

The Promise and the Price of Contact: Puyallup Indian
Acculturation, Federal Indian Policy and the City of Tacoma,
1832-1909

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington
2016

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Program Authorized to Offer Degree:
Department of History

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Abstract

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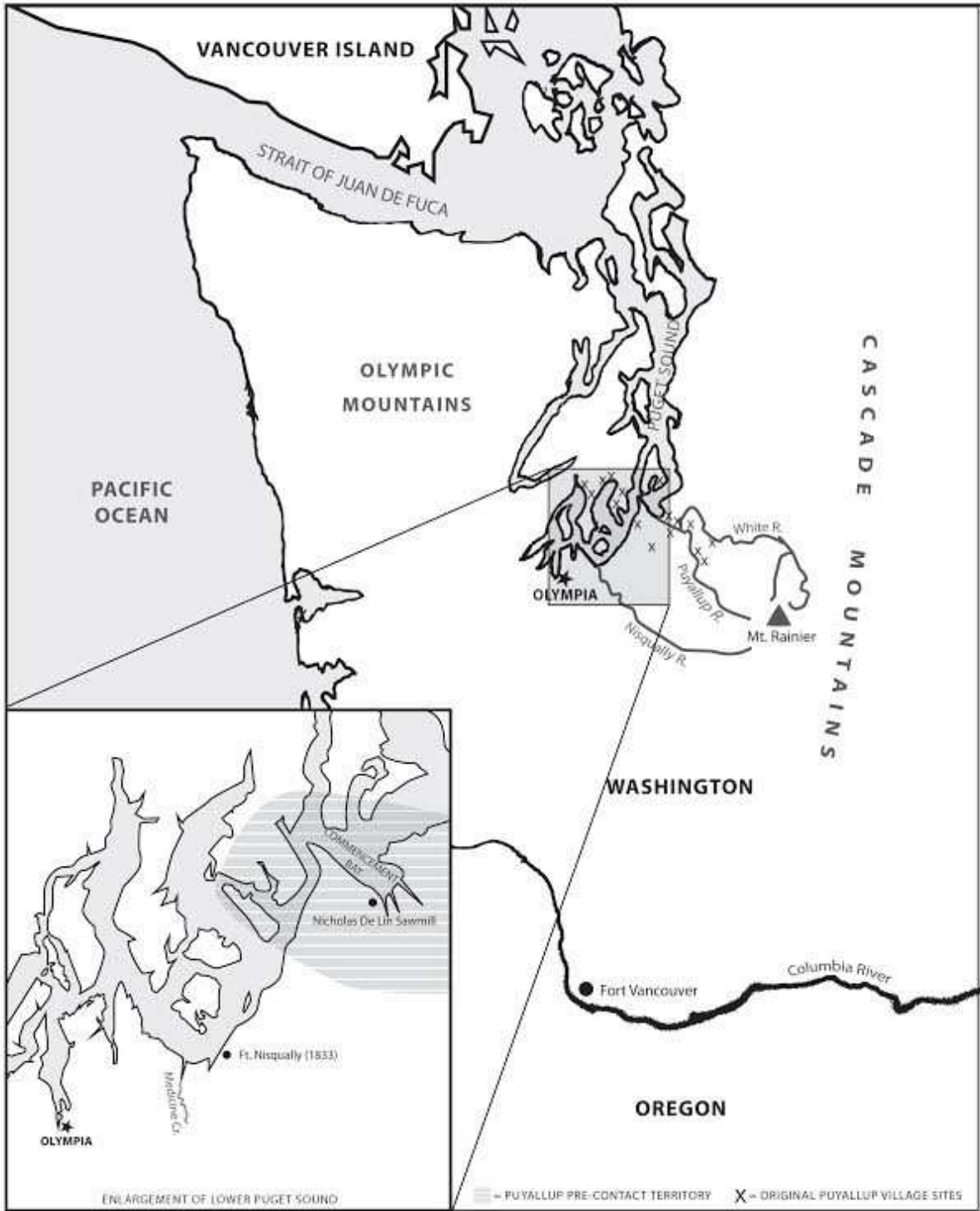
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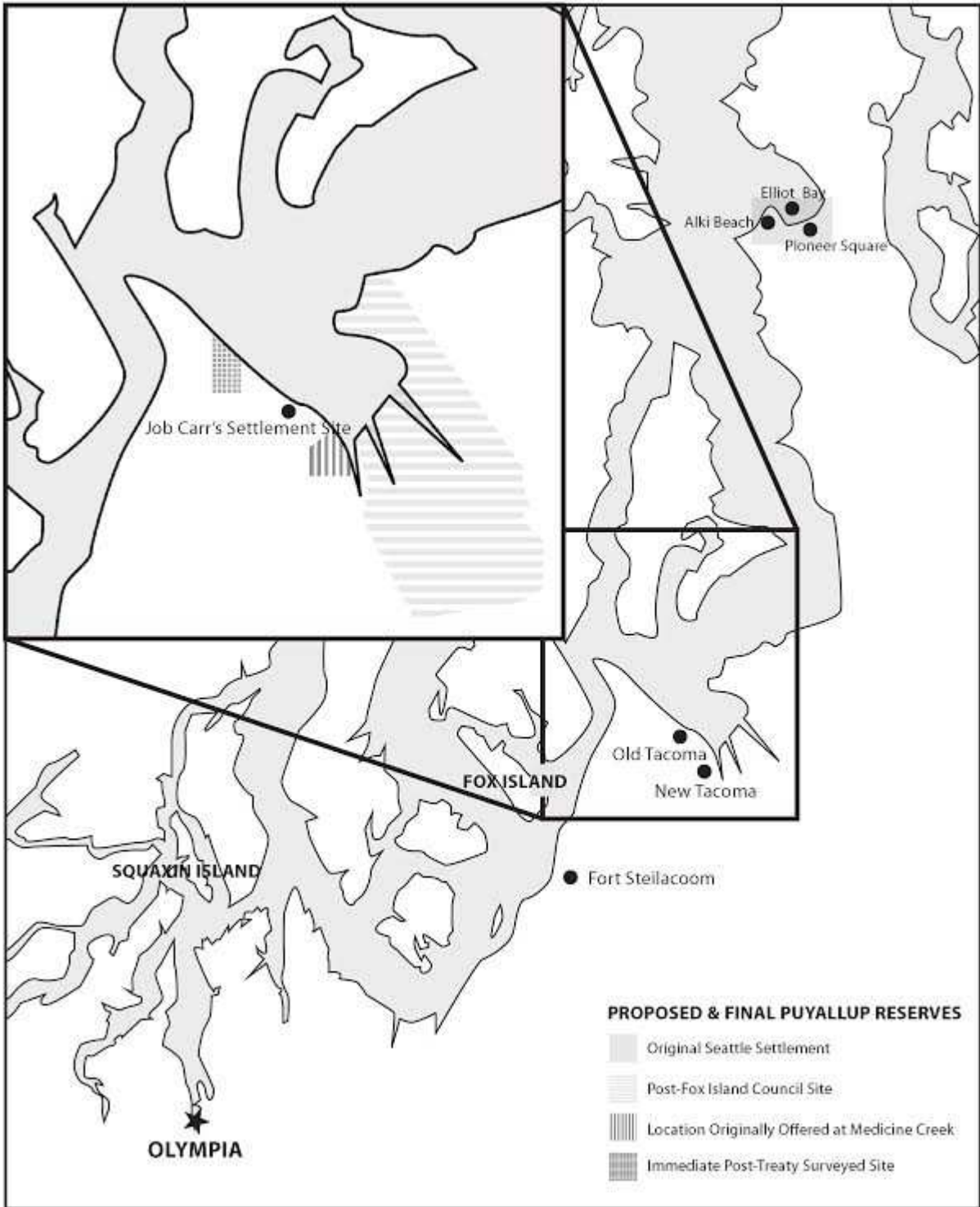
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History shows that Native American contact with Euro-Americans led to many Indians' loss of land, resources, and independence. Between 1832 and 1909, numerous Puyallup Indians of the south Puget Sound suffered this fate as they dealt with newly imported Euro-American diseases and colonialism. As tragic as this era in history was to the Puyallup, it was also a time when many tribal members continued a long tradition of embracing outside influences into their lives and shaping them to fit their cultural needs. This study will show that prior to 1832, the Puyallup had a long, complex, and generally prosperous relationship with other communities in the Puget Sound region and cultural transformation was a normal part of their life. After 1832, change came more quickly and, unfortunately, was more destructive. Nevertheless, many Puyallup continued accepting change and some successfully shaped their new situation to fit their needs, just as their ancestors had done. A modest portion of the tribe employed aspects of the Medicine Creek Treaty, the nearby city of Tacoma, and assorted Euro-American legal and economic institutions to pursue numerous Puyallup customs. And, while transformation remained difficult for a majority of the tribe, I argue that their failures were the result of a restrictive government allotment policy as much as the Indians' inability or unwillingness to adapt to their new conditions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: A Distinguished Visitor.....	Page 1
Chapter 1: S’Puyalupubsh Cultural Development, Adaptation, and Persistence through 1854.....	Page 35
Chapter 2: To “Have an Object for Which to Labor”: Puyallup Shaping and Utilization of the Medicine Creek Treaty, 1855-1872.....	Page 93
Chapter 3: Task Time, Clock Time and the Puyallup’s Push for Reservation Patents, 1873-1883.....	Page 155
Chapter 4: The Puyallup’s Campaign for Land Sales Rights, 1883-1893.....	Page 219
Chapter 5: A Bitter Pill of Indian Reform, 1893-1909.....	Page 283
Epilogue.....	Page 343





Acknowledgements

The production of this body of research has been enlightening and often enjoyable. But the time and effort that one puts into projects like these are enormous and in my case I succeeded with the help of an important group of people. The most helpful contributor to this dissertation was my committee chair, Dr. John Findlay. John's knowledge of the American West and the research that he and others have done on the topic gave me important insights to the Puyallup and the world they inhabited. Meanwhile, I will forever appreciate his patience with me as I went down an occasional rabbit hole during the completion of the manuscript. Dr. Sasha Harmon and Dr. Bruce Hevly were the other members of my reading committee and they, too, brought their own enlightened and unique perspectives to my research. That being said, I take responsibility for any errors that may crop up in this document.

I also want to extend a thank you to Kathleen Laurante, a librarian at Bates Technical College who helped me obtain research material, the staff of the Tacoma Public Library Northwest Room, who happily pointed me in the right direction as I searched for information, and the researchers at the Pacific-Alaska Region National Archives in Seattle for their effective assistance.

An earlier version of Chapter 5 appeared in *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*. I thank the journal for allowing me to publish that information, which helped me work through some of the themes for this manuscript.

Another thank you to my daughter, Haley Schaefer. She created the maps.

Finally, I want to thank my circle of friends who were often there for me when I needed to take my mind off of this work.

To Clarence & Rose
And
Miles & Haley

INTRODUCTION: A DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

In the afternoon of August 22, 1892, a Puyallup Indian named Peter Stanup patiently stood on the southwest corner of his people's reservation, just outside the city of Tacoma, Washington. Stanup was a thirty-five year old Native who had adopted a number of Euro-American cultural practices into his life. During his youth, he attended several government-run Indian schools and later, as an adult, he earned money as a laborer and entrepreneur in the local market economy. He also served as a pastor in his reservation's Christian church. These activities helped him establish a number of economic and social relationships with local non-Natives, which in turn helped him garner a significant amount of prestige and influence within his tribe. On this particular day, Stanup wore a suit and tie, an apparel choice that displayed his ability to incorporate aspects of the non-Native world into his life. His attire choice also illustrated an understanding of how some Euro-Americans showed respect for an important guest.

Stanup was waiting for the arrival of United States Secretary of Interior John Noble, who was traveling throughout the West to attend to the business of his department and, when time permitted, indulge in some sightseeing. He came to Tacoma to gather information from the Puyallup and non-Natives in order to decide the future of the Indians' thirty-six year old reservation. As of 1892, the reserve was home to approximately 600 Indians. Most of the residents possessed patented allotments, which protected their property from non-Native takeover. However, this type of title prohibited the Puyallup from selling their plots or leasing them for more than two years at a time. The government had instituted this policy in order to protect what it believed to be simple-minded aboriginals from becoming the victims of their own bad choices or from losing their property to non-Indian swindlers. Noble came to Tacoma to

determine if the government should maintain these restrictions or change them in one way or another.

Many of the Puyallup, like most other Natives in the American West, placed a lot of importance on their reservation lands and they hoped that the Interior Secretary would enforce particular Indian treaty rights concerning their allotments. However, the record of what transpired between the Puyallup allottees and Noble shows that there were contradicting ideas within the tribe about how the government could meet these expectations. These Indians also revealed that they had a complicated relationship with their land and their neighbors.

Tacoma city leaders and entrepreneurs were the first locals to greet Noble when he arrived in Tacoma that morning. As he stepped off the train, his hosts found him to be “a man of medium height, of somewhat heavy build... [with]...a certain heaviness of the facial features [that] is attributable to too close attention to desk work.”¹ The welcoming committee immediately took the secretary to a reception hosted by local businessmen. Virtually all of these attendees wanted the Indian Office to remove its sales and lease restrictions on the Puyallup Reservation so they could gain more access to its resources and own its valuable land. These aspiring customers justified their desires by arguing that the reservation, which had been in existence since 1856, remained woefully undeveloped. Stands of trees, large thickets of thorny blackberry bushes, and numerous small, shallow ponds covered vast expanses of the reserve. Less conspicuous were places where Indian residents had cleared a portion of their property and built a small home. Some of the Puyallup had also constructed barns and then fenced sections of their allotments to simultaneously protect crops from wild foragers and hem in domesticated animals. Many of these sites were less than an acre in size, though a few of the larger

¹ “The ‘Little Father’,” *Daily Ledger* (Tacoma), August 24, 1892, 5.

homesteads were in excess of thirty acres. The Puyallup's efforts to develop their land did little to impress most of their non-Native neighbors. One observer noted, "A majority of [the] sites were evidences that order is not regarded as the very first law...of the Puyallups." Meanwhile, "the roads that connected these homes were full of "pits and holes that kept...carriage springs in constant terror."²

Noble was aware that large portions of the reservation were undeveloped and that local non-Indians wanted to turn the Indians' woods, prairies and tidelands into their own productive farms and ports. At the same time, he understood the land was vital to the existence of many Puyallup and he had to consider their welfare in any decisions that he made. Consequently, after he had listened to the concerns of local non-Native entrepreneurs he journeyed to the Puyallup Reservation to meet with Stanup and the reservation's agent, Edwin Eells. These two men would take their guest on a tour of the reserve and argue for their own views concerning the issue at hand.

Eells, like Tacoma's businessmen, wanted Noble to notice the undeveloped state of most of the reserve, especially the Indians' home sites. The agent sympathized with the economic desires of his local non-Native friends and acquaintances and he shared their belief that the Puyallup were an intellectually and culturally inferior race of people. He not only understood the inevitability of non-Natives settling the Indians' land, but he supported it as well. However, unlike most local Americans, the agent saw the reservation's sparse renovation as evidence that the Puyallup should retain their land, not sell it. Eells wanted to keep the reservation intact because he felt the aboriginals still had a lot to learn about surviving in the Americans' world. He had been the reservation's chief administrator for a decade and during that period he had

² Ibid.

attempted to transform his wards into his version of educated, independent yeoman farmers. As of 1892, he was unsatisfied with the results of his efforts and he wanted to preserve the reservation so he could finish his mission. He publicly insisted that the government had a moral and legal obligation to support him in this endeavor.

When Noble got to the reservation, around 2:30 p.m., Stanup and a local reporter were the only men present to receive him. The record does not indicate why Eells was not there and the secretary was noticeably frustrated by his absence. The visitor nevertheless gave Stanup a warm greeting. The two men had previously met when Stanup travelled to Washington, D.C. to lobby for his vision for the reservation's future. As Noble shook Stanup's hand, he exclaimed, "Well, you came a long way to visit me and now I have come to return it." The cabinet member then informed his host that he was ready to inspect the reserve, "...to make some inquiries into the state of your people here, I wish to be taken to see them so that I can talk with them and see how they live. I don't wish to see the very best of them nor the very worst, but a fair average."³ Stanup, Noble, and the newspaperman then started their tour.

Stanup, as Noble's guide, was determined to highlight certain characteristics of the reserve while ignoring others. Like Eells, the tribal member was concerned about the Puyallup's future, but he had alternative ideas about the reservation's possibilities and different understandings of the government's treaty obligations to his people. Stanup was a man who had thrived in Tacoma's economy. He had accumulated capital and property and was eager to earn even more money through land sales. He therefore used the outing to highlight the progress that he and his people had made in turning their plots into farms and integrating American culture

³ Ibid.

into their lives. He wanted to show Noble that the Puyallup no longer needed the allotment protections that Eells supported.

The next day, Noble met with over 200 tribal men and women allottees who had come to make him aware of their prescription for the future of their reserve. These Indians all shared a hope that the government would not reduce the size of their land possessions as it had done with the Medicine Creek Treaty of 1854. This agreement allowed the Americans to pare down the size of the Puyallup's historic territorial range from hundreds of square miles to a much smaller section of land along Commencement Bay. The treaty also turned the Puyallup's lives upside down by severely limiting reservation residents' access to favored hunting and gathering sites. After 1854, the government compounded the Puyallup's hardships by failing to adequately fulfill its treaty promises to educate the Indians' young, provide the tribe with needed supplies, and train the Puyallup to become horse and plow farmers. These failures pushed many of the Natives into deep poverty. The victims tried to alleviate the ill effects of their situation by hunting and gathering in areas still open to them and working in the local market economy. However, resources became less abundant over time and job availability was inconsistent—much of it was seasonal—and the pay was often meager. Many Puyallup believed that their community and their allotments were all they had left to support themselves, and they wanted the government to ensure the continued existence of their ownership rights over their land. They were especially concerned about this due to the impending approach of Tacoma's borders. Hence, tribal members hoped this gathering would produce a policy that would give them hope for their future.

Noble began the proceedings by explaining that he had enjoyed the previous day's tour of the reservation. He complimented the Puyallup for speaking English, building homes, and

earning money to improve their lodgings. He also praised tribal members for learning how to cultivate the soil. At one point he stated, “I have no trouble in concluding that the Puyallups are very intelligent and industrious.”⁴

The secretary then steered the discussion in a new direction by telling the Indians that American settlement in the region had been beneficial to the Puyallup people. He told his audience that their case was unique from other Indians’ because a city sat so close to their reservation. As he put it, no other tribe “ever had such...property...which has been made so valuable by the work of the white man...” He added that government policy had also furthered the tribe’s fortunes because officials had awarded reservation residents patents to their lands long before most other tribes had received theirs. The secretary felt this decision had accelerated the pace at which South Sound Indians were becoming civilized. Noble then opined that despite the opportunities that Tacoma had provided to its Indian neighbors, the continued co-existence of the city and the reservation was untenable. He somberly warned his Indian hosts, “The interests of the white man and the Indian have come up against each other.” Noble wanted his listeners to know that change was on the horizon for the Puyallup because the government had as much, if not more, responsibility to allow Americans to enjoy economic growth as it did to protect what it believed were the Indians’ interests.⁵

Noble next expressed his vision of how the government could best meet the needs of both the Puyallup and its American constituents. This proposal revealed his racial biases because it involved maintaining a high degree of government presence in the Indians’ lives due to perceived failings in their character. Noble told his audience that when he returned to

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Washington, D.C. he would recommend that the government permit allottees to sell only a modest portion of their land and then direct authorities to collect the sales proceeds, place the money in a trust, and dole it out to the Natives in measured portions. He added, perhaps condescendingly, “Even white men are apt to lose their money, and if the Indians should lose theirs they would be sorry and blame someone, perhaps, for not helping them take care of it.”⁶ The secretary concluded his oration by telling the Puyallup that his job was to represent “the Great Father, who desires the common good of all.” Noble’s audience then gave him a respectful, if not necessarily supportive, round of applause.

The Puyallup then responded to their guest’s comments. Each spokesperson who addressed Noble explained their definition of government protection to him. The record of these accounts illustrates the tribe’s diversity regarding members’ expectations of the federal policy.

Many of the Indians who came to see Noble were heartened by his indication that the allottees should have the chance to sell some their land. After 1873, the property in and around Tacoma had begun to skyrocket in value due to the city’s growth, and so the Puyallup found themselves living atop a mine whose ore was timber, stretches of coast line, and thousands of acres of fertile soil. Most of the Natives knew enough about the workings of the local economy to understand the possibilities of their situation. Yet they did not all agree on how to proceed. Tribal members, whether they had already earned significant amounts of money, were quite poor, or existed in between these two positions on the economic spectrum, wanted the chance to use their land as they saw fit, which could include selling all of it, free of government oversight. Other Puyallup were not sure they were prepared for such responsibility and hoped that the

⁶ Ibid.

government would continue to protect them in one way or another from losing their land to their American neighbors.

