chose to take was one of integration and accommodation with the surrounding white communities.

This relatively integrated community that had been the goal of many of the early settlers and Indians was not acknowledged or valued as a success in the early twentieth century by the new immigrants, and the new generation of settlers. In this way, the thriving and integrated community gradually faded away. By 1914, an article in the Town Crier reflected a dramatically

changed Port Madison, with a re-imagined history: the local interaction with Indians was reduced by that year to the depiction of a single “interesting character,”⁶⁵ Mary Sam. The history of the town had been reinterpreted to reduce the Indians’ role - the only mention made of the Indians besides the present-day figure of Mary Sam is in the time of early settlement: “Originally the Indians over-ran Bainbridge Island, and when the white settlers came in there was plenty of trouble brewing.”⁶⁶ There is not a single mention of the Indians during the period of Meig’s sawmill, and the author reports that “The Indians are now on their own reservation...”⁶⁷ Indeed, as she remarks in classic nostalgia and with unintended irony, “Few landmarks remain to tell the story of what a master-mind once conceived and wrought out of the wilderness, but...the Port was the pride of every one connected in any way with its fortunes.”⁶⁸ This statement could easily be applied to the Indian community of Port Madison as well. The changing perceptions of Indians, the demise of the town of Port Madison as an economic center, and the changing policies and actions of the government were all contributing factors in this lack of recognition of a successfully integrated community.

⁶⁵ Adele M. Ballard, “The Rise and Fall of Port Madison,” Town Crier (Aug 15, 1914), p. 12.

⁶⁶ Adele M. Ballard, “The Rise and Fall of Port Madison,” p. 12.

⁶⁷ Adele M. Ballard, “The Rise and Fall of Port Madison,” p. 12.

⁶⁸ Adele M. Ballard, “The Rise and Fall of Port Madison,” p. 12.