Joseph Swyell, the chief justice of the Puyallup's tribal court and the first audience member to speak to Noble, represented this latter view. The Indian magistrate welcomed the chance to sell a mere portion of his land and he approved of Noble's plan to closely monitor the sales process. According to Swyell, "...We [the Puyallup] are not yet capable of taking care of that" on our own.⁷

Swyell represented tribal members who wanted to exercise caution when it came to reservation land sales. The next speaker was Atwin Jackson, a tribal associate justice and a successful farmer.⁸ He was also a member of a small tribal group who had been very active in adopting aspects of Euro-American economic culture into their lives and then shaping them into a form that fit their needs. These individuals, of whom Peter Stanup was also a member, were comfortable operating in the American marketplace and as a result, a few of them were financially prosperous. They were additionally familiar with local non-Indian laws, institutions, and customs and used them to their advantage when they could. These Indians' successes convinced them that unrestricted land sales rights were in the tribe's best interests. They felt that sales proceeds would help their poorer reservation neighbors live a less desperate life, while providing financially savvy Natives with additional investment capital. These well-to-do Indians had previously used their wealth to acquire new material comforts and obtain tribal prestige and political influence. They wanted access to more capital in order to solidify their tribal positions as well as obtain more independence off of the reserve. Supporters of total land alienation were

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Some records also refer to Atwin as Antoine.

not concerned with preserving the reservation in its current state as much as they wanted to transform their tribe's post-treaty homeland into to a group of individually-controlled parcels that people could sell, buy, or retain at will.

Jackson commanded the room's attention when he began addressing Noble. He was a rather large, muscular man who exuded pride and confidence and when he stood to talk, he was as obvious as Mt. Rainier among its surrounding Cascade Mountain peaks. Jackson began his oratory by telling the secretary that tribal members had experienced numerous hardships over the years and desperately needed money in order to survive. He insisted that the government was unnecessarily concerned about the Indians getting too much money in their hands. "When I get hold of money I know how to use it. I can safely handle any amount that may come to me." He then claimed that the current government policy of allowing the Puyallup to vote and pay taxes, but not sell their land, was hypocritical. "A white child when he becomes twenty-one years of age is free; now I am forty-five and my father has not let me go yet." The speaker concluded his comments by informing Noble, "We want to be free; we want to manage our own affairs like white men." Jackson then sat done amid a roar of shouts and claps.

Jackson had emphatically informed Noble and the government that the Puyallup were intelligent and successful, and his words may have inspired another unnamed Indian to speak. This man who was "so infirm that he could hardly support himself on his feet," rose up and seconded Jackson's comments. He then revealed his urgency to be have pride in his life by telling the Interior Secretary that he wanted to sell his surplus lands so he could pay his bills. He added that the money from land sales would allow the Indians to become "good citizens and to be somebody."⁹

⁹ Ibid.

After Secretary Noble heard the Puyallup speakers, he promised to relay their messages to the President. This news pleased the audience, who, according to one observer, felt that their visitor had given them more attention than any other government official had, up to that time. More than a few of the Puyallup in attendance apparently left the gathering optimistic that Noble would protect their interests.¹⁰ They were unaware that within a generation of time the government's response to the lobbying efforts of the Puyallup, their American neighbors, and Indian policy reformers, as well as Puyallup tribal members' reactions to the resulting federal land sales policy, would bring nearly a century of anguish to a preponderance of the Puyallup community.



The August 1892 meeting between Puyallup allottees and Secretary of Interior John Noble was one of numerous interactions that occurred between Native Americans and Euro-American colonialists during the nineteenth century. Past generations of historians often overlooked such encounters because they did not fit into a generalized schema where non-Natives, who lusted for land and resources, dominated aboriginals who were supposedly singularly focused upon preserving past customs. In this narrative, the Indians' alleged unwillingness to accept change left them dependent and mired in poverty.

The Puyallup's history from 1832 through 1909, of which their aforementioned meeting with Secretary Noble was an important event, suggests that there are alternatives to this storyline. An awareness of this gathering not only reveals the Puyallup's willingness to transform, it also sheds light on their complex needs, desires, and expectations in the face of tumultuous change. Throughout this study I argue that from 1832 to 1909, many Puyallup Indians experienced, and

¹⁰ Ibid.

in many cases pursued, cultural evolution. I will also show that the Puyallup often used these changes to preserve cherished customs that were, at times, necessary for their survival.

The Puyallup's meeting with Secretary Noble was just one of many incidents in which conflict and compromise appeared between Natives and non-Indians. In this case, most of the Indians who attended the meeting viewed the official as a potential ally in pursuing their agendas. Nevertheless, the Natives did not all agree as to how the secretary could help them and they were all unwilling to accept the secretary's help solely on his terms.

The comments of Jackson and Swyell further draw back the curtain on fissure and accommodation. Neither man stood in front of the Secretary of Interior and reminisced about a long-lost pre-contact world, nor were they relying upon the mercy of a government bureaucrat for survival. Each individual came to the meeting as an Indian who had willingly and successfully adopted Euro-American style agriculture. Jackson ultimately became an entrepreneur who incorporated American concepts of citizenship, rights, and ownership into his life, and he asked the tribe's guest for the chance to enjoy the same privileges that many of his non-Native neighbors did. This included selling land and collecting all of the proceeds from that sale. Meanwhile, Nobel's meeting with the Puyallup shows that Euro-American efforts to colonize the Puyallup produced competing agendas. It also suggests that occasionally the colonized had a degree of influence over the colonizers.

This study traces the ways in which the Puyallup dealt with change over an eighty-seven year period. They were not the only Native Americans who endured significant adjustments in their lives during this time, but they were one of the few aboriginal groups who went through this process while simultaneously being affected by three distinct forces that pushed, prodded, and occasionally dragged tribal members into situations they would have rather avoided. Yet, there

were also instances when tribal members eagerly embraced these influences and used them to their advantage.

A government effort to reconstruct the Puyallup into reformers' understanding of modern and civilized individuals was one significant pressure they faced. This process began after the aboriginals moved on to their reservation. Once there, Indian agents tried to alter Puyallup customary dress, language, spirituality, health practices, time use, and subsistence habits. Administrators of Indian reform made instruction in horse and plow farming and government-run schools the primary tools in implementing these changes. Bureaucrats insisted that their plan was a humanitarian endeavor, but despite their intentions, the government's programs experienced numerous failures. Graft, Congress's unwillingness to fund its efforts with adequate sums of money, and the Indian Office's habit of staffing the reservations and Indian schools with poorly prepared individuals left many Indians underserved, if not completely neglected.

Mismanagement and neglect were not the only problems on the Puyallup reserve. Edwin Eells, the government's point man in this process between 1883 and 1894, believed that a properly assimilated Native was an English-speaking, law-abiding, and Christian-worshipping adherent of market capitalism, who had metaphorically shed his or her "Indian" skin. Eells was determined to use the government's Indian reform program to steer the Puyallup toward his concept of civilization. However, the manner in which he and others of his ilk determined when an Indian was civilized was inconsistent and uninformed. Unfortunately, Eells blamed his wards for any frustrations that he experienced in this endeavor, claiming that the aboriginals' shortcomings were causing them to evolve too slowly. Ironically, when some Puyallup accepted

instruction at a pace and to a degree that surprised the agent, he generally refused to believe that an Indian could embrace modernization so thoroughly. Hence, the agent was seldom satisfied.¹¹

A second force present in this story was the Puyallup's desire to retain important aspects of their pre-treaty culture, either because they wanted to or because they had to in order to supplement shortcomings in government treaty obligations. The Indians' efforts to hold on tightly to custom provided a significant roadblock to the government's plan to modernize tribal members. I will show that while this impulse did not preclude the Indians from accepting change, it did affect the degree in which they embraced it. The existence of dissimilar motivations among Puyallup and reservation officials when it came to participating in government Indian reform programs led to friction among and between members of both groups.

Despite these problems, Eells and his staff soldiered on with their duties and the Puyallup kept attempting to use government programs and the Medicine Creek Treaty in advantageous ways. Today, it is difficult to determine how much fruit the agent and federal policy bore in the crusade to transform the Puyallup. The Indians who gathered in front of Noble had certainly adopted portions of Euro-American culture into their lives, but many had begun this trend before they moved on to their reserve. Meanwhile, throughout the agent's tenure he believed that the Puyallup were too inconsistent in choosing which changes they would or would not adopt.

¹¹ In some ways, Eells's disbelief in the Puyallup's ability to modernize exemplifies what Paige Raibmon has argued was Americans' unwillingness to acknowledge the dynamic nature of Native culture. She shows that many Americans like Eells assigned specific roles and characteristics on to Indians in order to fit them into their understanding of the "other." One of these roles was to be an "authentic" Indian, which meant being ignorant, if not stupid, and culturally uncivilized. Raibmon claims this concept of authenticity prevented non-Indians from fully believing that Indians could modernize. Ironically, when these observers believed that Indians were adopting too many aspects of Euro-American culture, they claimed their subjects were no longer Indians. Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 1-3, 7, 9.

Even though Puyallup assimilation never happened, tribal members did change, even if it was for reasons that Eells did not understand. Ironically, if he had not been so close minded and zealous, he may have recognized that the Puyallup community had a long tradition of enhancing the quality and comfort of their existence by incorporating the customs of outsiders into their lives. It was how they modernized before Euro-Americans entered into their lives. The Puyallup who stood in front of Noble were exhibiting this custom. These Indians had willingly adopted Euro-American fashion, became yeoman farmers, and understood the workings of the region's non-Native marketplace. Nevertheless, they still saw themselves as Puyallup.

An equally large force that affected the Indians' lives during this period was their close proximity to the city of Tacoma. The resolve of American settlers to establish the town, Northern Pacific Railroad officials' decision to designate the location as their company's western terminus, and the settlement's consequent growth after 1873 transformed the city into a community that emitted a cultural gravitational pull upon the Puyallup in myriad ways.

One impact that the city had upon the Puyallup was to influence how Eells and other reservation officials administered their programs. On the one hand, he and other authorities cautiously welcomed the town's presence because they believed that many of its residents would act as role models to Indians and compel them to integrate themselves into American society. In Eells's mind, American entrepreneurs and laborers would reveal to the Indians the virtues of hard work and consumerism. The agent also approved of the economic relationships that existed between the Puyallup and their off-reservation neighbors because these interactions allowed the Indians to sell their goods and services to city residents and use their resulting income to purchase an assortment of goods they may have otherwise found difficult to obtain. This included tools, clothing, and housewares that reflected a Euro-American way of life. Of course,

while Eells supported the idea that consumerism could lubricate the gears of Indian transformation, reservation residents used the interactions to improve their quality of life, elevate their tribal status, and support customs.

Despite these possibilities, Eells and his cohorts were suspicious of the nefarious influences, e.g., gambling, drinking, and prostitution, which nested in Tacoma's shadows. Indian policy reformers and the bureaucrats who carried out their programs generally believed that aboriginals lacked the fortitude to ward off these evils. Eells was especially fearful that such vices would nullify any advances that federal programs had made upon his wards. He consequently wanted to regulate the Puyallup's contact with the city in order to fulfill his mission. He envisioned himself as the operator of a spigot valve that he could turn, one way or the other in order to enhance or impede the flow of cultural influence coming out of the city and towards the Indians.

Eells's efforts to protect the Puyallup from Tacoma failed for several reasons. One was that many of the Puyallup had little desire to avoid their nearby American neighbors because the city offered tribal members a degree of wonder and excitement. Meanwhile, the record shows that some of the Natives, Peter Stanup and Atwin Jackson for example, were quite successful at using the town to their economic advantage. They were among a small portion of the tribe who either obtained well-paying jobs or were able to sell their crops or other resources at a healthy profit. Unfortunately, many of the Puyallup who tried to emulate these successes failed because they lacked the proper skills, understanding, or confidence to succeed in it. This caused a number of the Indians to succumb to vices, swindles, or their own questionable decisions, just as Eells feared they would.

Tacoma's biggest threat to the Puyallup and their reservation was its continued growth. As more people moved into the area, the city's need to expand its boundaries and access more farmland grew markedly. From the Puyallup's perspective, the city had become a Leviathan that needed to feed upon their land holdings in order to survive. Meanwhile, city residents wanted access to the reservation's lands in order to compete with other West Coast metropolises. This was good news for some Puyallup who understood that these conditions increased the value of reservation land. It simultaneously caused other Indians to fear that incoming American immigrants would eventually take their allotments and give little if anything in return for them. The situation stirred a debate among government officials, Tacoma residents, and Puyallup Indians about the reservation's future. The lines of demarcation that separated proponents and critics of the reserve's continued existence constantly shifted. Meanwhile, one could find members of all three groups on most sides of the deliberations. The solutions that emerged from these discussions enhanced the fortunes of a handful of Puyallup while making the lives of a majority of the tribe's members much more difficult.

My selection of themes regarding the Puyallup's story from 1832 to 1909 emerged from my understanding of recent scholarship that analyzes the intricacies of the post-contact experience. These studies acknowledge that the Euro-Americans' arrival into the New World was most often harmful to the Indians. Yet, they simultaneously recognize that Natives did not suffer in equal degrees and there were occasions when aboriginals benefitted from adopting Euro-American practices into their lives. These "new historians" suggest that many Natives accepted or rejected aspects of Euro-American culture based upon their efforts to fulfill

commitments to their tribes, village, and families. In short, this perspective argues for Native American diversity and agency.¹²

Stephen Silliman is one scholar who avoids painting the Native American colonial experience with a mere handful of brush strokes. He challenges the presumption that contact between the Indians and Euro-Americans was a diametrical experience where members of cultures either changed or stayed the same. In his study of Native American adoption of European artifacts, he concludes that indigenous societies were not merely carrying out acts of mimicry when they incorporated new tools from outside communities. They were instead modernizing in order to survive. To accomplish this they employed what he calls practice and memory to reshape and then use novel processes and artifacts to satisfy what they deemed to be traditional needs. I will show that the Puyallup, like many cultures, adopted new things so they could maintain their identity, not change it.¹³

Raymond Teske and Bardin Nelson are two researchers who have written about the concepts of acculturation and assimilation, and they would argue that the Puyallup's cultural transformation between 1832 and 1909 was indicative of "external assimilation." These men argue that Indians who became, what one might describe as culturally gilded, mimicked non-Natives, which, among other things, allowed them to participate in the off-reservation economy. Puyallup Indians who did this pleased Eells until he discovered their true intentions, which could

¹² Nicholas Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration & Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 4.

¹³ Stephen Silliman, "Change and Continuity, Practice and Memory: Native American Persistence in Colonial New England," *American Antiquity* 74 (April, 2009): 211-217, 226-227. Philip Deloria also discusses Indian efforts to "modernize." He argues that Native Americans, like members of other societies, want to enjoy the benefits of progress. See Philip Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 236.

include Puyallup using excess capital to sponsor a potlatch instead of bolstering their savings or purchasing Euro-American style consumer goods.¹⁴

Eells believed that Puyallup who displayed such behaviors remained uncivilized and he tried to increase his control over their lives. Yet, he never accomplished this for his wards crossed the reservation's borders at will and stayed either on or away from their allotments for durations of their choosing. Eells was quick to blame his failure to civilize the Puyallup on what he believed to be their primitive nature and their supposed propensity to seek out the baser elements of American society. He ignored the fact that assimilation could only occur if certain factors were in place. These include a model group's acceptance of its target group and the model group's ability to shield the target group from unwanted outside influences. Americans' intolerance of the Puyallup, combined with tribal members' continued interactions with members of other regional Indian communities, reinforced the South Sound Natives' identity and made Eells's task an impossible one to complete.¹⁵

Other historians who have explored the complexities of post-contact encounters likewise have likewise shown that the intricate nature of the Puyallup's story is a familiar one. Melissa Meyer's study of the Anishinaabeg Indians of Minnesota and John Heaton's analysis of the Fort Hall Shoshone-Bannocks in Idaho show that as Americans laid siege to the Indians' culture, resources and land, many tribal members plummeted into deep poverty. At the same time, events played out differently from tribe to tribe and from individual to individual. Meyer explains that while non-Natives brought hardship into the world of the Anishinaabeg, the

¹⁴ Raymond H.C. Teske and Bardin H. Nelson, "Acculturation and Assimilation: A Clarification," *American Ethnologist* 1:2 (May 1974): 360. Teske and Nelson argue that few Indians became "internally assimilated."

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 361-363.

newcomers also offered Indians alternative ways to acquire wealth and enhance their influence within their community. She adds that the marketplace's prospects were alluring enough to a few of the Anishinaabeg that they adopted some Euro-American behaviors faster than government officials anticipated they would.¹⁶ Heaton studies how the market economy provided previously nondescript individuals among the Shoshone-Bannock the chance to become leaders within their community.¹⁷ Both authors point out that while many of their subjects adopted Euro-American characteristics to one degree or another, the Indians' overall goal was not to assimilate but rather to mold their new economic, social, and political situation in ways that contributed to their cultural heritage. Hence, despite the fact that contact brought many changes that the Indians did not want, they nevertheless fashioned these adjustments to fit their needs when they could.

Meyer and Heaton are especially effective in illustrating how the market economy was a driving force in the Indians' post-contact lives. For example, Meyer explains that in Minnesota, American business interests and politicians worked hard to integrate Anishinaabeg lands into the regional economy, an effort that exposed the Indians to powerful outside forces of change.¹⁸ She suggests that the Indians in her study could have rebelled against government policies more easily than they could have ignored the influences of the marketplace.

Joshua Reid's study of the Makah Indians of Washington State also emphasizes the power and the possibility of the market economy in his. He notes that these people of the sea

¹⁶ Melissa L. Meyer, *The White Earth Tragedy: Ethnicity and Dispossession at a Minnesota Anishinaabeg Reservation, 1889-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 6.

¹⁷ John Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks: Culture and Commerce at Fort Hall, 1870-1940* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2005), 196-197.

¹⁸ Meyer, 225.

used an assortment of strategies, including their participation in Euro-American trade networks as hunters and fishers, to resist certain aspects of modernization and maintain cherished customs. For the first half of the nineteenth century, Makah leaders traded with Euro-Americans in order to maintain, and in some cases expand, their kinship ties and their control over their ocean borderlands. Later, the Makah's economic power allowed them to garner concessions from government officials during the Neah Bay Treaty negotiations of 1855. These included continued access to important ocean harvest zones. The Makah's role in the Pacific Northwest hunting and fishing industry during the post-treaty era allowed some tribal members to become successful entrepreneurs as well as important partners in Indian and non-Indian fishing operations. By the late-nineteenth century, numerous Makah had accumulated enough wealth to invest in state-of-the-art sea vessels and equip them with some of the newest hunting and fishing equipment.¹⁹

The experiences of these three Indian nations illustrate how contact, despite its broad context of disruption and hardship, could still provide Natives with the opportunity to use new things to maintain old ways. Adopting aspects of foreign cultures into their own was something that New World Indians had done with friends and strangers for thousands of years. These connections not only helped participants obtain new items and ideas, they likewise gave the Natives ways to acquire and cement tribal influence and attend to spiritual matters.

One Euro-American aspect of trade that became especially important to the Puyallup was the commodification of land. Aboriginals throughout the continent had long valued their land

¹⁹ Joshua L. Reid, *The Sea Is My Country: The Maritime World of the Makah, an Indigenous Borderlands People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 155, 200-201, 231, 259-260, 285. Cary Collins makes a similar argument about the Makah's use of the marketplace. See: Cary C. Collins, "Subsistence and Survival: The Makah Indian Reservation, 1855-1933," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 87 (Fall 1996): 181-183, 185.

because they believed it was a gift from their creator that possessed life-sustaining qualities. Numerous Indian communities also designated certain portions of their territory as the final resting place of their ancestors. In this scenario, indigenous peoples generally understood land as a source of value rather than being a chip in the game. Most Americans, on the other hand, treasured land because, among other reasons, they felt one could purchase, sell, or keep it, like any other item. Euro-Americans also used land accumulation as a way to measure economic success. These non-Native concepts about land swam upstream of most Indians' historical understandings of what their surrounding ground represented and many aboriginals questioned how one could own something so sacred. Post-contact Indians, who had long understood the power of trade and the importance of land, now inhabited an economic environment where participants intertwined trade and land together.

The works of the aforementioned authors tell us much about the post-contact era and provide a lens with which to view aspects of the Puyallup life from 1832 through 1909. Yet, they are incomplete because their subjects were among the majority of indigenous peoples who lived on reservations that were relatively distant from the path of American development during the immediate post-treaty era. To be sure, the government's attempt to sequester the Indians did not cut them off from all non-Native urban influence. For example, even though the Anishinaabeg and Shoshone-Bannocks lived in relatively isolated regions of Minnesota and Idaho respectively, their reservations had spurs of the Northern Pacific Railroad running through or near them, which helped connect the Indians to American cities. Moreover, while the Makah's reserve was only accessible by boat until 1931, their trade activity and use of ancient sea routes kept them in constant contact with Americans and Canadians.

This study of the Puyallup will contribute to the literature that shows how non-Native cities played a very large role in Indians' lives. In some cases, these urban centers emerged next to Indians who were living on their traditional lands. Often, these Native settlements lacked any federal protections and their inhabitants quickly fell victim to subsequent urban expansion. The towns' steamrolling of these aboriginal communities left shards of their built environment and culture scattered throughout the emerging cityscape. The historian Coll Thrush has brought to light the experiences of Natives who lived around the American settlement of Seattle as that city emerged and grew. He argues that despite the loss of their pre-contact environment, the Indians of the Elliott Bay region not only survived, but also played an integral role in the development of their new urban surroundings. His case study shows that as non-Indians transformed the area from a Native rural setting to a Euro-American style cityscape, aboriginals persevered by adapting to continually changing environments, a process that allowed them to maintain their cultural heritage as they contributed to the city's growth. He urges historians to acknowledge the existence of such narratives by creating urban and Native histories that "speak to each other."²⁰

Thrush's subjects became urbanized because the city came to them. During the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there were also numerous Natives who abandoned their reservations and relocated to cities. By 1980, over one-half of all Native Americans lived in an urban setting. Nicolas Rosenthal explains that racism often kept cities from becoming the economic and social oases that Indians hoped to find. Many Indians responded to these circumstances with subaltern resistance that helped them transform their urban surroundings into

²⁰ Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 8, 12-13, 97-98.

an environment that met more of their needs. Rosenthal therefore argues that historians need to “reimagine Indian country” in order to fully understand the Indians’ experience during this era.²¹

The insights of Thrush and Rosenthal provide additional clues on how to construct order and provide meaning to the Puyallup’s post-treaty and post-reservation efforts to survive as individuals and as a community in and around Tacoma. As Americans came into the area, established a city next to the Puyallup’s reservation, threatened the reserve, and then finally took it over, we can see that tribal members reacted in numerous ways. Evidence also shows us that by the early 1900s, when the Puyallup had lost almost all of their land, they relied upon other aspects of their culture to preserve their concept of self and community.²² It was a difficult process, but the Puyallup’s long-standing tradition of integrating, adapting, and accommodating prepared them to meet this challenge.

Whether Native Americans lived in or near an urban setting like the Puyallup, or a relatively isolated one like the Makah, aspects of Euro-American culture eventually molded Indians into people their ancestors may not have recognized. Alexandra Harmon has traced these adjustments as they occurred in the Pacific Northwest. She argues that Indians have transformed their identity over time through a series of figurative negotiations with non-Natives and other Indians. These dialogues occurred in various contexts, including treaties, consumerism, employment, court cases, and environmental activism. Harmon explains that in

²¹ Nicolas G. Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration & Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 2, 3, 6.

²² Donald Lee Fixico, *American Indians in a Modern World* (Lanham: Alta Mira Press, 2008), 39-40; Susan Lobo, “Is Urban a Person or a Place? Characteristics of Urban Indian Country,” in *American Indians and the Urban Experience*, eds. Susan Lobo and Kurt Peters (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2001), 76-66, 80-81. Lobo argues that Indian urban communities resembled Indian pre-reservation life in that Natives did not rely on geography to identify themselves. Their community was instead a creation of “relatedness,” or an “informal consensus,” which city Indians quickly adopted in order to create a sense of community.

these and other situations, Native Americans had an active role in creating and maintaining aspects of their identity as they adapted to change and responded to the perceptions that non-Indians had about them. This means that post-contact Native identity has been, and remains, in constant flux.²³

The dynamic nature of identity had numerous implications for the Puyallup during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The marketplace had an especially strong impact upon the Puyallup's sense of self during this period because it reconfigured tribal notions of status and success. For example, many Indians who effectively operated in the non-Indian economy were able to enhance their tribal prestige. All the while, their varied and complicated self-perceptions, based upon a rich history of transformation, ran up against Americans' insistence that the Puyallup were a homogeneous population who shared a set of common and static marketplace characteristics. The existence of these countervailing identities had fateful implications for the tribe.

A particularly significant identity issue that Puyallup tribal members and Americans confronted after 1854 was the of the progressive-conservative (traditional) dichotomy. Tacoma business interests, the press, and government officials used these labels in their effort to measure the level at which tribal members had adopted aspects of American culture into their lives. They relied upon words like "Half-breed," "civilized," and "good" to signify Indians who were seemingly useful to their needs. On the other hand, non-Indians employed pejorative terms like "full-blood," "savage," and "Lo" to pejoratively describe Indians who apparently clung tightly to their historical way of life and were thus worthy of suspicion. All the while, the Indians themselves used these categories to demarcate political and economic factions within the tribe.

²³ Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities Around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 3-4, 12.

I use the progressive-conservative labels to bring order to this narrative of the Puyallup community. Yet the terms have shortcomings that need to be acknowledged. I refer to the historian David Rich Lewis, who reminds us that the labels are “ethnocentric and value laden [and]...have become a kind of professional shorthand for describing individuals, factionalism, and the process of acculturation.” Consequently, their use can cloud the complexities and nuances of individuals and communities. Lewis shows us that the terms have other issues as well. For instance, the progressive-conservative dichotomy fails to reflect the fact that cultural change produces an assortment of perspectives among each individual. Perhaps most important to this study, Lewis tells us that words like progressive and traditional imply a static existence. In reality, traditions change over time, so what was once new eventually becomes custom, and Indians who became more progressive did not necessarily become less traditional.²⁴

Reid’s study of the Makah illustrates Lewis’s concerns by showing how tribal members participated in, what he labels to be, a “moditional” economy. This involved Indian fishers, sealers and whalers employing old and new ways to harvest sea life. For example, Makah obtained larger, faster vessels from Euro-Americans in order to hunt further afield, and they traded for certain types of fishing gear and guns, which made hunting more efficient. These strategies allowed the Makah to continue harvesting animals that they had been gathering for thousands of years as they competed with non-Native fishermen, whalers, and sealers. At the same time, the Makah’s continued pursuit of these historical economic practices allowed them to acculturate much more easily. On top of that, Reid shows that the Makah’s successful use

²⁴ David Rich Lewis, “Reservation Leadership and the Progressive-Traditional Dichotomy: William Wash and the Northern Utes, 1865-1928,” *Ethnohistory* 38 (Spring 1991): 125-127, 140-141.

modern fishing techniques allowed them to maintain tradition and simultaneously ward off modernization in the guise of government pressure to become yeomen farmers.²⁵

At an individual level, we can see similar complexities in the life of the Nisqually named Leschi, who lived just to the west of the Puyallup 's pre-treaty territory. Leschi's efforts to protect traditional Nisqually land and customs against American incursion after the Medicine Creek Treaty, and his eventual capture and execution by Washington Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens, cemented his place in history. However, Leschi was protecting more than tradition, for prior to 1854, he was an active trader with the HBC and obtained Euro-American tools, attire, and guns from the company. He also adopted the life of a horse rancher and may have owned a herd that numbered around 100 animals. Leschi's actions after the treaty were as likely due to his wish to protect his business interests with the HBC and the settlers as he was trying to preserve Nisqually culture. One might therefore understand him as a man with moditional inclinations.²⁶



I have divided this study into five chapters and an epilogue. Chapter One covers events relevant to this story from pre-contact up to 1854, and argues that the Puyallup's interest in adopting aspects of foreign societies into their lives predated contact and continued after Euro-Americans entered the south Puget Sound. Prior to the Euro-Americans' presence in the Pacific Northwest, the Puyallup participated in a vast trade network with indigenous peoples who lived throughout the region. The Puyallup not only used these connections to obtain technologies and

²⁵ Reid, 17, 176-177, 205-206.

²⁶ Richard Kluger, *The Bitter Waters of Medicine Creek: A Tragic Clash Between White and Native America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 63-65, 114..

ideas they did not have, these associations also established and solidified alliances and helped participants pursue various spiritual endeavors. The Puyallup merely continued this trend when Europeans and Americans came into the region. They traded resources and provided much needed labor to the non-Native immigrants, and then used the fruits of their trade to satisfy their cultural needs.

Unfortunately for the Puyallup, Old World diseases, Euro-American immigration, and the resulting rise in competition for South Sound resources and land compelled the tribe to sign the Medicine Creek Treaty in 1854. In the agreement, the tribe relinquished large swaths of land in return for cash, supplies, a small reservation, and limited access to resources. This event forced tribal members to become even more adaptive in their efforts to survive and retain their cultural identity.

As a side note, for most of this chapter I will refer to my subjects as the S'Puyalupubsh, which is at least one of the labels they used to identify themselves prior to contact. As Euro-American colonialism descended on to the region, it began transforming physical, economic, and cultural entities into new forms. Names and labels were some of the victims of this change. Not long after the HBC established Fort Nisqually, record keepers began using the label "Puyallup" or a derivative of that to identify the Commencement Bay Natives. In 1854, Isaac Stevens used the phrase "Puyallup tribe" in the Medicine Creek Treaty. It is at this point of my study that I shift my references to the community as the Puyallup tribe.

Because Native Americans fared so poorly during the treaty era it is easy to assume that they had little if any recourse as the Americans imposed the terms of the settlements upon them. Chapter Two follows in the footsteps of many new historians who provide an alternative perspective on this theme. I will show that between 1855 and 1872, after the Medicine Creek

Treaty had gone into effect, the Puyallup worked to shape the conditions of the resulting arrangement to fit their needs.

One way that a small portion of the Puyallup community attempted to reshape the Medicine Creek Treaty was to participate in the Puget Sound Indian War of 1855-1856. Tribal warriors picked up their weapons for an assortment of reasons, not the least of which was to stand up to change. However, I will argue that they, like their Nisqually neighbor Leschi, were not only attempting to protect their customs, but they also sought to preserve their newly formed economic connections as well as their cultural and economic future. In the meantime, most Puyallup chose to stay out of the war, believing they could accomplish similar goals by different means.

After the yearlong uprising ended, Puyallup leaders secured several important concessions from government officials during the post-conflict deliberations. I will highlight two of these successes. First, the Indians persuaded officials that their original reserve was too small and lacked needed resources. This compelled convinced authorities to relocate and significantly increase the size of the reservation that the treaty had allocated to Puyallup.

The second accommodation that the Puyallup obtained from the government came after reservation officials began implementing aspects of its treaty obligations on the Puyallup reserve. Authorities established a government-run Indian school and taught tribal members horse and plow farming. The school did little to change the students at first, but some Puyallup did adopt farming. These slight changes delighted officials, but over time the Native agronomists became fearful that newly arriving settlers would take their recently developed land. In 1872, these concerns inspired a handful of these Indians to push for a second accommodation. They told authorities that they would stop farming until the government allotted portions of the reserve to

families or unmarried adults, as Stevens had spelled out in the 1854 treaty. The Indians argued that allotments would provide them with increased security against non-Native takeover of their fields. This became the first of several Puyallup attempts to compel the government to enact land ownership rights within the Medicine Creek Treaty.

Chapter Three covers the years 1873-1883, and shows that the government acquiesced to the Puyallup farmers' allotment request and began the process of surveying the reservation and assigning plots in 1873. The decision had the effect of luring the recalcitrant farmers of 1872 back to their fields as well as convincing other tribal members to become involved with agriculture. Authorities believed that the Indians' interest in farming, their children's increased attendance at the reservation school, and the fact that more and more Puyallup were dressing, speaking, and occasionally behaving like their American neighbors was proof that their efforts to modernize the Puyallup were working.

The Puyallup's adoption of non-Indian culture was especially evident in the marketplace. In 1873, Tacoma became more of an economic force in the region when the Northern Pacific Railroad designated the city as the western terminus of the nation's first northern transcontinental rail line. This decision brought more Americans into the South Sound area and increased the Indians' opportunities to earn money and purchase Euro-American goods. Mechanical clocks became one of many artifacts of interest to the Puyallup at this time. The Indians prized the devices for their aesthetic value and the prestige they gave their owners. Some Puyallup likewise used clocks to navigate the schedule of the market economy. Reservation agent Edwin Eells believed that aboriginals who used timepieces to dictate their economic behaviors displayed a degree of modernization.

Land commodification was another aspect of Euro-American economic culture that some Puyallup integrated into their lives at this time. As Tacoma's population grew and the reservation allotments increased in value, tribal members strategized over how to protect their interests. By the late-1870s, some Indians believed that the best way to guard their allotments from non-Native encroachment was to obtain patents to their land. This type of ownership gave allottees title to their property though it also possessed lease restrictions and prohibited allottees from selling it. Indian farmers once again threatened to halt their activities unless the government granted the patents, which it did after 1883.

Many of the Puyallup who responded to the marketplace and government programs hoped to enhance their tribal influence. One particular subset of the tribe's population exemplifies this point. During the early 1880s, members of this cadre had attended the reservation school and they felt as comfortable in the non-Native world as in their own. Their immediate goal was to accumulate wealth and modernize the tribe and these Indians eventually pushed for more than just allotments and patents. Chapter Four focuses upon these more progressive Puyallup, whom I refer to as land sales activists. I will show that between 1883 and 1893, some allottees pressed authorities to implement yet another portion of the treaty that dealt with reservation land. Puyallup allottees had finally received the patents by 1886, but within a few years some tribal progressives had concluded that patents, due to their lease and sales restrictions, were already obsolete. They were leery of Tacoma's growing population of Americans who wanted the government to dismantle the reservation and open its valuable lands for non-Native settlement. These particular Puyallup looked again to the Medicine Creek Treaty to deal with their situation. They ultimately aligned with a group of local non-Native

entrepreneurs to push Congress to grant Indian patent holders alienation rights, which would allow them to dispose of their land as they saw fit.

The Puyallup's 1892 meeting with John Noble represented one aspect of the tribe's campaign to obtain land sales rights. The government's response to this request in 1893 further complicates the Native American colonial narrative. In this case, the Indians pressured the government to institute a program that, on some levels, made the allottees more modern. Yet, their antagonist, Edwin Eells, argued against this policy because he believed that the Puyallup were still unprepared to accept the responsibilities of unregulated land ownership. In the end Congress passed the Puyallup Act of 1893. This law granted the Puyallup the right to sell limited amounts of their land and gave the government the responsibility of setting prices, collecting sales proceeds, and then paying out increments of the sales sum, minus an administrative fee, to the Indian sellers over time.

Chapter Five covers the period 1893 through 1909, and argues that the Puyallup Act in most cases did not alleviate the Puyallup's poverty but in fact contributed to it. I show that though the adverse effects of the law did not become apparent for several years, the Puyallup's experiences after its passage fit into a common theme in Native American history: allotment generally transferred Indian land into non-Indian hands, and left many aboriginals landless, poor, and dependent. The Puyallup Act had this effect upon tribal members, but the failure of the allotment program on the Puyallup reservation was the product of at least two seldom discussed forces.

The first of these factors was the 1893 economic depression, which drove down the demand for, and value of, Puyallup property for the first few years of the law's existence. The market crash forced cash-starved Indians to sell their land at reduced prices or go without much

needed capital. The legislation's second economically debilitating feature was the way that the Puyallup Act instructed the Indian Office to handle land sales and dole out proceeds.

Lawmakers believed that they had designed a law that would prevent the Puyallup from allegedly mispending their money. In practice, the plan reduced the amount of money that ended up in each Indian land seller's pocket. To begin with, the government's use of the tenants-in-common ownership policy, which divvied up allotments and sales receipts among numerous family members, often provided each seller with just a small portion of the total sales proceeds. The fact that the government paid these proceeds to the allottees over time further limited the amount of capital that the Puyallup could access at one time. To make matters worse, the government charged Indian land sellers a ten-percent transaction fee each time it collected money from the buyers or paid out dividends to the sellers. Finally, adding insult to injury, records indicate that the government failed to pay each allottee the total of this reduced amount that he or she ought to have received.

In this tempest of flaws, many of the Puyallup tried to use the 1893 law to alleviate their financial woes. Most failed because they were not economically deft enough or lacked the financial capital or economic diversity to weather this storm. Still, a handful of individuals did make significant amounts of money after 1893, which helped them become prominent members of both the Puyallup and non-Indian societies. Unfortunately, these people were the exception rather than the norm, and by 1909, most of the Puyallup were not only poor, they were landless as well. They suffered additionally because now their traditional support systems were in tatters. In less than a century, Euro-American settlement, which had initially brought the Puyallup opportunity, had destroyed what had been a once powerful and vibrant Indian community.

I end Chapter Five with the 1909 Federal Court case *U.S. v. Ashton*. In that suit, the judge ruled that the Puyallup did not have claim to a strip of tidelands along Commencement Bay, and the court's decision effectively prevented the Puyallup from retaining the last valuable piece of their original 18,060 acre reservation. All that remained to the Puyallup after that decision was a cemetery and some acreage that was the site of the reservation school. Throughout most of the twentieth century, many American political leaders and most non-Indians living in the south Puget Sound assumed that the Puyallup Tribe had disappeared for good because they no longer possessed a homeland, the government had ceased to recognize the tribe, and many of the Puyallup had left the area.

The epilogue will show that these naysayers were wrong because the Puyallup community sustained itself in several ways. One involved members' reliance upon various pre-treaty traditions and participation in pan-Indian alliances. Meanwhile, twentieth-century Puyallup continued to follow the lead of their ancestors by accommodating aspects of American culture, especially its legal, educational, and economic institutions, into forms that worked to their advantage. The primary drivers of these efforts were tribal members who used activism to push for tribal unity, federal recognition, and government acknowledgement of Medicine Creek Treaty rights. Over an eight-decade period, these individuals used government policy, the courts, the media, and, in some cases, armed militancy to successfully pursue aspects of their agenda. In the 1930s the Puyallup regained federal tribal status. Then, in the 1970s, federal courts affirmed Pacific Northwest Indians fishing rights. Near the end of the century, the federal government conceded that it had been derelict in its assurance of Puyallup treaty rights and awarded the tribe one of the largest cash and land settlements in Native American history. The presence of Tacoma has further enhanced the value of the federal authorities' decision.

As of 2016, the Puyallup tribe has established itself as a major economic and political force in Pierce County. It has reestablished a small portion of its original reservation next to Tacoma, and tribal landholdings continue to grow several acres at a time. Puyallup leaders have meanwhile established a host of programs that ensure tribal members' access to health, educational, and social services. In the end, the history of the Puyallup suggests the years 1832 to 1909, despite the presence of disruption, conflict, and hardship, represent several footsteps in the tribe's long journey through time. This era, like the years that preceded and proceeded it, was indicative of a long-standing path of change and adaptation

CHAPTER 1: S'PUYALUPUBSH CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, ADAPTATION, AND PERSISTENCE THROUGH 1854

A CULTURAL CONTACT

The Puget Sound is an approximately 100-mile-long, twisting shard of salt water that penetrates into the northwest portion of present-day Washington State. In 1832, a group of men representing the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) selected a site on the southern reaches of the inlet, chopped down the surrounding trees, shaved them into planks, and then used the lumber to construct a set of small buildings. It did not take long for some local indigenous people to notice the activity and they quickly spread news of the event to relatives, friends, and trading partners from various other Indian communities. Before long, a number of Natives gathered to watch the HBC men work. A few of the onlookers were so interested in witnessing the HBC project take shape that they constructed short-term residences around the site, some in the form of "...mats hung on poles in the shape of a cartshed."¹ It is probable that a few of the Indians came to the location merely to satisfy their curiosity or be entertained. Others may have been suspicious of the foreigners' presence and intentions. Time would show that many of the Natives present hoped that they could use the strangers to their advantage. These Indians were looking forward to a time when the workers put aside their construction tools and offered to trade some of their possessions; these aboriginals' expectations were part of a long tradition of South Sound Indians satisfying their subsistence and cultural needs by obtaining new objects and ideas from outsiders.

Nuckalkat and Quilniash were two S'Puyalupubsh Indians who lived in a village that was at least a half-day's walk away from the HBC's outpost. Both men were hunters so they most

¹ William Fraser Tolmie, *The Journals of William Fraser Tolmie, Physician and Fur Trader* (Vancouver, B.C.: Mitchell Press, 1963), 195.

likely knew how to navigate their way around the local terrain, survive in the wild, and use the tools of their trade with deadly efficiency. We can guess that their knowledge and skills made them important members of their village. There is a possibility that at some point during the project's construction they were among the group of Indians who watched the HBC employees work on their buildings. Nuckalkat's and Quilniash's roles within their community and their experiences in carrying out their duties undoubtedly caused them to focus upon particular aspects of the foreigners' activities. Perhaps the two men discussed the idea that the HBC structures shared similarities with S'Puyalupubsh lodges, though they, along with other Indians, might have wondered why the newcomers were creating several modest sized buildings instead of constructing one big edifice to house everyone and everything together. Our knowledge of S'Puyalupubsh architecture suggests that is what they may have done. Nuckalkat and Quilniash just as likely paid close attention to how these men procured meat and pondered the possible advantages and disadvantages to the tools the HBC men used to fulfill this need.

HBC officials named the site Fort Nisqually and they planned to make it a key part of the company's Pacific Northwest economic empire. The fort served as a way station for employees traveling north to other trading posts in the region. HBC authorities also hoped to make the site a place where the company could conduct trade with the Natives. The HBC's plan had potential, because the English had been dealing with Indians commercially throughout the continent. These economic interactions had provided the aboriginals and the HBC with necessities and luxuries that generally contributed to the participants' well-being. Nuckalkat's and Quilniash's reaction's to the fort's presence indicated that they saw the post as a place to trade skins and meat for items they believed would make their lives more comfortable and enhance their prestige within their community. Meanwhile, the fort was also a nexus where S'Puyalupubsh and HBC

staffers could choose aspects of a foreign culture that they wanted to integrate into their lives. Many of the S'Puyalupubsh felt comfortable with the HBC's presence because they had been interacting with outsiders and adopting aspects of outside cultures for much of their history. Yet their contact with these new strangers would be different because the company had an international reach and could therefore provide Natives with a much wider variety of goods, artifacts and ideas from which to choose.

One of the HBC employees that Nuckalkat and Quilniash eventually met was a twenty-one year old Scot named William Tolmie. He, like Nuckalkat and Quilniash, used the post to satisfy an assortment of personal and professional needs. He began his journey to the Pacific Northwest after taking medical courses at the University of Glasgow. While there, he met a professor who had previously spent time in the Columbia River region. The instructor's descriptions of the area fascinated the young student and compelled him to accept an offer from the HBC to work as a medical officer for its Columbia District. Tolmie was a man driven to succeed and who wanted to learn and earn as much as he could. Hence, aside from working as a physician, he also secured a position as a company clerk, which doubled his salary. This second role brought him into close contact with Puget Sound Natives.²

Tolmie's journey from Scotland to Fort Nisqually was a long one. He sailed across the North and South Atlantic, around the tip of South America, and up the west coasts of both continents. The young doctor saw himself as part of a generation of Britons who found merit in expanding scientific knowledge. Consequently, when he came across a host of peculiar plants

² W. Kaye Lamb, "William Fraser Tolmie," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, accessed August 24, 2012, www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?id_nbr=5873.

and animals during his trip, he took every opportunity that he could to collect or record them.³ One of Tolmie's contemporaries, the naturalist Charles Darwin, was in South America at this same time busily conducting his own landmark studies of the region's life forms.

The young surgeon landed at Fort Vancouver in May of 1833, and then proceeded north, at times slogging his way through the forests, swamps, and waterways that lay between the Columbia River and the southern Puget Sound. After he reached Fort Nisqually, the doctor occasionally attended to patients, but he more often bartered with Indian customers and studied local plants and animals.

Tolmie was immensely interested in Puget Sound region's flora and fauna. After he had cataloged the life forms that existed around the fort, he organized a small expedition to investigate natural life on the slopes of Mt. Rainier, which sat about sixty miles southeast of the outpost. Nuckalkat and Quilniash somehow heard that Tolmie was willing to employ five Indians to guide him on this journey and they made themselves available. The doctor hired the two men and designated Nuckalkat as the lead guide. This appointment probably paid Nuckalkat more than what the other four individuals received, and it suggests that Nuckalkat was either the eldest, or he was the more experienced member of the group. It might have also indicated that he was better at selling his skills to Tolmie than the other applicants were. In any case, Tolmie hired Nuckalkat and Quilniash and the three other Indians to set up camps, prepare meals, and

³ For instance, Tolmie wrote in his log that during his journey to the Puget Sound he meticulously preserved the skin and eyes of a flying fish. Another time he watched with amusement as a sea turtle continued to struggle after he had decapitated it. See: Tolmie, 37, 59.

perform other tasks as needed. The doctor paid his Native employees with ammunition and blankets.⁴

The cultures that Nuckalkat, Quilniash, and Tolmie came from influenced their decisions to enter into this agreement. Both of their societies placed a degree of importance upon the concept of work and the accumulation of new knowledge and technology. Many S'Puyalupubsh and English labored and investigated in order to satisfy individual desires and social needs. In this case, the hunters and the doctor used their interactions with each other to obtain previously unknown information and tools that they could use to meet their culturally inspired goals. Nuckalkat's and Quilniash's procurement of HBC goods from Tolmie provided them with alternative ways to exist within their environment. Even though they already had weapons for killing game and skins to keep warm, the shot and powder they acquired for their European guns diversified the manner in which they could provide animal products for their village. Meanwhile, wool blankets were more effective than their traditional fabrics in warding off the Puget Sound's cool, damp climate.⁵ The pair may have also used these items as gifts that they

⁴ Tolmie, 230; Lamb; Murray Morgan, *Puget's Sound: A Narrative of Early Tacoma and the Southern Sound* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), 34-36.

⁵ Wool is a versatile product. It is soft but durable and can absorb up to thirty-percent of its weight in water while still feeling warm and dry to the touch. The wool fibers also contain lanolin which makes them somewhat waterproof and naturally stain resistant. One might describe wool as the "Gortex" of that era. See: "What are the Advantages of Wool," accessed August 27, 2012, http://wikianswers.com/Q/What_are_the_advantages_of_wool/; "Advantages of Wool Fabric," accessed August 27, 2012, http://www.ehow.com/about_6397773_advantages-wool-fabric.html. The Puyallup pre-contact method of hunting large game like deer usually involved a degree of planning and stealth. Puyallup often hunted during the pre-dawn darkness when animals were less aware of their stalkers' close proximity. At times Puyallup hunters would build a large fire in a clearing and when deer came out from the cover, the hunters would kill them with a bow and arrow. Sometimes the hunters would build fires in canoes and kill deer in the same manner as they came down to the shoreline. On other occasions, the Puyallup would

could bestow upon fellow S’Puyalupubsh, which would enhance their importance within their village. Nuckalkat and Quilniash therefore accepted Tolmie’s offer because it could improve their lives.

The actions of Nuckalkat and Quilniash were one of many illustrations of the S’Puyalupubsh’s legacy of interacting with outsiders. These behaviors contributed to their self-image of being a “people who display generous and welcoming behavior to all people who enter our lands.”⁶ Equally important to the S’Puyalupubsh was their habit of seeing outsiders as a source for new ways to accomplish old tasks. In either case, S’Puyalupubsh contact with Euro-American immigrants to the Pacific Northwest presented the Indians with a host of consequences. For approximately two decades after the HBC came to the South Sound the S’Puyalupubsh and company employees shared a complex set of cultural relations. Members of both contingents embraced what they believed to be useful ideas, goods, and behaviors that members of the other side of the cultural divide provided.⁷ The S’Puyalupubsh used the HBC as a doorway to a global capitalist network and Nuckalkat and Quilniash’s eagerness to obtain Hudson’s Bay point blankets and shot for firearms suggest that they were appreciative of this

corner deer and strike them with a club. See: Marian W. Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 253-254.

⁶ Smith, 23; Judy Wright, *History of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians* (Tacoma, WA: Puyallup Tribal Council, 1997), 3.

⁷ Colleen O’Neill, “Rethinking Modernity and the Discourse of Development in American Indian History, and Introduction,” in *Native Pathways: American Indian Culture and Economic Development in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Brian Hosmer and Colleen O’Neill. (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2004), 18; Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 61; Daniel Richter, *Facing East From Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 177.

opportunity.⁸ Meanwhile, their ability to offer Tolmie their labor and their knowledge of the region certainly gave them value in the doctor's eyes.

Throughout the course of these interactions, constituents of each culture attempted to persuade members of the other group to act in ways that adhered to their own values. Initially these efforts had limited impact because neither the S'Puyalupubsh nor the newcomers were committed enough or strong enough to dominate the other. Consequently, the S'Puyalupubsh and HBC employees dealt with each other through "...creative, and often expedient misunderstandings" that often blurred their cultural boundaries. Throughout this process, members of each side believed they were shaping the relationship in ways that were clear and to their advantage.⁹

The S'Puyalupubsh's interactions with the HBC yielded numerous opportunities. Yet the contacts also had negative implications for the Indians because Fort Nisqually became a key component of European imperialism in the South Sound. Its construction was to be the first of numerous actions that company officials took that challenged S'Puyalupubsh autonomy. Still,

⁸ Tolmie, 219. George Dickey, ed. *The Journal of Occurrences at Ft. Nisqually, commencing May 30, 1833; Ending September 27, 1859* (Tacoma, WA: Ft. Nisqually Historic Site, Metropolitan Park District, 1983), see July 6, 1837. Peter Charles Newman, *Empire of the Bay: The Company of Adventurers that Seized a Continent* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 170-171, 176.

⁹ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), x, 51-52, 33-34, 388; John Lutz, *Maku'k: a New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), x-xi, 11; Peter A. Thomas, "Cultural Change on the Southern New England Frontier, 1630-1665," in *Cultures in Contact: The European Impact on Native Cultural Institutions in Eastern North America*, ed. William Fitzhugh (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985), 140, 143-144.

the effects were not immediate, the Europeans, and later the Americans, never fully subjugated the S'Puyalupubsh, and the proceedings did not affect all of the participants in the same way.¹⁰

Because we have a historical perspective that Nuckalkat and Quilniash lacked it is easy for us to see the S'Puyalupubsh's post-contact history in a negative light. Over time, Euro-Americans confiscated much of their land, restricted their independence, and pressured them to change elements of their culture. They also forced the S'Puyalupubsh to make choices that they would have rather avoided. While there is abundant evidence to support this narrative, there is also proof that from 1832 through 1854, numerous S'Puyalupubsh eagerly and advantageously pursued trade associations with the HBC and later the Americans. Nuckalkat's and Quilniash's agreement with Tolmie represented a link between the S'Puyalupubsh's past, their present, and what the two hunters and their people perceived to be their future.

PRE-CONTACT S'PUYALUPUBSH ECOLOGY & CULTURE

As advantageous as Nuckalkat's and Quilniash's transaction with Tolmie was, the interaction was in no way predestined to occur. Still, one can see it as part of the Indians' cultural legacy. The S'Puyalupubsh lived in a resource-rich ecosystem that satisfied the subsistence needs of many of its human residents. The region's abundance is what caused Nuckalkat's and Quilniash's ancestors to settle the south Puget Sound thousands of years earlier, and over time members of the S'Puyallupubsh nation developed a culture that took advantage of

¹⁰ Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change Among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), xiv, xix, 317-318.

its surroundings and allowed many of these Indians to live relatively comfortable lives. Still, community members always kept their eyes open for new or improved ways to survive.

There are two origin stories concerning the S'Puyalupubsh. Members of the South Sound Native community traced their beginnings to Dokibatt, the Changer or Transformer, who placed their ancestors in the region. They credited this spirit with creating all living and inanimate forms, and claimed, among other things, that he took life from the surrounding stones, turned large insects into small and harmless creatures, and gave the S'Puyalupubsh the knowledge that they required for their survival.¹¹ Non-Native historians have used archaeological evidence to offer a different narrative. They argue that the S'Puyalupubsh's distant ancestors first entered the Puget Sound area in meaningful numbers, from the east, around 11,000 B.C. They add that another significant migration into the region came in from the north around 9800 B.C.¹²

When the predecessors of the S'Puyalupubsh arrived in the region they found an environment whose physical contours and non-human life were the result of millions of years of both subtle change and colossal geological violence. This included some eight thousand years of glaciations, which had advanced to a point some thirty miles beyond the southern tip of the Puget Sound and forcefully kneaded together ash, lava, rock, and gravel. When the ice sheets receded

¹¹ Robert Ruby, John Brown, and Cary Collins, *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of the Pacific Northwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 238.

¹² Kenneth Ames and Herbert D.G. Maschner, *Peoples of the Northwest Coast: Their Archaeology and Prehistory* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 63-64, 66. In an interesting side note, Ames and Maschner note that one of the key factors regarding those humans who migrated from Asia to America was the availability of firewood, which travelers used to keep warm, prepare food, and create technology. As the ice melted and trees began to grow, humans were able to press further inland. The abundance of such fuel in the Pacific Northwest may have swayed the early humans' decision to settle there.

about 10,000 years ago, they left behind a loam that to this day supports numerous life forms. These include stands of Douglas fir, spruce, alder, red cedar, hemlock, oak, cottonwood, and big-leaf maple. The region's post-Ice Age environment also contains prairies and plains that remain the habitat for seasonal and perennial wild vegetation and game such as rabbit, elk, deer, and bear.¹³

The Cascade Mountains, which sit to the east of Puget Sound, were also born during this pre-human era. The range's peaks are high enough to block moisture heading eastward, a phenomenon that produces roughly thirty-six inches of light but steady annual rainfall in the area. Residents likewise experience cool and wet winters as well as dry summers and lengthy growing seasons.¹⁴ The rivers that roll down from these mountains played a significant role in many of the S'Puyalupubsh's lives. A number of the tributaries that flow through what was their historical domain originated from the slopes of the fourteen-thousand foot, 500,000-year-old

¹³ The S'Puyalupubsh found the western red cedar to be especially useful, for aside from being in great supply, they could easily split it, it was slow to rot, its aroma warded off pests, and it repelled water. These latter qualities made the material especially useful for home construction. The S'Puyalupubsh also converted its bark into a thread that they used to create fabrics for clothing, baskets, hats, mats, and even diapers. See: Richard Kluger, *The Bitter Waters of Medicine Creek: A Tragic Clash Between White and Native America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 18-19. For the geological history of the Puget Sound see David Alt and Donald W. Hyndman, *Roadside Geology of Washington* (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing, 2008), 236; Dale Lambert, *The Pacific Northwest: Past, Present, and Future*, Fourth Edition (East Wenatchee, WA: Directed Media, Inc., 1997), 68-69; *Soil Survey of Pierce County Area, Washington* (United States: U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, 1979), 114-115; Hill Williams, *The Restless Northwest: A Geological Story* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 2002), 90, 112, 114; Robert Burns, *The Shape and Form of Puget Sound* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 51-52.

¹⁴ Charles Nelson, "Prehistory of the Puget Sound Region," in Wayne Suttles, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians (Northwest Coast)* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 481.

volcano that the S'Puyalupubsh admiringly referred to as "Tahoma" (their word for "mother of water.")¹⁵ This peak sits to the east of the southern Puget Sound and it is the home to twenty-seven separate glaciers, making it the single largest mountain glacier system in the contiguous United States.

The rivers that flow from Tahoma provided the S'Puyalupubsh's ancestors with food, especially salmon, fresh water, and transportation and communication routes. Water shaped the Indians' identity as well. They and their neighbors recognized each other by their geographical location, and a large number of the S'Puyalupubsh settled near a tributary that ran through the center of their homeland. These early settlers gave it the name "Pwiya'lap," an appellation that may have come from the neighboring Indians' word for the mouth of the Puyallup River or their term for "crooked stream."¹⁶

The humans who originally came to the south Puget Sound established settlements in an area that came to represent about ten percent of the inland channel's coastal perimeter. Upon their arrival, the new settlers added further changes to the environment in their efforts to survive. Their motivation to make these changes was much like that of other human settlers on the

¹⁵ The Puyallup also called the mountain "Tacobeh" or "Tahoma." The label may have meant larger than "Koma," which is a mountain that sits to the north. Fred Beckey, *Cascade Alpine Guide*, Vol. 3, Third Edition (Seattle: Mountaineers Books, 2000), 83; Rob Carson, "Puyallup Tribe Member Wants Mt. Rainier Renamed," *The News Tribune* (Tacoma), June 2, 2010, accessed April 13, 2012, <http://www.theskanner.com/article/Puyallup-Tribe-Member-Wants-Mt-Rainier-Renamed-2010-06-02> .

¹⁶ Some researchers have also suggested that "Pwiya'lap" means "shadow," which referred to the shade offered by the thick forests that covered the southeast portion of the Puget Sound long ago. Smith, 25, 28, 31; John R. Swanton, *The Indian Tribes of North America* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), 434; Frederick Webb Hodge, ed. *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, Part 2* (New York: Pageant Books, Inc., 1959), 331; Ruby, Brown, and Collins, 237.

continent: accumulate food and material, create transportation links, introduce new life forms, or satisfy spiritual needs.¹⁷ As this society's population grew, members established homes in assorted locations. Several villages existed on the north bank of what we now know as the White River while two others sat to the southwest of the Sound, near the present day Nisqually River. S'Puyalupubsh also lived on the shores of the current Puget Sound, Carr Inlet, and the southern tip of Vashon Island.¹⁸ Thus, water was the sinew that tied many of these aboriginals' lives together, though some members of the community lived on inland prairies.¹⁹

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF STRANGERS

When the S'Puyalupubsh's ancestors entered the south Puget Sound they found its ecosystem stocked with numerous resources. The Indians optimized their environment's output by designing and employing a host of innovative tools and strategies.²⁰ These tactics in turn contributed to the constant birth of new ideas, technologies, and cultural norms. The fact that the

¹⁷ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), xvii, 198, 266-267.

¹⁸ Smith, 28; Ruby, Brown, and Collins, 237; Swanton, 434.

¹⁹ Smith, 29-31; "Report of Mr. George Gibbs to Captain McClellan, on the Indian Tribes of the Territory of Washington, March 4, 1854," in George Gibbs, *Indian Tribes of Washington Territory* (Fairfield, WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1978), 11; Susan M. Reddick and Cary C. Collins, "Medicine Creek to Fox Island: Cadastral Scams and Contested Domains," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 106:3 (2005): 379. Whites called Indians who lived along the water "canoe Indians," and they labeled those Natives who resided inland along the plateaus as "horse Indians."

²⁰ William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 33, 37-38, 42.

S’Puyalupubsh lived in one of the more densely populated non-agricultural regions of the world is a testament to the success of their efforts.²¹

Nuckalkat’s and Quilniash’s decision to work for Tolmie was part of a S’Puyalupubsh cultural legacy that provided them with additional benefits that were not available in their immediate surroundings. For example, Nuckalkat and Quilniash were interested in obtaining HBC wool blankets and lead shot because they did not have access to sheep or vast deposits of lead. Meanwhile, interactions with outsiders not only allowed the S’Puyalupubsh to procure additional resources, it also helped them develop alliances and enlarge and strengthen their population. The S’Puyalupubsh’s relationship with their nearby neighbors, the Nisqually, allowed them to conduct trade, intermarry, and organize festivals and ceremonies with each other. Meanwhile, S’Puyalupubsh prairie communities were likely the legacy of community members who united with other distinct groups living in the region.²² Similarly, the S’Puyalupubsh who lived nearest to the Cascade Mountains proudly boasted of their familial ties to members of Sahaptin communities from the east side of the Cascade divide.²³ This practice allowed the S’Puyalupubsh to diversify their population because they often invited outsiders who

²¹ Some researchers have estimated that in excess of 1,000,000 Natives inhabited the Pacific Northwest region—this region generally includes the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and the southern half of British Columbia— just prior to the arrival of Europeans. They also argue that the Northwest Coast and California had the largest regional populations of Indians in North America prior to Contact. See: Robert T. Boyd, “Demographic History, 1774-1874,” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol 7, ed. Wayne Suttles, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 135; Ames and Maschner, 26-27.

²² Dale Walde, “Sedentism and Pre-Contact Tribal Organization on the Northern Plains: Colonial Imposition or Indigenous Development?” *World Archaeology* 38: 2 (2006): 306. Walde argues that the varied settlement and subsistence patterns of certain Native American groups may have been a result of unification of one group with other invading Natives.

²³ Smith, 21, 23.

possessed unique knowledge or skills to live in their lodges and contribute to the community's assorted needs.²⁴

The S'Puyalupubsh also satisfied their material requirements by bartering with outsiders for items that complemented what they already had or were superior enough in quality to warrant replacing them. For instance, the S'Puyalupubsh harvested sinew or cedar and cherry bark from their surroundings in order to produce a type of cloth. However, many of these South Sound Indians preferred to use a fabric they made from the blades of mountain grasses that came from Natives who lived nearly 100 miles to the north. The S'Puyalupubsh also obtained a bright yellow-red paint from mountain Indians, and they secured arrowheads, twine baskets, and women's saddles from indigenous communities east of the Cascades. They also constructed some of their twined baskets using a method that they learned from the Twana, who lived around Hood Canal.²⁵

Evidence of the S'Puyalupubsh's extensive inter-community contacts lay not only in demography, possessions, and habits, but also within their language. The S'Puyalupubsh spoke Lushootseed, which was one of twenty-three dialects that made up the Salishan tongue. These vernaculars varied in inflection and vocabulary, but they shared enough similarities with each

²⁴ The S'Puyalupubsh's welcoming of outsiders was a common behavior common among numerous aboriginal cultures. See: Marshall D. Sahlins, "On the Sociology of Primitive Exchange." in *Conference on New Approaches in Social Anthropology* (New York: F.A. Praeger, 1965), 139-140; Smith, 33-35, 141, 279; Harris, 73; Robert Bunting, *The Pacific Raincoast: Environment and Culture in an American Eden, 1778-1900* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 16-17; Wayne P. Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver, B.C.: Talon Books, 1987), 210, 219; Ralph Linton, ed. *Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith), 1963, 51

²⁵ Smith, 276, 292, 296, 300, 304. The S'Puyalupubsh believed that their reproductions of Twana baskets remained inferior to those made by Twana basket makers.

other than the Indians who spoke them generally comprehended each other's meaning. Meanwhile, the S'Puyalupubsh who lived on the eastern outskirts of their people's territory were bilingual due to their close contact with the Sahaptin speakers.²⁶ There were also S'Puyalupubsh who were versed in the Chinook Jargon, which they employed to carry out commerce with non-Salishan speakers living in the Pacific Northwest. Chinook had a limited vocabulary of 200-300 words and lacked any specific grammar rules, but it gave its users the chance to participate in a 600,000-square-mile trade network.²⁷

The S'Puyalupubsh expanded their sphere of contact with outsiders dramatically when Europeans came to the south Puget Sound. Euro-American adventurers, traders, and settlers began appearing in the Pacific Northwest in the late eighteenth century. Spanish explorers participating in several naval expeditions from California were the first to enter the region. Their subsequent reports convinced Spanish authorities that there was little economic potential in the area so they never pushed inward to the south Puget Sound. However, these sailors did come ashore along the Pacific coastline and encountered Natives. Explorers from other nations followed soon after. England's Captain James Cook anchored at Nootka Sound in 1778 and one of his officers, George Vancouver, later explored the Puget Sound, in 1792. That same year, Robert Gray, of the United States, explored and inventoried a portion of the Columbia River. Lewis and Clark also represented American interests in the region when they established Fort Clatsop along the Columbia River during the winter of 1805-1806. While the Spanish, British,

²⁶ Laurence Thompson and M. Dale Kinkade, "Languages," in *Handbook of North American Indians*, 33; Smith, 20, 22; Wright, 3.

²⁷ Smith, 23; Myron Eells, "The Chinook Jargon," *American Anthropology* 7 (July, 1894): 302, 309-310; Edward Harper Thomas, "The Chinook Jargon," *American Speech* 9 (June, 1927): 378, 382.

and American expeditions came into contact with Northwest Natives, there is no evidence they came face-to-face with any of the S'Puyalupubsh. Nevertheless, it is very likely that community members were aware of the explorers' presence.

When these foreign travelers returned to their respective homelands, their nations' leaders stepped up their interest in the region's economic potential. In 1818, English and American diplomats arranged to share access to Oregon Territory as part of a larger agreement to solidify the dividing line between British and American claims west of the Mississippi River.²⁸ Representatives from both sides showed little concern for the Indians' point of view in this matter.

The British initially were the more successful of the two nations in establishing a foothold in the region. In 1821, the English government gave the HBC full jurisdiction over British claims upon the territory. George Simpson, the HBC's North American governor from 1820 through 1860, was optimistic that the grant would allow the company to quench its thirst for revenue. He said of the region, "It can not only be made to rival but to yield double the

²⁸ The Americans and British reached this accord after an American warship entered the mouth of the Columbia River in an attempt to regain Fort Astoria from the British. The 1814 Treaty of Ghent stipulated that all pre-war possessions return to their original owner, but this failed to solve some of the border disputes in the region between England and the US. This led to a series of meetings between American and British representatives. The Americans proposed extending the dividing line of the 49th Parallel that already existed from Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains, all of the way to the Pacific Ocean. The British initially countered by insisting that the dividing line should be the 49th Parallel up to the headwaters of the Columbia River, at which point the river would separate land claims. A lack of an agreement led to the British proposing that the two nations jointly occupy land west of the Rockies that lay between the 45th and 49th Parallels. The Americans rejected this so the British expanded the area of joint occupancy north to the 54th Parallel, which the Americans accepted. The nations renewed the joint occupation in 1827 for an indefinite time. See: Frederick Merk, *The Oregon Question: Essays in Anglo-American Diplomacy & Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1967), 30-31, 48, 51-52, 56.

profits that any other part of North America does for the amount of capital employed therein....”²⁹

In their attempt to make the Pacific Northwest yield a profit, HBC officials made culturally informed transformations to portions of the Puget Sound environment. When employees built Fort Nisqually, they leveled sections of forest, killed or chased off predatory animals, and introduced non-Native flora and fauna into the region. These changes directly affected the indigenous population. However, the South Sound had experienced human induced transformations before. For example, prior to the Europeans’ arrival, the S’Puyalupubsh hunters and gatherers took advantage of their surroundings’ richness by practicing affluent foraging. Practitioners of this subsistence system were more sedentary than stereotypical hunters and gatherers and that allowed them to produce more highly sophisticated technologies and enjoy greater levels of wealth. Anthropologists have argued that a state of affluent foraging is one of the necessary precursors to a society’s adoption of plant and animal domestication.³⁰ However, the S’Puyalupubsh show us that people involved with this practice did not always become Neolithic-style farmers. In some cases, hunter-gatherer societies like the S’Puyalupubsh’s were so successful at subsisting that they did not have to work as hard as agriculturalists to support themselves and they therefore retained their traditional methods of surviving.³¹

²⁹ George Simpson, *Fur Trade and Empire: George Simpson’s Journal*, ed. Frederick Merk (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1968), 136.

³⁰ Ames and Maschner, 14.

³¹ Practitioners of both of these subsistence styles lived in the Pacific Northwest, which has allowed anthropologists and archaeologists to use this region as a baseline for various conclusions they have developed about hunters and gatherers from around the globe. See: Ames and Maschner, 24-26, 28-29.

An effective subsistence system provides its adherents with an amount of calories that equals or exceeds the energy required to procure food. Hunters and gatherers typically require a lot of energy and the S’Puyalupubsh certainly had these needs, despite the efficiency of their system. They therefore continually reshaped their environment to optimize food production. The Indians concurrently used the changes to diminish the distance they had to travel to gather food, which reduced their caloric requirements. One way they accomplished this was by using satellite settlements, a system that employed multiple living sites. S’Puyalupubsh villagers typically inhabited a home site, often near a river, where they spent the winter months sheltered from rain, winds, and sporadic snow. In the early spring members of the community then traveled to locations throughout the hinterlands of their territory to harvest fish, berries, nuts, roots, and game. While there, they made clearings, constructed simple lean-tos for shelter, and then set to work drying some of their bounty for consumption during the winter months or for trade. In the fall they returned to their villages, waited for spring, and then they began the process over again.³²

One satellite site that the S’Puyalupubsh were especially fond of sat on an inlet at the bottom of a steep, heavily-forested hill, along a portion of what eventually became the city of Tacoma’s waterfront. Small springs dotted the slopes, providing slow but constant trickles of fresh water that zigzagged downward toward the Sound as they ran up against trees, mounds of grass, and small earthen moguls. These streams fed into a large pool that the S’Puyalupubsh

³² Bunting, 10-11; Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, 235, 253; Early Euro-American immigrants to the South Sound questioned the S’Puyalupubsh’s ability to feed themselves using this system. Many non-Indians reported starvation among the Puget Sound Natives. However, some modern researchers claim that these observers were most likely describing a situation in which the Indians suffered from an imbalanced diet rather than a food shortage. See: Suttles, *Handbook of North American Indians*, 136.; Charles Carson, “Rising From the Ashes: The Puyallup Indians: Assimilation, Culture & Self-Determination,” (MA thesis, University of Washington, 2003), 4-5.

called “Cha-lash-litch,” which they used to shelter their canoes, harvest shellfish and berries, and hunt bear that were searching for salmon.³³

The S’Puyalupubsh also minimized their movement and maximized Nature’s output by creating edge environments. Natives who lived in the moist, wooded lowlands of the southeast portion of the Sound used this strategy and it involved burning stands of timber in order to create prairies that lured game or provided conditions for the emergence of certain edible plants. This proved to be a very effective way to develop the human caloric output of certain areas.³⁴

HBC employees had different needs than the S’Puyalupubsh and thus made additional alterations to the South Sound soon after they entered the area. One of the first acts that company agents performed was to divide the environment into categories that they could claim, extract, and sell. Throughout this process, HBC officials gave special attention to locations that possessed items that were in short supply in the Old World. And, while they initially had little appetite for the Natives’ land at this time, they eventually took interest in the soil’s ability to produce an array of crops. The changes that the HBC brought to the region not only continued a pattern of environmental change that the S’Puyalupubsh had long practiced, but these alterations also had numerous short-and long-term effects on the region’s Indian residents. As William Cronon writes, a “...reshaped environment presents a new set of possibilities for cultural reproduction, thus setting up a new cycle of mutual determination.”³⁵

³³ Herbert Hunt, *Tacoma: Its History and Its Builders, A Half-Century of Activity* (Chicago: J. Clarke Publishing, 1916), 9-10, 16.

³⁴ Bunting, 12-13; Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, 273. Smith notes that those Puyallup who lived away from the sound or rivers were less likely to clear land through burning because during certain seasons, it was too dry and they feared that the fire would become uncontrollable.

³⁵ Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 20-21, 169.

Many of the S'Puyalupubsh showed their acceptance of the HBC's changes to the land by hiring themselves out to the company and assisting in the reconfiguration of portions of the South Sound's ecosystem. The S'Puyalupubsh's long history of laboring for the needs of their community allowed them to adapt to the HBC's needs. For instance, it was customary for the residents of each Indian village to contribute to the community's well-being. Because the South Sound's environment allowed the S'Puyalupubsh to establish a relatively permanent home site, they had the time, energy, and domestic stability to focus upon certain specialties and develop sophisticated technologies. Individuals provided services like hunting, defending the village from outside attacks, or attending to the sick. Others were adept at processing hides or constructing items such as mats, clothing, baskets, cookware, tools, housing, weapons, and canoes.³⁶ Still others spent their time honing their skills as shamans or gamblers.

Gender played a role in how a resident contributed to the lodge's welfare. Men generally pursued game or constructed dwellings, weapons, or canoes, while women attended to sewing and weaving clothes, mats, and baskets. Men and women occasionally shared some responsibilities such as gathering plants or preparing food.³⁷

The HBC's arrival changed the dynamics of each S'Puyalupubsh village to a certain degree, for the company offered the Natives new ideas, goods, economic roles, and opportunities for advancement within their society. The Indians discovered that one of the more prominent changes introduced by the HBC was the merchant, who organized the transport of goods, and assessed and recorded the value of certain items. Company merchants taught the S'Puyalupubsh,

³⁶ Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, 140-141.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 138-140.

that in the Europeans' eyes virtually everything had monetary or trade value, which was an unfamiliar concept for many of the Natives.³⁸

HBC merchants also tried to teach the S'Puyalupubsh about European systems of authority and control, which company officials believed would help insure that goods and capital flowed with minimal disruptions. Among the tools that the company used to establish its power in the Puget Sound was a set of forts it built throughout the area. These outposts protected the company's interests by acting as pumps and valves in an economic circulatory system that thrust men, merchandise, information, and company authority deep into the Indians' lives. The outposts also provided surveillance to protect the flow of goods and services throughout the region.³⁹

The HBC brought the S'Puyalupubsh into close contact with this system when it built Fort Nisqually, fifteen miles southwest of present-day Tacoma. The structure sat on the Nisqually Plains, a 30-mile-square area between the Cascade Mountains and the Puget Sound. The company constructed the fort at this particular location because it gave inhabitants easy access to fresh water and it sat near acres of prairie and timber. The fort's location also positioned it approximately halfway between Fort Vancouver to the south, and various stations that lay to the east and north. Meanwhile, the area was home to numerous Indians who were eager to trade with the HBC. The fact that the site was accessible by water from anywhere on

³⁸ This was a common experience for Indians when they initially came into contact with Euro-Americans. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 12-13, 95-98, 165.

³⁹ Harris, 34-35, 39; Richard Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade on the Pacific* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 127; Newman, 4.

the Puget Sound meant that Natives from as far away as Whidbey Island, Admiralty Inlet, and even the Pacific Coast could come to the fort to conduct business.⁴⁰

HBC employee Archibald McDonald supervised the construction of Fort Nisqually's original buildings. He and his crew began working in April of 1832, and they completed the first structure, a 15 x 20 foot log house, in twelve days. Company workers erected additional buildings in 1833. The work was painstaking, as men whipsawed the logs into planks and then connected them together with wooden pegs and the tongue-in-groove method. The largest building was the 20 x 55 foot factor's residence.⁴¹

S'Puyalupubsh were among some of the first Indians to participate in commercial activity at the new post. They traded bear, otter, and beaver skins or hired themselves out for assorted tasks, including transporting some of the first HBC goods over the rough terrain between Fort Vancouver and the Puget Sound.⁴² Some S'Puyalupubsh also sold oil to the company that they had rendered from dogfish and mud sharks.⁴³ Nuckalkat and Quilniash took advantage of these opportunities in numerous ways. While they were guiding Tolmie through the foothills of Mt. Rainier, they killed elk and brought back the animals' fat to trade to HBC merchants.⁴⁴ The pair

⁴⁰ Alfred J. Smith, *Old Fort Nisqually: A Historical Sketch* (Tacoma, WA: A. Smith, 1936), 1,3.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Dickey, *The Journal of Occurrences at Ft. Nisqually*, see: July 16, 1833; January 10, July 19, 1836; February 21, May 27, July 6, December 4, 1837; May 7, 1838.

⁴³ Tolmie, 208, 219, 220, 251; Eells, *The Indians of the Puget Sound*, 98; John S. Galbraith, *The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, 1821-1869* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), 40, 140.

⁴⁴ Tolmie, 231.

also benefitted during the expedition by swapping a slab of elk meat to a famished Tolmie for three rings and four lead balls of musket shot.⁴⁵

The S’Puyalupubsh, like HBC merchants, were eager to accumulate material goods. However, the Indians’ motivations to participate in these transactions differed from that of the Europeans. The S’Puyalupubsh exploited their contacts with the HBC to satisfy and occasionally enrich their distinct cultural needs. For example, they often utilized goods such as fabrics, molasses, metal objects, glass beads, firearms, etc., in ways that differed from European applications. This included using them as stakes for gambling wagers, compensation for shamans, or gifts for potlatch ceremonies.⁴⁶

Members of S’Puyalupubsh society also used wealth accumulated from trade as a measure of one’s relationship to the spirit world. Community members believed that individuals with a particular skill set and ample material possessions had a strong relationship with their supernatural spirit. Each adult believed he or she had a particular power that he or she received from his or her spirit, and this association influenced every facet of his or her life, including the ability to accumulate wealth. The S’Puyalupubsh recognized individuals who had “wealth power” as being a holder of “tio’tlbax,” which was akin to the western concept of having a Midas touch. They felt that this power gave one the ability to become wealthy and blessed them with the attributes of graciousness and generosity.⁴⁷

Wealth accumulation also had political implications. S’Puyalupubsh influence within their village came partially from one’s ability to display wisdom and skill that was the product of

⁴⁵ Ibid., 230.

⁴⁶ Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, 76, 217.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 56, 59, 71.

his or her personal power. Individuals who rose to become a lodge's headman or chief also exhibited an ability to broker disagreements between fellow villagers or between separate villages. Lodge residents showed their appreciation, respect, and loyalty to such an individual by rewarding a specialist with gifts. Consequently, the possession of property was one of several symbols of the owner's importance to the village.⁴⁸

S'Puyalupubsh who possessed sufficient material goods solidified or improved their status by distributing their property at a potlatch, which made a sponsor's "name bigger" through "wealth power." Potlatches could be separate ceremonies or the host could tie it in with other types of gatherings, like funerals or marriages. The potlatch host designated a time and place in which he or she exchanged portions of his or hers net worth for the recipients' allegiance, which further enhanced the host's reputation and influence. Potlatches ultimately acted as glue that helped solidify the unity of village members.⁴⁹

The S'Puyalupubsh's emphasis upon property accumulation and distribution allowed most community members the opportunity to use their contacts with Europeans to change their station within the village. Most S'Puyalupubsh villagers belonged to the middle-upper or the upper level of their society but stratifications existed within these groupings. There were also residents who did little to contribute to the village's welfare. Members of this population segment had fewer material possessions, and, therefore, inhabited the lower echelons of Puyallup

⁴⁸ Ibid, 50; Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, 219.

⁴⁹ Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, 107-108, 110. Potlatch invitees often brought food with them to give to the host, who would then redistribute it as well. Suttles and Harris state that this aspect of the potlatch was created to distribute excess items, e.g. fish or venison, in order to stem shortages. Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, 23, 31, 204-205; Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikan, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1990), 10-12.

society. The general population stigmatized people with limited possessions by referring to them as “no-accounts.”⁵⁰ In any case, the S’Puyalupubsh’s access to HBC goods gave individuals a chance to move from one economic, social, and political level to another.

As useful as European trade was to the S’Puyalupubsh, many Indians continued to employ traditional tools and ideas to satisfy their needs because they believed that they worked as well as anything the newcomers offered.⁵¹ A case in point was the S’Puyalupubsh’s construction and use of wedge-shaped stones to recover wood and then shape it into homes and canoes.⁵² The aforementioned HBC Governor Simpson showed his respect towards the regional Indians’ skill with this device by noting in his log that “... their workmanship with this tool is very ingenious and well finished.”⁵³ The Northwest Natives’ continued use of watertight coil reed vessels to cook their food also impressed him.⁵⁴ The S’Puyalupubsh exhibited a continued

⁵⁰ Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, 48-52, 55, 59, 68; Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, 17, 20, 104-105, 219. The Puyallup community also had slaves, which they saw as another form of property. Slaves were the only group members who were mired in the lower echelons of the community. They, like all possessions, represented wealth power and status. See: Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, 6-7.; Ames and Maschner, 27.

⁵¹ Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, 146-148; Smith, “The Puyallup of Washington,” 22-23; Daniel Richter, *Facing East From Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 41, 43.

⁵² Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, 232.

⁵³ Simpson, 103. American Naval Captain Charles Wilkes was also impressed with the Indians’ craftsmanship. During a sojourn to the Puyallup River, he made notice of a hut that was “remarkably well made.” He said the boards were evenly cut and the structure was watertight. See: Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Party During the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842*, Vol. 4 (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845), 420.

⁵⁴ Simpson, 103. Natives prepared their food in these coil reed baskets by heating rocks in a fire and then placing them among the food that sat within the utensil. Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, 148.

appreciation for this type of cookware by doling them out at potlatches, even after the HBC had made iron kettles available to them.⁵⁵

TENSIONS

The S'Puyalupubsh traded with the HBC because the company provided the Natives with what they deemed to be quality and fairly priced merchandise. This, and the fact that the HBC only wanted enough land to establish a trading post and a modest farm, at least until 1840 when its agricultural ambitions grew, ensured stable relations between both communities. Company administrators appreciated this situation as much as the Indians did because peaceful relations enabled trade.⁵⁶

Despite the Indians' and the HBC's ability to offer mutually beneficial opportunities to each other, their interactions still experienced stresses. In more than one instance, the Natives' capacity to exert their independence during the course of their relations with the newcomers frustrated HBC employees who preferred conducting trade in the manner to which they were accustomed. Differences in perspective also affected various aspects of the exchange experience. Sources of tension included HBC officials' failure to understand that the Natives acquired possessions as much for distribution as for accumulation. Meanwhile, indigenous people believed relationships were an important part of trading while HBC merchants

⁵⁵ Ibid., 76, 217; Bunting, 27; Salisbury, 16-17; Christopher L. Miller, and George R. Hamell, "A New Perspective on Indian-White Contact: Cultural Symbols and Colonial Trade," in *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500-1850*, ed. Peter C. Mancall and James H. Merrell (New York: Routledge, 2000), 178-181.

⁵⁶ Gray H. Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee: U.S. Empire and the Transformation of an Indigenous World, 1792-1859* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 206.

emphasized the quality, quantity, and price of goods and services more than the rapport between the traders. Yet another difference concerned the concept of labor. Aboriginals generally saw work as a means to an end while Euro-Americans held that work had a social and economic meaning and was a measure of individual virtue.⁵⁷

Language was another problem that plagued the two cultures' relationship with each other. For instance, Tolmie constantly required an interpreter to communicate with the Natives, which was a source of discontent for him. The Indians compelled HBC officials to speak Chinook in most of their dealings, which, as I stated earlier, was an imprecise language. A copy of an HBC logbook contains a set of Chinook phrases that company employees likely used quite often. They were either questions about intent or orders to perform a task. Phrases included: "What do you want to buy or get for this?" "What are you doing?" "Work away, work away." "Quickly, be quick." "Come and get your grub." "Where are you going?" And, "Whence did he come?"⁵⁸ These statements suggest that HBC clerks and supervisors spent much time imploring the Indians to stay focused on a particular task, which undoubtedly added to their frustration when dealing with the aboriginals.

HBC employees were also maddened by what they claimed was the Natives' ignorance of European notions of personal and company property. Tolmie often commented on the local Indians' habit of helping themselves to his or the company's possessions. In one instance, a

⁵⁷ Stephen Gudeman, *Economics as Culture: Models and Metaphors of Livelihood* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 44; Newman, 172; David Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 36; E. Paul Dunenberger and Nicola Tannenbaum, "Chayanov and Theory in Economic Anthropology," in *Theory in Economic Anthropology*, ed. Jean Ensminger (New York: Alta Mira Press, 2002), 140-141.

⁵⁸ *Hudson's Bay Company's Account Books at Fort Nisqually, 1833-1850*. Photocopy available at Tacoma Public Library.

Native secured two HBC canoes without permission. When Tolmie found the culprit, he “Remonstrated with him on the impropriety of stealing our canoes but the interpreter declined translating his answer on the grounds that the doctor ‘spoke bad’.” Tolmie was only able to iron out the disagreement by paying the alleged thief some tobacco.⁵⁹

Despite Tolmie’s concerns about the Indians’ respect for the possessions of others, the S’Puyalupubsh did have concepts of property that they employed to promote social, political, and economic stability as well as to deal with the potential consequences of excess and dearth.⁶⁰ Inland prairie villagers used notions of property when they restricted outsiders’ access to their hunting grounds in order to avoid shortages of deer, bear, and elk. Experience had taught them that if they allowed members of other villages to harvest game from the lands immediately encircling their lodge site, they would have to invest valuable time or trade prized commodities to obtain replacement food, or else they would likely endure some degree of malnutrition.⁶¹

The S’Puyalupubsh’s establishment of permanent home sites allowed them to accumulate more “stuff” than typical foragers, which caused them to employ other concepts of property,

⁵⁹ Tolmie, 239-240.

⁶⁰ Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, 9-10; Craig S. Galbraith, Carlos Rodriguez, and Curt H. Stiles, “False Myths and Indigenous Entrepreneurial Strategies,” in *Self-Determination: The Other Path for Native Americans*, ed. Terry Anderson, Bruce Benson, and Thomas Flanagan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 5; Terry L. Anderson and Dominic Parker, “The Wealth of Indian Nations: Economic Performance and Institutions on Reservations,” in *Self-Determination: The Other Path for Native Americans*, eds. Terry Anderson, Bruce Benson, and Thomas Flanagan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 190; Bruce Benson, “Customary Indian Law: Two Case Studies,” in *Property Rights and Indian Economies: The Political Economy Forum*, ed. Terry Anderson (Washington, D.C.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1992), 32.

⁶¹ Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, 24-25.

including notions of inheritance, transfer, and personal property.⁶² They defined personal property by classifying ownership of an item via a determination of who utilized it rather than who created it. Thus, if a S’Puyalupubsh man made or obtained a tool for his wife’s use, he relinquished indefinite control of the item to her, which allowed her to continue contributing to the village in the case of a family dissolution. The S’Puyalupubsh’s concept of ownership was so strong that they often buried items that fell into this category with their deceased owners, unless the proprietor had agreed to pass the artifact on to another person. There were cases when the S’Puyalupubsh mandated that some property had to be inheritable because going without it or trying to replace it would burden the village’s surviving members. They put slaves, horses, and canoes into this category. At the same time, the S’Puyalupubsh required an owner of inheritable property to pass it on to a member of his or her blood group rather than someone outside of it in order to mitigate violence. The S’Puyalupubsh used similar principles for the possession of essential property (common usage items), excess property, which were articles related to conspicuous consumption, and certain types of knowledge.⁶³

Like the Europeans, the S’Puyalupubsh developed property concepts to ensure a level of tranquility within their communities. However, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many Europeans believed that the disparate ways in which Indians and non-Indians defined property proved that there were inherent flaws in the aboriginals’ intellect and character. Western science’s racialization of the planet’s human population during that era informed many of these views. Hence, when the Natives frustrated Tolmie in the marketplace, he unhesitatingly called them “filthy” humans who had no respect for property rights. He likewise attacked their

⁶² Ames and Maschner, 25.

⁶³ Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, 143-145.

work ethic by claiming that they constantly loitered around the fort and relied too much on the Chinook language, which he chastised as “vile...gibberish.”⁶⁴ Tolmie was not alone in rebuking Indians who upset him. Many European colonists in the New World racialized the Indians as soon as they went into competition with them over land and resources. These non-Natives were especially willing to use race as a justification to take sections of the Indians’ territory from them. They claimed that the Natives were too wild and ignorant to fully appreciate and use what they had. Racialism also released its wielders “from the responsibility of their actions, actions that would otherwise have been repellent and unacceptable.”⁶⁵ HBC officials’ denigration of the Native character intensified over time as non-Indians stepped up their efforts to control the region.

Tensions between the HBC employees and South Sound Natives also arose when members of each group attempted to influence the other to varying degrees. The HBC had been dealing with Indians since well before its employees and the S’Puyalupubsh began interacting with each other. A century’s worth of these experiences had convinced company officials that economic arrangements with the Indians worked best when all of the participants adhered to a common set of rules.

The S’Puyalupubsh could appreciate this policy for they had their own regulations regarding ownership and trade. For example, they created and employed notions of distance, quantity, and time, which traders could use during the exchange process.⁶⁶ They also had trade arrangements that were akin to contractual obligations. Aside from recognizing basic trades in

⁶⁴ Tolmie, 143, 188-189, 215, 221-222, 239-240.

⁶⁵ Whaley, 137, 155, 159-160.

⁶⁶ Eells, *The Indians of the Puget Sound*, 202; Haeberlin and Gunther, 29.

which individuals bartered one item for another, the S'Puyalupubsh also practiced the idea of paying for something prior to its creation, e.g. a "customer" paying an artisan to make a canoe or a patient compensating a shaman for his cures. They likewise had concepts of exchange in which one paid a gift to another to fix a bad relationship, or someone gave a gift with no expectation of reimbursement.⁶⁷ These values and protocols were important to the S'Puyalupubsh, but they were willing to alter them when the consummation of a transaction required it. Their problem was that HBC officials had different protocols, and the non-Indians thought it was more prudent for the S'Puyalupubsh to convert to the English system rather than for company employees to make adjustments that fit what the Indians practiced. Therefore, the company empowered men like Governor Simpson and Tolmie to try to establish HBC legal and economic hegemony throughout the Puget Sound region. Their actions had a direct influence upon how Fort Nisqually personnel dealt with their Native trade partners.⁶⁸

South Sound Natives witnessed HBC officials attempting to control Indian behaviors in several ways. For example, the Europeans, and later the Americans, often ignored Indian names for a location and gave these places their own titles. Captain George Vancouver did this during his exploration of the Puget Sound in 1792. He identified the region's inland sea as Puget Sound, Tahoma as Mt. Rainier, and a small inlet on the west side of the Sound's narrows as Gig Harbor.

Simpson and Tolmie also joined fellow Europeans in re-categorizing the Native populations, at least to a degree. Recall that one way in which the S'Puyalupubsh identified themselves was through their connection to the Puyallup River and its surrounding tributaries

⁶⁷ Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, 146-148.

⁶⁸ Newman, 4, 9, 80.

and lands. Early European explorers and traders adhered to this system because it made sense to them. Hence, when Fort Nisqually opened for business, employees began referring to the Indians from the “Payallip river” as the “Poyalup.” Tolmie did this when he recorded his hiring of Nuckalkat and Quilniash in 1833. HBC officials used an assortment of other spellings when recording transactions with the S’Puyalupubsh as well. At one point, a particular employee used the word “Puyallipas.” By the late winter and early spring of 1837, HBC merchants were simultaneously employing other structures: “Three “Poo-yal-lups came and traded 5 beavers,” and “A young Poo-yal-lap died yesterday suddenly.”⁶⁹

This labeling scheme was only partly accurate because many Indian societies, like the S’Puyalupubsh, also organized their communities through familial and ancestral ties, a common language, and shared economic and ceremonial activities. This social and political structure was a constant source of frustration for European and later American administrators because it was occasionally amorphous and often dynamic. The Euro-Americans therefore insisted upon relying upon the seemingly static attributes of geography to construct their definition of a “tribe.”⁷⁰

The HBC, like other European institutions in the New World, also tried to use the marketplace to manage the Natives.⁷¹ George Simpson felt that trade would eventually compel

⁶⁹ Dickey, *The Journal of Occurrences at Ft. Nisqually*, see dates: February 21, May 27, 1837; Tolmie, 230. From this point on in this study, I will refer to the subjects as the Puyallup.

⁷⁰ Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, 210, 219.

⁷¹ Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia*, 34, 57; Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption* (New York: Routledge, 1996), xxi-xxii; Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), xii, xv, 20; Tim Dant, *Materiality and Society* (Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press, 2005), 4; Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value*, 153.

the Indians to “imbibe our manners and customs and imitate us in Dress; our Supplies would thus become necessary to them.” He likewise believed that European goods would convince the Indians to take on what he believed to be preferable non-Native attributes. He insisted that commerce would push the Indians to “become more industrious and...turn their attention more seriously to the Chase in order to be enabled to provide themselves with such supplies.”⁷²

While the HBC attempted to use Fort Nisqually’s commercial activity to transform the South Sound Natives in certain ways, they gave the outpost another economic role that made it a spore for the Europeans’ new physical alteration of the region. After taking control of the HBC’s Columbia Divisions in 1821, Simpson made several visits to the Pacific Northwest. After the first tour (1824-1825) he expanded the scope of the company’s Pacific Northwest fur trade, a decision that ultimately produced Fort Nisqually. Simpson then made a second inventory of the region in 1828-1829, after which he recommended to his superiors that the HBC diversify its economic operations. He understood that the company’s reliance on furs had decimated the region’s stock of needed animals. Simpson meanwhile thought that sections of the area, especially the South Sound, would be excellent for raising livestock and certain crops. He thus began converting some of the HBC’s forts into farms and ranches.⁷³

The company made Fort Nisqually part of their plan to shift its economic focus toward agriculture due to earlier successes that employees had experienced while raising small herds of animals. The original inhabitants of the fort had brought a handful of cows and horses with them and by 1837 these beasts, along with numerous pigs and chickens, wandered the property. These animals did so well foraging off the local lands that in 1838 Simpson sent 634 sheep to the fort,

⁷² Simpson, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 108.

⁷³ Mackie, 44-45.

along with more cattle. These herds also thrived and quickly became an alternative source of income for the HBC. At the same time, employees began raising crops. By 1839, the HBC secured a contract with the Russian American Company to supply its Pacific Northwest outposts with rations in return for pelts. The HBC was now essentially converting domesticated animals into furs, which was much more manageable and lucrative than directly hiring trappers and processing hides. By 1840, the HBC had made Fort Nisqually the base of operations for the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, which supplied plant and animal products not only to the Russians, but to customers in California and Hawaii as well. The company's ability to service all of these customers helped it turn a profit on its agricultural operations by 1844.⁷⁴

Fort Nisqually's emergence as a farming enterprise had assorted implications for the Puyallup. Once the fort switched to agriculture its administrators claimed vast tracts of lands that stretched between the Nisqually and Puyallup Rivers.⁷⁵ A sprinkling of British immigrants settled portions of these properties, as employees of the HBC. John Montgomery was among those workers who settled near Puyallup homelands. He came to the region from Scotland, in 1841, and established a home in what is now Spanaway, some ten miles southwest of the Puyallup River.⁷⁶ Newcomers like Montgomery were sparse, however, because the HBC tried to restrain Euro-American settlement of the region. The company therefore still relied upon the

⁷⁴ James Gibson, *Farming the Frontier: The Agricultural Opening of the Oregon Country, 1786-1846* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 4-5, 9, 87, 104; Alfred J. Smith, *Old Fort Nisqually*, 3-4; "The Granary and Factor's House, Fort Nisqually," United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, accessed October 26, 2011, <https://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NHLS/Text/70000647.pdf>; Newman, 4-5, 9, 26-27, 87, 104; Mackie, 235-240; Tolmie, 216; Galbraith, 201; Bunting, 38; Morgan, 30-32.

⁷⁵ Smith, *Old Fort Nisqually*, 5.

⁷⁶ Steve A. Anderson, "The Forgetting of John Montgomery: Spanaway's First White Settler, 1845-1885," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 101 (Spring 2010): 73.

Indians to perform over half of the needed work. Puget Sound Agricultural Company officials hired Indians to be herders and cultivators, and by 1846, the operation was employing at least forty-four Natives and paying them as much as eight pounds per year along with supplies.⁷⁷

The habits of Native farm workers continued to frustrate company officials and the non-Native immigrants who hired them. These individuals, who had long practiced affluent foraging, often balked at performing certain tasks that required more intense physical labor than what they wanted to perform. They knew that they could secure food and resources from the surrounding environment with much less effort.⁷⁸

Native workers' alternative understanding of the manager-worker relationship further maddened their HBC employers. We can see this from Joseph Heath's records of his interactions with Indian workers. Heath lived outside of Fort Nisqually, near Steilacoom, and worked for the HBC as a contract farmer, from 1843 through 1849. He depended upon local Indians to work his land and there is a chance that several of his employees over the years were Puyallup. His diaries show us that there were occasions when Indian workers brought him satisfaction. In July 1845 he wrote, "Got three wandering Indians to work digging holes for posts to [the] barn. Brisk as a bee. Lots of people at work—puts me quite in spirits."⁷⁹ Yet, Native laborers could just as easily stoke Heath's ire, as when they failed to perform the tasks he asked of them. In 1845, one of the Indians got himself discharged for idleness. Heath later lamented, "Could do nothing with him." Other Indians would be hired and then demand a higher wage midway through the project. "Men making road all struck, wanted me to pay them for

⁷⁷ Gibson, 118; *Hudson's Bay Company's Account Books at Fort Nisqually*.

⁷⁸ Puget Sound Agricultural Company officials also complained about Indian participation in livestock rustling as well. See: Gibson, 118-119, 185-186.

⁷⁹ Joseph Heath, *Memoirs of Nisqually* (Fairfield, WA: Galleon Press, 1979), 47.

what they had done. Refused to do so and after much palaver [they] went to their work again.” There were also times Heath could not find any workers, as was the case in June of 1845, when he “rode to the Fort to get people to make [a] road for sheep to the sea beach. Unsuccessful; all away to eat raspberries.”⁸⁰

Despite these issues, the Puyallup and HBC operatives continued to find some advantages to working with each other. However, this fulcrum of mutual dependence between the Puyallup and the non-Natives shifted perceptibly during the mid-nineteenth century. The Puyallup’s tradition of associating with outsiders to enhance their own lives began to betray them because the non-Native newcomers eventually had powers and influences that the Puyallup could not stand up to.

Several forces propelled the changes. We can trace one as coming from decisions made by members of the Puyallup community. Many Puyallup were eager recipients of European goods and before long they became reliant upon particular commodities to perform common tasks. Once the Natives adopted these items and discarded their traditional ones, they came to depend upon non-Natives for continued supply. Within a generation or two, Indians exacerbated this trend by losing the skills needed to create and efficiently use many of their customary tools. The Puyallup’s adoption of guns was one of the springs in this trap, as it led to their dependence upon shot and powder. William Tolmie noted that over time the Indians he dealt with craved ammunition, “...more than trinkets or bijouterie of any kind....” The Indians’ preference for guns also contributed to an all-out assault on the area’s wildlife population, which had at least two consequences. First, it diminished the Puyallup’s long-established food supply.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 14, 47, 49.

Second, it compelled the Natives to use European textiles in order to make clothes, rather than relying upon animal skins that were becoming more scarce and, therefore, more valuable.⁸¹

The influx of European goods also upset tribal unity at a time when members could have used cohesion to blunt the damaging impacts of the non-Natives presence. When the HBC first arrived in the Puget Sound region, Native village leaders strengthened their economic and political power by being the primary conduit for company goods that flowed into their communities. However, HBC traders did not limit their transactions to headmen, so before long any Native, whether a leader or not, was a potential client. This policy made non-chiefs less dependent upon their leaders and allowed them to sponsor their own potlatches, which eroded the old guard's influence and prestige.⁸²

European borne diseases were another source of upheaval in the Puyallup's lives. Pre-contact South Sound Indians had long suffered from a host of physical maladies, including tuberculosis, non-venereal syphilis, iron deficiencies, intestinal disorders, rheumatoid arthritis, and arthritis caused by intense and prolonged physical activity. Due to these health problems, the average Puget Sound Native probably only lived into their thirties.⁸³ The Europeans brought

⁸¹ Tolmie, 219; Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, 313-314.

⁸² John Lutz, "Work, Sex, and Death on the Great Thoroughfare," in *Parallel Destinies: Canadian-American Relations West of the Rockies*, eds. John Findlay and Ken Coates (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 84, 87, 88; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 98; June McCormick Collins, "Growth of Class Distinctions and Political Authority Among the Skagit Indians during the Contact Period," *American Anthropologist*, 52:3 (July-September, 1950): 338; Cole and Chaikan, 8-9, 65; Marshall Sahlins and Elman Service, *Evolution and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), 65-67; Richter, 52-53. A number of these authors point out that the large death toll upon the Native population brought on by disease also increased the number of potlatches because leadership positions had a high turnover rate. These new leaders, in turn, became more reliant upon Euro-Americans for items to distribute.

⁸³ Ames and Maschner, 56-57.

with them a new set of illnesses that came in waves and proved much more traumatic to the Indians. For example, from 1835 through 1847, meningitis, measles, influenza, mumps, dysentery, and smallpox descended upon Native communities in the area. Venereal disease and a new wave of tuberculosis tore into the Native population as well. Some of these illnesses then returned during the 1850s. Smallpox was the most dangerous of these maladies. Robert Boyd argues that this particular disease initially killed about one-third of the Indians; some historical demographers suggest that in some areas the death rate was much higher, in excess of ninety percent.⁸⁴

While we can safely guess that these multiple epidemics killed at least twenty-five percent of the region's Native inhabitants during the early-to-mid nineteenth century, it is difficult to gauge what effect these events had upon the Puyallup.⁸⁵ Regardless of the numbers, the death rates decimated many Indian communities by depriving them of workers, warriors, child bearers, and problem solvers. One can assume that Puyallup were among the affected, because the Fort Nisqually records from 1837 indicated an overall drop in Indian trade activity during one particular smallpox outbreak. This implies that the disease noticeably affected the Puyallup or that they avoided the fort out of fear that visits could further expose them to the illness. On the other hand, some Puyallup did come to the fort to trade at this time, which suggests other possibilities. Those customers may have avoided the trauma of this outbreak

⁸⁴ Robert Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence: Introduced Infectious Diseases and Population Decline Among Northwest Coast Indians, 1774-1789* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 116, 134, 137; Ames and Maschner, *Peoples of the Northwest Coast*, 53-54.

⁸⁵ Boyd, "Demographic History," 137-139; Boyd, 134, 137; Alfred W. Crosby, "Ecological Imperialism: The Overseas Migration of Western Europeans as a Biological Phenomenon," in *American Encounters*, 55-57; Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia*, 23; Bunting, 31.

because earlier epidemics had thinned out the Native population enough to create breaks in the chain of contact between separate Indian communities, or the survivors of these earlier outbreaks passed on natural immunities to later generations. Alternatively, it might be proof that some Puyallup had participated in the Hudson's Bay Company's smallpox vaccination program at Fort Nisqually.⁸⁶

AMERICAN "EARTH HUNGER"

We can interpret the Puyallup's growing dependence upon Euro-American goods and their susceptibility to European borne diseases as two powerful attacks upon their culture. The arrival of large numbers of American immigrants to the South Sound represented a third destructive shockwave that descended upon the Indians of this area. American interest in the Pacific Northwest, dating back at least to Robert Gray's return from his 1792 reconnaissance of the Columbia River, accelerated after the return of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1806 and Captain Charles Wilkes's mission to the south Puget Sound in 1841.⁸⁷ Correspondence from missionaries and early American settlers perpetuated American fascination with the Oregon Territory as many observers highlighted its mild climate, abundant resources, and stretches of rich soil. Some of the authors added that the Puget Sound could be a practical location for an American seaport.

⁸⁶ Suttles, *Handbook of North American Indians*, 137-139; Boyd, 134, 137; Carson, *Rising From the Ashes*, 9.

⁸⁷ Significant 19th century American explorations into the Pacific Northwest aside from Wilkes's and Lewis and Clark's were Captain B.L.C. Bonneville (1834) and Lieutenant John Fremont (1843).

During the 1840s, tens of thousands of Americans were so intrigued with Oregon's potential to improve their lives that they travelled a roughly 1,900-mile rugged overland trail that stretched from western Missouri to the Willamette Valley. The journey took approximately six months and migrants endured perilous terrain, extreme weather, deadly diseases and accidents. Once the immigrants arrived, they attended to their cultural needs by leveling forests, altering vistas, uprooting native plants, chasing off unwanted predators, and then replacing them with imported life forms.

The American settlers' goals regarding land use and possession differed from those of the HBC. George Simpson was interested in land ownership, but he was equally if not more concerned about the resources his employees could cull from the earth. Consequently, the company attempted to deter settlers from coming into the region and staking a claim to a section of the area that would limit the company's ability to access furs or farm. Most Americans, meanwhile, had little interest in working for a corporation. They instead wanted to privatize the land for individual or family use as much as possible. Many of the men and women who travelled the Oregon Trail saw land as a reward for their travails as well as a symbol of independence and opportunity. Many of them also belonged to a society that viewed land as a good that had monetary value and could be transferred from person to person. Over time, the newcomers expected their government to force the Natives to yield to, if not participate in, this grand design.⁸⁸

The Great Migration's first wave of immigrants did not immediately impact the Puyallup because most of the early arriving Americans settled south of the Columbia River, within the Willamette Valley. Later travelers broke to the north after reaching that particular tributary, and

⁸⁸ Bunting, 42-46, 51-54.

before long, some established home sites within the Puyallup's territorial range. Some Puyallup, as was their habit, immediately approached the settlers to find out what economic and cultural opportunities were available. They soon discovered that the Americans were arriving in much larger numbers than the British had and they carried with them a different vision for the area's future. By mid-century, this put an ever-increasing amount of pressure upon the Puyallup community because, unlike the HBC, the Americans had an "earth hunger" that they could only satisfy at significant cost to the Indians. Therefore, while many Americans mirrored the HBC by giving Puyallup a role in the local market economy, their urge to establish numerous boundaries throughout the region put much more pressure on the Indians to change their way of life.⁸⁹

The new settlers had to gain control of the area before they could legally make changes to it. This meant that their government needed to deal with the English and the Natives. The American takeover of the Pacific Northwest could have conceivably occurred in various ways, including a hostile takeover. There were other possibilities, however, and the American government at this time obtained large amounts of foreign lands through treaties. The short and long-term implications of this government policy upon the Puyallup will become apparent throughout this study.

The Americans first tried to erase any British claims to the region by forcing a renegotiation of the Convention of 1818. In 1844, James Polk made the American takeover of Oregon Territory a plank in his successful presidential campaign platform. He especially wanted the United States to obtain control of the Puget Sound, one of the few deep-water harbors along the length of the Pacific coast. The British eventually ceded to the Americans lands south of the 49th parallel and the resulting Treaty of 1846 placed the Puyallup under the American flag. The

⁸⁹ Whaley, 206.

agreement did not immediately sever the Puyallup's relations with the HBC since the company did not vacate Fort Nisqually until 1869, after American and company officials finally agreed on a price to compensate the HBC for its property.⁹⁰

Immigrant entry onto Puyallup lands increased when Congress passed the Donation Land Act of 1850. This law gave claimants living in Oregon prior to December 1, 1850, 320 acres of land, while married couples qualified for 640 acres. After that time, and up until 1853, the government awarded half of these amounts to new settlers. In each case, the claimants had to occupy their parcels and cultivate them for at least four years, at which point the government awarded the settlers a patent to the land. Eventually the American government issued 7,317 patents for 2,500,000 acres of land in what is now Oregon and 300,000 acres in what became Washington Territory.⁹¹

The Donation Land Act provided the Puyallup with new neighbors well before the American government had figured out how it would transfer land and resources from Indian possession. In 1852, the immigrant Nicholas De Lin moved onto a claim on the shores of Commencement Bay and then dropped timber, dammed two creeks, and built a sawmill. At one point, he was harvesting enough trees to process roughly 2,000 board feet of lumber each day. Peter Judson and his family arrived the following year and obtained 321 acres of land. His farm occupied a western portion of the Puyallup's lands and he was harvesting oats and wheat within a year. William Sales established another Donation Land Act homestead along the Puyallup

⁹⁰ The HBC's claims on Fort Nisqually, as well as all land south of the 49th Parallel, ended in 1872 after the U.S. Government agreed to pay the company and the Puget Sound Agricultural Company \$650,000. Robert Ficken, *Washington Territory* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 2006), 58; Bunting, 38.

⁹¹ James M. Bergquist, "The Oregon Donation Act and the National Land Policy," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 58:1 (March 1957): 28-29; Kluger, 31.

River, while several other entrepreneurs launched a fishery and barrel-making operation nearby.⁹² By 1855, at least eight non-Native families had staked claims on what had been Puyallup territory.⁹³

The Puyallup initially responded to the Americans' presence much like they had the HBC's. They assessed aspects of American culture and economic activity and then either used them to their advantage or ignored them. At the beginning of this process, the Puyallup and their new neighbors found each other to be peculiar, occasionally useful, and at times entertaining. The Puyallup's habit of brazenly walking into the newcomers' homes without a knock or greeting sometimes offended the homesteaders. However, the Indians' apparent hospitality, which they frequently displayed through gifts of food, often tempered the homeowners' irritation at these intrusions. Ezra Meeker, who came to the South Sound in 1853, said later that he found the Puyallup to be very pleasant with him and consequently he never locked the doors of his cabin, whether he was home or away.⁹⁴

De Lin's sawmill was a popular hangout for some Puyallup who enjoyed watching the large circular blade noisily slice wood logs into useable planks. They were apparently astonished at the device's speed and accuracy in performing a task that had always taken them considerable effort and time to complete with their simple tools. De Lin complained to friends that at times he had to herd the Indians off the premises so he could produce his daily quota of

⁹² Hunt, 10; Morgan, 80-82; Caroline Gallacci, "Planning the City of Destiny: An Urban History of Tacoma to 1930" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1999), 89-91.

⁹³ Kluger, 31-33; Warren Gove, letter to Isaac Stevens, Governor of Washington Territory and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, December 29, 1856, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Puyallup Indian Agency, Tacoma, WA, Land Use Files 1855-1920. RG 75, Box 1, Series 20, NA-PAR.

⁹⁴ Hunt, 133; Ezra Meeker, *Pioneer Reminiscences of Puget Sound* (Seattle: Lowman & Hanford, 1905), 224.

boards. Not surprisingly, many of the new settlers found the Indians to be just as intriguing. They especially marveled at the spectacle created when the Puyallup gathered with Indians from other Native societies on the Nisqually plains to race their horses, gamble, and hold feasts.⁹⁵

The Puyallup and the Americans also developed a trade relationship with each other. In this case, the Americans' arrival provided the Puyallup with more chances to participate in exchange because there were more Americans and many were closer in proximity to the Puyallup than Fort Nisqually was. One settler, John Swan, established a small dry goods store and fish-processing operation on the southwestern shore of Commencement Bay and counted the Puyallup among his customers and suppliers. Meanwhile, the Puyallup joined with other Puget Sound Indians in providing their new acquaintances with fish, oysters, clams, and lumber. In addition, as they had done for the HBC, they hired themselves out as laborers for the Americans through canoe transportation, manual labor, and domestic service.⁹⁶ Employers paid the Natives with food, goods, and currency. One observer noted that some of the more enterprising Indian workers were earning up to thirty dollars per month.⁹⁷

A number of Puyallup took advantage of these opportunities whenever they could. In the spring of 1853, some of the Indians worked as guides for Ezra Meeker and some of his friends on a tour of the southern reaches of the Sound. The Indians pulled their clients' boat up the Puyallup River, provided them with food, and in one instance, taught them how to cook clams. Meeker believed that the Puyallup gave him full value for their pay and he said that they made

⁹⁵ Hunt, 10, 18.

⁹⁶ Kluger, 49-50; Thomas P. Giere and Ralph W. Johnson, *Red Man In A Gray Area* (Seattle: University of Washington School of Law, 1971), 460.

⁹⁷ George Gibbs, *Indian Tribes of Washington Territory* (Fairfield, WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1972), 33.

him feel "...that we were among friends."⁹⁸ Meeker continued to hire Puyallup to work for him over the next forty years, which shows that the Natives also derived a level of satisfaction from his employment.

These anecdotes show that the Puyallup and Americans often benefited from their associations. Nevertheless, there were occasions when the relationships were not as accommodating. Some new settlers, like their HBC predecessors, complained that Indian workers were "inconstant" and would not perform a task for any length of time.⁹⁹ The biggest source of tension between the two groups concerned land and resources. Most specifically, the Indians' possession of large tracts of the region's acreage frustrated many settlers who grew impatient with the barriers that the Indian land holdings represented to their aspirations. They believed that Oregon's territorial legislature was not giving these and other concerns enough attention and they therefore petitioned for their own territorial rule, which Congress granted to them on March 2, 1853. Washington Territory was born and Olympia was its capital.¹⁰⁰ The new territory's Native population would now have to deal with 3,965 non-Natives, most of whom wanted their leaders to adopt a policy that would aggressively eradicate Indian claims to the region's land and thus permit more immigrants to take advantage of the Donation Land Law.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Meeker, 45-46, 57, 58, 60; Reddick and Collins, 378, 380.

⁹⁹ Gibbs, 33.

¹⁰⁰ Washington Territory's size and shape assumed three different manifestations. In 1853, the territory included the current state of Washington, the northern panhandle of Idaho, and the northwest corner of Montana. In 1859, when Oregon achieved statehood, Washington Territory expanded to include all of Idaho, and a triangle section of west-central Wyoming. In 1863, Washington Territory assumed the shape that it would have when it became a state in 1889.

¹⁰¹ Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest*, 104; *The Encyclopedia of Washington, Vol. 1*, Third Edition (St. Clair Shores, MI: Somerset Publishers, Inc., 2000), 46-47.

By 1853, Americans had come to the South Sound in large enough numbers to establish a handful of villages within a day's horseback ride from some Puyallup villages.¹⁰² In many parts of Washington Territory, a number of the immigrants who endured the long, arduous, and expensive journey to the Pacific Northwest were so eager to establish their farms that they decided not to wait for the government to negotiate with the Indians to vacate their lands. In some cases, the newcomers took it upon themselves to drive the Natives away. One observer called the Donation Land Act, which he felt was the catalyst of this land-grab, "...the great primary source of evil in Oregon and the western part of [Washington] Territory." He added that the predicament had caused the Natives to become quite suspicious of the Americans. While there is little evidence that these aggressive settlers were harassing the Puyallup, tensions nevertheless ran high between three distinct interests: the Natives, the settlers, and federal authority.¹⁰³

United States government officials decided to take action in order to circumvent hostilities. They had been dealing with citizens' drive to usurp Indian lands well before American immigrants entered Puyallup lands. Federal policy generally tried to keep peace between both groups, but authorities found it difficult to sate the settlers' thirst for land and simultaneously keep the Indians' displeasure over losing cherished spaces from boiling over into armed conflict. The government had tried to address this problem on the east side of the Mississippi River by establishing removal policies, which generally relocated the Natives to sites that were far away from non-Indians, often in the trans-Mississippi west. However, by the 1870s (with a few exceptions), large numbers of Americans were claiming this land as well, which

¹⁰² These villages were Seattle and a Duwamish River settlement to the north, and Olympia and Ft. Steilacoom to the southwest.

¹⁰³ Gibbs, 28.

made removal unworkable in certain areas. In some cases, the government responded to this dilemma by creating reservations, which had various uses, including relocating and isolating Natives to “remnant portions” of their original territory or to small, out of the way places. In either case, the policy provided Americans with access to more land and gave government officials an opportunity to monitor and control the Indians’ interactions with non-Indians.¹⁰⁴

Indigenous peoples who relocated to reservations did not always settle in environments with which they were familiar. This fate was a possibility for the Puyallup. When the government considered using its reservation policy with the Puget Sound Natives, officials lobbied to relocate the Natives east of the Cascade Mountains. The targeted Indians rejected this idea because they did not want to move to an environment in which they had no cultural ties. Many of these Natives were especially adamant about remaining close to their ancestral burial grounds. A large number of Puget Sound non-Natives supported the Indians’ preference to stay in the area because they needed access to Native labor. Indian policy reformers and some government administrators also favored keeping Indians close to non-Indian settlements because they believed that the Indians’ constant contact with Americans would hasten the “civilizing” process. Consequently, Commissioner of Indian Affairs George Manypenny decided to keep the coastal Indians west of the territorial divide.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Edmund Jefferson Danzinger, Jr., *Great Lakes Indian Accommodation and Resistance during the Early Reservation Years, 1850-1900* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), viii; Uteley, *The Indian Frontier*, 41; Stuart Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Lands: Law and Power on the Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2001), 235-236; Robert A. Trennert, Jr., *Alternative to Extinction: Federal Indian Policy and the Beginnings of the Reservation System, 1846-1851* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1975), 1-3, 29, 31.

¹⁰⁵ Kent Richards, “The Stevens Treaties of 1854-1855,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 106:3 (2005): 343, 346; Kluger, 71-72.

General Isaac Ingalls Stevens was the agent of Mannypenny's Indian policy in Washington Territory. Stevens had previously been an officer in the Army Corps of Engineers and had fought in the Mexican-American War. In 1852, he vigorously supported Franklin Pierce's successful run for president and afterward convinced the new chief executive to reward his support by appointing him governor of Washington Territory. Never short of ambition, Stevens then effectively lobbied Secretary of State William Marcy to name him territorial Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Soon after, the officer secured another position as head of a survey team that would map out potential transcontinental railroad routes across the nation's northern reaches. As if that were not enough responsibility to fill a man's day, Stevens garnered an appointment as the territory's Indian Treaty Commissioner. These positions allowed the new administrator to have his hand in numerous facets of territorial affairs. The fact that his obligations had him representing opposing interests apparently did not concern this confident man.¹⁰⁶

Stevens arrived in Washington Territory in November of 1853 and one of his first orders of business was to create a set of treaties that would get some 14,000 Natives to give up their lands to a population of Americans whose numbers were a quarter of that.¹⁰⁷ Stevens, who seemingly gained energy through action, immediately recorded the location and size of the region's Native communities, familiarized himself with the terms of any informal agreements that the Indians had already made with settlers, and calculated the cost of creating and enforcing

¹⁰⁶ Morgan, 83-84; Kluger, 15-16, 39.

¹⁰⁷ Ficken, 44.

any future treaties. He then proposed a set of guidelines that he felt the government needed to follow in order to regulate the gamut of interactions between non-Natives and Indians.¹⁰⁸

The governor was not the only government official with an opinion on this matter. George Gibbs, an expert cartographer who assisted Stevens with his Cascades railroad survey, had simultaneously conducted a geological and ethnographic study of the region. In 1854, he submitted a report that advocated for the fair treatment of the Indians and urged policymakers to respect the Natives' way of life as they encountered each other. He believed the government could do this by resettling Indians near their traditional homes and allowing them to continue many of their customs. Gibbs also counseled the government to protect the aboriginals from predatory settlers whom he believed would try to swindle the Natives.¹⁰⁹

Within half a year, Stevens completed a list of recommendations and then personally delivered them to his superiors in Washington, D. C. His proposal reflected, at least to some extent, his responsibilities to all of the interests he represented, though he definitely weighted them in the settlers' favor. The plan provided Americans with new lands without moving the Indians out of the region, compensated the aboriginals for relinquishing large swaths of their territory, allowed them to pursue their "peculiar wants and habits," and gave reformers the opportunity to assimilate the Indians into non-Native society.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ C.F. Coan, "The Adoption of the Reservation System Policy in the Pacific Northwest, 1853-1855," *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, 23:1 (March 1922): 11.

¹⁰⁹ Gibbs, "Report of Mr. George Gibbs," 28-30; "George Gibbs, Surveyor and Ethnologist, 1815-1873," *The Treaty Trail: U.S.-Indian Treaty Councils in the Northwest*, accessed April 26, 2012, <http://washingtonhistoryonline.org/treatytrail/context/bios/george-gibbs.htm>.

¹¹⁰ Richards, 347; Kluger, 72-73; Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 402-403; Coan, 13-14; Alexandra Harmon, "A Different Kind of Indians: Negotiating the Meanings of "Indian" and "Tribe" in the Puget Sound Region, 1820s-1970s" (Ph.D. diss., University of

Manypenny, satisfied with Stevens's suggestions, ordered the Washington Territorial Governor/Superintendent of Indian Affairs/Indian Treaty Commissioner to negotiate pacts that reflected these recommendations, as well as ideas from treaties that the government had just concluded with the Otos, Missouris, and Omahas. Manypenny was especially adamant that Stevens include sections from those accords that outlined how the government could compel Indians to become horse and plow agriculturists. In an effort to save the government as much money as possible, the commissioner also insisted that Stevens make one change to the plan that would prove to be consequential to the Puyallup: he ordered his subordinate to keep the number of reservations to a minimum.¹¹¹

Manypenny's proposals affected the Puyallup soon after Stevens returned to Washington Territory, late in 1854. The governor spent the next year securing ten treaties with Washington Territory Indians on both sides of the Cascade Mountains.¹¹² The first of these was the Medicine Creek Treaty, which involved 1,500 Indians who comprised nine South Sound "tribes," including the Puyallup.¹¹³ The governor approached these Indians before the others because he thought their history of close contact with Euro-Americans would make them more accepting of

Washington, 1995), 210-211, 215-216; Matthew Kingle, *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 37-38.

¹¹¹ Prucha, 402-403, 405; Kluger, 73; Coan, 13-14.

¹¹² The four treaties in western Washington Territory were the Medicine Creek Treaty, December 26, 1854; The Point Elliott Treaty, January 22, 1855; Point No Point Treaty, January 26, 1855; and the Neah Bay Treaty, January 31, 1855.

¹¹³ The Indian groups who were part of the Medicine Creek Treaty were those Natives who occupied "...the lands lying round the head of Puget's Sound and the adjacent inlets...." This included the Puyallup, Squawskin, Nisqually, Steilacoom, S'Homamish, Stehchass, T'Peeksin, Squi-aitl, and Sa-heh-wamish. See: Treaty of Medicine Creek, 1854, accessed February 9, 2010, <http://www.washingtonwars.net/Medicine%20Creek%20Treaty.htm>; Giere and Johnson, 457.

the terms he offered.¹¹⁴ The treaty council took place just west of the Puyallup's homelands, at a small tributary of the Nisqually River that the area's Indians called She-nah-nam. This name came from the local Indian shamans' belief that the stream's waters fortified them with healing power. American settlers generally referred to the rivulet as Medicine Creek in recognition of this. Other local residents called the flow McAllister Creek because of its proximity to property belonging to a homesteader named James McAllister.¹¹⁵

Nearly 700 Natives from the affected tribes gathered at the meeting site on December 24, 1854. The Puyallup brought their neighbor and friend, John Swan, who was likely concerned that the government would move the Indians to a place that could deprive him of customers and suppliers. Stevens and his entourage floated in that evening on a canoe with terms in hand, which shows that he did not intend the Medicine Creek Treaty to be a negotiated settlement. The proceedings began on December 25, when Stevens read the document's contents to the Indians, section by section. As he spoke a translator interpreted the details to the Native audience in Chinook, which was the most widely understood language among those present. Unfortunately, for the Indians, the jargon's limited vocabulary made it difficult for the interpreter to articulate the nuances of the treaty to his audience.¹¹⁶

As Stevens, in his role as territorial governor, dictated the terms to the Indians, he explained that the government wanted to buy their land for cash and supplies, and then relocate them to sites where officials would instruct them how to farm. He said that the government's ultimate goal was to modernize the Indians as quickly and as thoroughly as it could. He

¹¹⁴ Kluger, 75; Giere and Johnson, 460.

¹¹⁵ Reddick and Collins, 374, 381-382.

¹¹⁶ Eells, "The Chinook Jargon," 300, 307, 311.

simultaneously performed his responsibilities as Indian Superintendent by insisting that he and the “Great Father” had the Indians’ best interests in mind.¹¹⁷

The Medicine Creek Treaty is a multi-faceted document that, among other things, directed the Puyallup and their fellow Indians to relate to their environment, the Americans, and each other in new ways. The terms of this document thus made it more difficult for these Natives to fulfill many of their time-honored cultural needs. The treaty’s first two articles outlined how the government would wrest 2.5 million acres of land from the aboriginals.¹¹⁸ Article One stated that the participating Indians would “...hereby cede, relinquish, and convey to the United States, all their right, title, and interest in and to the lands and country occupied by them....” The second article described the locations where the government would resettle each tribe. Meanwhile, the treaty’s third and fourth articles stated how the government would compensate the Indians for their lands. Article Three allowed the Natives to continue practicing some pre-treaty subsistence activities “at all usual and accustomed grounds and stations” that were not claimed by Americans. The fourth article established an annuity schedule that would last for twenty years.¹¹⁹

The treaty also prescribed how the Indian signers were to adopt a more sedentary subsistence system that would have them embrace an American vision of the environment. Article Five urged the Indians to “clear, fence, and break up a sufficient quantity of land for cultivation,” and the next article gave the President the authority to order government officials to

¹¹⁷ Prucha, 404; Morgan, 91-93; Kluger, 100.

¹¹⁸ Reddick and Collins, 382.

¹¹⁹ Articles One, Two, Three, & Four of the Treaty of Medicine Creek.

survey the reservations into plots that he could then assign to individuals or families.¹²⁰ The men who developed this plan and the administrators who carried it out believed the policy would break up the Natives' communal living conditions and transform them into self-sufficient farmers.

The government hoped to use other articles to re-mold the Indians' economic behaviors as well. Article Eight stated that the Indians had to respect Euro-American concepts of property while parts of the other three articles prohibited the Indians' from using alcohol and keeping slaves. The treaty also established an American trade monopoly over the signers by preventing them from dealing with merchants based outside of the United States. In essence, this clause in the treaty prohibited the Indians from conducting any trade with agents of the HBC.¹²¹ Finally, the document's tenth article instituted an educational system that its supporters hoped would help Indians prepare for a new, "modern" way of life. It mandated that the government establish upon each agency "an agricultural and industrial school" that would offer Indians instruction in Euro-American versions of domestic sciences, farming, carpentry, and blacksmithing. School staff would simultaneously provide their pupils with lessons in general academic subjects.¹²²

On December 26, 1854, just twenty-one years after Nuckalkat, Quilniash, and Dr. Tolmie had agreed to trade with each other on equal terms, Washington Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens secured the signatures of sixty-eight Indians on a treaty, that would, over time, make it difficult for south Puget Sound Indians to enjoy the degree of agency enjoyed by their

¹²⁰ Articles Five & Six of the Treaty of Medicine Creek.

¹²¹ Articles Eight, Nine, Eleven, and Twelve of the Treaty of Medicine Creek.

¹²² Article Ten of the Treaty of Medicine Creek. According to this section of the treaty, the government promised to assign a physician to each agency in the hope that the Indians would abandon their reliance upon Native medicine.

forefathers. John Clowout, Tyee Dick, John Haiton, Squatahan, We-Po-It-Ee, Sah-le-talth, and Pah-how-at-ish were the seven Puyallup signers.¹²³ The Puyallup had never participated in proceedings of this magnitude with non-Natives and many of them drifted away from She-nah-nam confused and frustrated by what had transpired. Some became justifiably outraged once they fully understood what they had actually conceded to Stevens and what the government had given them in return. Descendants of the tribes who agreed to the Medicine Creek Treaty maintained years later that that Stevens had swindled their ancestors. This view still remains strongly embedded in the minds of present day Puyallup.¹²⁴

CONCLUSION: HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTINUITY AND DISRUPTION

Historians commonly agree that giving historical eras a particular beginning or end date is an ill-advised endeavor. We can best understand certain periods, such as the Scientific or Industrial Revolutions as temporal categories where certain ideas and actions became more prominent than they had been in past times. Thus, while it is convenient to identify HBC's

¹²³ Jennifer Halberg, the Puyallup Tribal Archivist in 2012, verified these individuals as the Puyallup representatives who signed the Medicine Creek Treaty of 1854. List provided on March 4, 2012.

¹²⁴ Morgan, 93; "Deposition of Jerry Meeker for Claimant Taken at Puyallup Indian Reservation, Washington, March 25, 1927," *Puyallup Tribal News*, accessed July 7, 2012, <http://www.puyalluptribalnews.net/article/214>. In 1927, the Puyallup claimed that \$3,000,000 was due them because the government had both swindled the Indians and reneged on numerous promises. See: "Say White Man Tricked Them in Indian Pact 72 Years Ago," *Daily Ledger* (Tacoma), March 25, 1927, 1. The Puyallup's anger at Stevens was heightened by the fact that twenty-nine members of their tribe did not arrive at Medicine Creek until December 26. Stevens gave them gifts but he did not bother to explain the treaty to them or give them an opportunity to express their concerns about the agreement. See: Reddick and Collins, 386.

establishment of Fort Nisqually in 1832 as the start of a particular epoch in Puyallup history, we should avoid overemphasizing the distinction of this event. The Puyallup had been sharing resources, ideas, and technologies with outsiders for eons of time in order to address their cultural needs. For at least a period of time, the Puyallup probably viewed HBC traders as a continuation of this process.

We can therefore explain Nuckalkat's and Quilniash's decision to interact with Dr. Tolmie as part of their people's cultural legacy of contact. The results of their decision tended to represent a vestige of what the Puyallup did after establishing relations with a foreign society; the Indians adjusted their behaviors to maximize the effectiveness of their newly gotten artifacts, or altered the item or its purpose to fit their needs. Nuckalkat and Quilniash, along with numerous other Puyallup who traded with Euro-Americans, acted in accordance with these principles.

Relationships between cultures can be beneficial to those involved, but because storylines concerning such associations often zig and zag from one predicament to another, we know that contact between foreign societies can also possess its share of complications. A prominent narrative in this process is one culture's attempt to control the other. This was the case around Commencement Bay between 1832 and 1854. Yet there was a time when negotiation, not force, was the engine of change whenever the Puyallup interacted with the HBC and the Americans. This middle ground gave the Indians the opportunity to satisfy some of their economic, political, and spiritual needs on their own terms, despite assorted stresses. Friction between the Puyallup and HBC officials arose because representatives of both sides believed that their culture was superior to the other. Tolmie, for example, was the product of an imperialist and capitalist culture that wanted to establish a trade system in the Pacific Northwest where commodification,

efficient use of time, and profit ruled. He and other HBC authorities predominantly saw Indians as people who could potentially contribute to this system. Whenever the Natives purposefully or inadvertently created roadblocks to the company's goals, the doctor denigrated them and tried to force them to adhere to HBC protocols. However, for a few years the HBC's influence over the Indians' behavior was as limited as the Natives' power over the HBC.

The existence of a cultural middle ground in the south Puget Sound allowed Nuckalkat and Quilniash and other Puyallup to carve out the space they needed within the HBC colonial and American imperialist process. While doing this, members of the Puyallup nation, just like other Indians, emulated some Euro-American habits. In 1849, George Gibbs made note of this when he wrote that the Pacific Northwest Indians' "long intercourse" with both the HBC and American merchants "has obliterated what peculiarities (i.e. Indian-ness) they may have had...." Yet Gibbs simultaneously witnessed numerous Natives retaining many of their old habits, which shows that the subjects of his observations were still pursuing their own agenda.¹²⁵

The balance of power between the Puyallup and non-Indians changed after the Donation Land Act went into effect. Initially, the Puyallup reacted to the Americans who came into the South Sound just as they did HBC employees, and for a while the middle ground remained intact. However, it did not hold. Disease represented an initial and significant assault upon the Puyallup's strength. Their growing dependence upon American goods meanwhile began to threaten long practiced social and political arrangements, which created levels of disunity within the community. The continuous flow of American immigrants into the South Sound, and their accompanying earth hunger, was an additional and powerful incursion upon Puyallup life. By

¹²⁵ Gibbs, *Indian Tribes of Washington Territory*, 9, 11, 30; Whaley, ix-x.

1854, the Americans had the ability to impose a new type of relationship between the South Sound Indians and themselves.

When the Puyallup and their fellow South Sound Indians met with Governor Stevens at the She-nah-nam gathering in December of 1854, they were attempting to protect their customs and their ability to determine their future. Today we know that the resulting Medicine Creek Treaty produced numerous and profound consequences for the Indian signers. We also know that most of these outcomes affected the Natives in negative ways. The Puyallup, when acceding to the government's offer, could not have known this because they were products of the same cultural mold as Nuckalkat and Quilniash. They were devoted to the idea that survival often involved transactions and transformation, and their world had been changing, culturally and otherwise, since well before 1854.

It did not take the Puyallup long to discover how devastating the treaty would be on most of their lives. After December 26, 1854, the American government pushed members of the Puyallup nation to alter their relationship with their land and adopt a new political and economic framework even faster than they had done before. One of the offshoots of this change was increased limits on the tribe's access to regional resources, which helped push its members toward a degree of dependence. Chapter Two will show that despite the numerous unwanted changes that the Americans brought to the Puyallup community, many Indians responded to these conditions as their ancestors would have, by adopting and shaping specific attributes from non-Puyallup societies into forms that they could understand.

CHAPTER 2: TO “HAVE AN OBJECT FOR WHICH TO LABOR”: PUYALLUP SHAPING AND UTILIZATION OF THE MEDICINE CREEK TREATY, 1855-1872

APPREHENSIVE FARMERS

On December 27, 1854, dozens of members of the Puyallup tribe stood in cold, dark, damp weather and watched Washington Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens and a handful of his associates climb into a canoe at the mouth of Medicine Creek. As the men paddled away, they carried with them the Medicine Creek Treaty, a document that contained the marks of sixty-eight representatives of nine South Sound Indian nations. Seven of these “signatures” belonged to Puyallup Indians. Stevens was proud of the treaty because he believed that it fulfilled a host of needs for the government, American settlers, and the aboriginals. This included allowing non-Natives to enter Indian lands by restricting where the tribes could live and access resources. The agreement also provided compensation for the Indians along with programs to modernize them.

Seventeen years later, Byron Barlow had become one of the men responsible for carrying out the Medicine Creek Treaty’s dictate to teach the Indian signers how to be horse and plow farmers. Barlow worked with the Puyallup, and his relationship with these Indians differed from previous interactions he had had with Native Americans. He had been suspicious of Indians earlier in his life. Beginning in 1848, he worked as a muleskinner, packing provisions throughout the Oregon Territory, and whenever less-than-friendly aboriginals tried to relieve him of his cargo, he used force to protect it. Later, in the mid-1850s, as a member of the Oregon territorial militia, Barlow fought the Modoc. However, by 1872, those conflicts were behind him and he was now teaching some Puyallup how to tend their gardens in a Euro-American style.¹

¹ “Byron Barlow, Pioneer, Taken,” *The Tacoma Daily*, July 6, 1914, 1, 3.

Some government officials who administered the Medicine Creek Treaty were initially optimistic that they could teach Indians to farm, trade, work, and go to school like Americans. Indian Agent Michael Simmons optimistically claimed that Natives living west of the Cascade Mountains, including the Puyallup, were “susceptible of civilization” because they “...do not consider labor a disgrace...,” they are “...easily governed; and...they possess intelligence to a sufficient degree to enable them readily to imbibe instruction.”²

Early in 1872, Barlow would likely have agreed with Simmons’s assessment of the South Sound Indians for he was having some success in converting the Puyallup into planters and ranchers. By September of that year, a portion of the tribe had cultivated 174 acres of wheat, oats, potatoes, turnips, peas, and other garden vegetables and produced 300 tons of hay.³ According to the reservation farmer, his subjects had “...made commendable progress in industry and civilization,” which was seemingly good news for the proponents of the government’s Indian programs.

Barlow was part of a national strategy that Indian policy reformers designed and government agents carried out in their effort to extinguish the Natives’ communal and sometimes migratory existence. According to one historian, proponents of this policy were generally “sincere, religious-minded men and women who believed intensely that only one solution was

² Michael T. Simmons, Report, June 30, 1858, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/91/rec/12>.

³ Byron Barlow, Farmer in Charge, Puyallup Reservation, letter to R.H. Milroy, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Washington Territory, September 15, 1872, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/600/rec/2>.

possible for the problem they saw facing the United States in its relations with the Indians—complete Americanization.”⁴

Barlow’s reports suggest that the government’s plan to transform the Puyallup was having some success. Yet, in the fall of 1872 he noticed that a handful of the farmers had scaled back their efforts and he was having the “...greatest difficulty...in the attempt to induce [them] to establish homes for themselves, [and surround them] with trees and cultivate[d] gardens.”⁵ Barlow’s predecessors had occasionally made similar complaints about the Natives, and when doing so they often insisted that their wards’ supposed laziness and savagery were the cause of these problems. Barlow knew that this was not the case at this time because the tribal members that he had been working with had shown him that they were neither slothful nor wild. There were other forces at work.

Breakdowns in the government’s nineteenth century Indian modernization programs were common for a host of reasons. These included corruption, the presence of unqualified administrators who were ignorant or unconcerned with the Indians’ needs and complexities. The Indian Office’s miscalculation of the amount of resources that were necessary to meet the department’s goals, especially money, compounded these shortcomings. Authorities also underestimated their subjects’ determination and ability to retain numerous customs. All the while zealous non-Native settlers constantly pressured their leaders to provide them ever more access to Indian land holdings. Reservation administrators compounded the inadequacies of the

⁴ Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), vi; Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier: 1846-1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 259.

⁵ Barlow, letter to Milroy, September 15, 1872.

system by blaming virtually all of the problems they encountered when doing their job upon what they believed were the indigenous population's racial shortcomings.⁶

Numerous historical studies have shown that Natives responded to nineteenth-century reservation life and government Indian reform programs in various ways. Many Indians turned their backs completely on the Indian Office's efforts while others, rather than resisting changes altogether, attempted to shape them in ways that allowed them to continue pre-treaty habits. These Indians, though lacking the ability to alter federal policies, discovered that they did have the power to influence some local decisions.⁷ The recalcitrant Puyallup farmers who were frustrating Byron Barlow represented one of several successful Puyallup tribal efforts to shape their post-treaty world to fit their needs.

In this chapter, I will show ways in which the Puyallup affected their post-treaty life from 1855 through 1872. In 1856, they successfully renegotiated the original size and location of their reservation. I will also show that in the fall of 1872, some members of the Puyallup wanted to influence the government's administration of the treaty once more. By this time, most Puyallup lived on the tribe's reservation for at least part of the year and virtually all had adopted some aspect of Euro-American culture into their lives. This included some Puyallup learning horse and plow farming and selling portions of their harvests. Puyallup also bartered their labor to non-Natives and some sent their children to the reservation's government-run school. The Indians participated in these activities because they, like their ancestors, welcomed—or at least

⁶ Prucha, 60; Utley, 202.

⁷ Brian C. Hosmer, *American Indians in the Market Place: Persistence and Innovation Among the Menominees and Metlakatans, 1870-1920* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), xii.

tolerated— certain changes brought on by the Americans. Many Puyallup believed that some of these new ideas, tools, and institutions would provide them with useful opportunities.

Between 1855 and 1872, the Puyallup encountered a multitude of changes that the Medicine Creek Treaty brought into their lives. They also experienced a force that was not faced by most other Native Americans in the West at that time; during this seventeen year period, South Sound Natives went from living on a relatively isolated reservation to inhabiting lands that bordered what would become a rapidly expanding American settlement.

The Puyallup maintained a complex relationship with their non-Indian neighbors and I will show that through 1872, the village of Tacoma represented both opportunity and peril to the Indians. Numerous tribal members found trade and employment prospects and used them to help fill the void created when they lost access to large portions of their territory in 1854. The Puyallup also tried to use trade to obtain items that the government had promised to them but had failed to deliver. Reservation administrators celebrated these interactions because they felt that most the Puyallup's non-Indian neighbors would model "appropriate" behaviors that showed how the market economy rewarded fortitude and hard work. Reformers and government officials also claimed that these cross-cultural interactions would help the Puyallup properly evolve through various stages of modernization.

Yet as useful as Tacoma was to the Puyallup, its existence concurrently threatened them. For example, from the village's very start, inhabitants trespassed across the reservation's boundaries to pirate resources. Meanwhile, other Americans zealously called for the government to remove the reservation and its residents so they could legally settle its land. By 1872, many Puyallup feared that the government would heed the requests of its citizens.

Puyallup trepidations about losing their reservation to their neighbors had a direct impact upon how they responded to the government's reservation policy and how they dealt with the Medicine Creek Treaty between 1855 and 1872. It is common to assume that Natives spurned government modernization efforts in order to shield themselves from certain outside influences. While some Puyallup took this tack, the tribal farmers who scaled back the development of their lands in 1872 had different motivations. They felt that Tacoma's approach threatened many of their customs, and since land was an important element in their culture and because the Puyallup had given up a lot of it after 1854, they wanted to make sure that they did not lose any more in the future. Yet, as threatening as the surrounding Americans were to the Puyallup, the newcomers compelled the Indians to adopt some non-Indian economic ideas and behaviors faster than they may have otherwise done. The Puyallup's embrace of the American marketplace reinforced their understanding that the land produced commodities for trade or sale. Marketplace activity also taught the Puyallup that land itself could be a commodity, much like a horse or a tool.

The uncooperative Puyallup farmers who frustrated Barlow in 1872 were the product of these forces, and in the framework of Puyallup history, they represent a set of Indians who used American statutes and institutions to solve some their problems with non-Natives. They wanted the government to protect their economic and cultural interests by implementing a specific part of the Medicine Creek Treaty that dealt with allotment. The Indian farmers hoped this policy would be a step toward privatizing their fields, which they thought would protect their land and their culture from outside assault. In 1872, these Puyallup believed that the best antidote to their fears was to embrace the Euro-American notion of ownership, an aspect of western society that had recently brought hardship upon them.

A NEW ORDER

The Medicine Creek Treaty had many immediate and devastating effects upon the Puyallup. After Governor Stevens had secured the treaty, the United States government dealt with the Puyallup much as it did other Native Americans living throughout the trans-Mississippi West at that time. It placed them on a reservation where reformers and government agents tried to “civilize” the new residents. Unfortunately, a host of unanticipated problems severely hampered the government’s efforts to support the Natives, much less assimilate them.

By the time that the government had assigned the Puyallup to a reservation, reform-minded officials had expanded its purpose from merely warehousing Natives to using it as, what one might call, a cultural boot camp, in order to purge the residents of their supposedly primitive, nomadic lifestyle, and fill in the resulting void with a respect for individualism and an appreciation of capitalism. By the 1870s, reformers pressed government officials to latch on to these ideas because they hoped that the policy would eventually eradicate the reservations and the associated bureaucracy necessary to administer Indian policy.⁸ The notion of using reservations to modernize and transform Indians emerged from a time period that historian David Rothman has identified as the age of the asylum. During this post-Jacksonian era, social reformers used institutions such as schools, hospitals, and prisons to purge deviancy and instill a

⁸ John Findlay, “An Elusive Institution: The Birth of Indian Reservations in Gold Rush California,” in *State and Reservation: New Perspectives on Federal Indian Policy*, eds. George P. Castile and Robert Bee (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), 19; Stuart Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Land: Law and Power on the Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2005), 236; Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier: 1846-1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 41, 204-205; Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 105-106; Robert A. Trennert, Jr., *Alternative to Extinction: Federal Indian Policy and the Beginnings of the Reservation System, 1846-1851* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1975), 1-3, 29, 31, 39.

common set of values among its citizens.⁹ The government's treatment of the Puyallup shows us that it had added the reservation to this toolbox of reform.

Luke Lea, who was President Zachary Taylor's Indian Commissioner from 1850 through 1853, was an early supporter of this plan. He felt that the best way to deal with the Indians was to settle them in agriculturally productive areas and then supply them with farming tools, animal stock, and materials for homes. He also wanted reservation administrators to provide Natives with Euro-American religious, moral, and academic education. Lea felt that this plan would eventually quash Indians' "...wild energies [and direct him toward] the more ennobling pursuits of civilized Life." He added that the program should continue "...until such time as [the Indians'] general improvement and good conduct may supersede the necessity of such restrictions."¹⁰ The subjectivity inherent in this type of assessment contributed to the reservation system's ultimate shortcomings.

A number of Americans, especially residents of the American West, criticized the policy of retaining land for Indians because they saw reservations as an impediment to their expansionist and economic goals. Non-Indian settlers who had no concern about the Indians' survival told Easterners who supported the concepts of reservations and Native rights to mind their own business.¹¹ Western lawmakers were able to derail some of the reformers' plans,

⁹ David Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), xix.

¹⁰ Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 325; Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis*, 105-106; John Findlay, "An Elusive Institution: The Birth of Indian Reservations in Gold Rush California," in *State and Reservation: New Perspectives on Federal Indian Policy*, eds. George P. Castile and Robert Bee (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), 19.

¹¹ Findlay, 14-15, 18.

which contributed to the level of hardship that Indians experienced after they agreed to relocate. For example, reservation critics got the government to compress some Natives' holdings into smaller sections of land several times over. This decision gave tribal members little opportunity to adjust to their ever-shrinking surroundings. Congress also neglected to allocate enough money to provide adequate care for its wards and many administrators participated in varying degrees of graft, which compounded Native suffering. The dearth of government financial support for the Indians also prevented reservation administrators from providing adequate training to the Natives.¹² These results compelled an already disheartened population of reservation inhabitants to despise their situation even more.

The Puyallup experienced many of these problems soon after the U.S. Senate ratified the Medicine Creek Treaty on March 3, 1855. One of the first issues the tribal members confronted was the size and location of their reservation. Soon after the treaty went into effect, Stevens announced that thousands of square miles of land were now open for American settlement. However, the new immigrants who came to the South Sound discovered that they had a limited number of locations to establish their homes because the Hudson Bay Company's Puget Sound Agricultural Company still had claim to 180,000 acres in the area. The area's first Americans also wanted to settle along rivers, which were locations that South Sound Indians coveted.¹³

These conditions spelled trouble for the Puyallup. Nevertheless, by the end of 1856 the Puyallup were able to convince the government to resettle tribal members on a reservation that was fifteen times larger than the one Stevens had specified in the Medicine Creek Treaty. This

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Susan M. Reddick and Cary C. Collins, "Medicine Creek Remediated: Isaac Stevens and the Puyallup, Nisqually, and Muckleshoot Land Settlement at Fox Island, August 4, 1856," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 104:2 (Spring 2013): 81-82.

episode was indicative of the Puyallup's ability to accommodate the conditions they found in front of them.

Prior to 1854, the Puyallup had enjoyed a settlement range that was hundreds of square miles in size. Article Two of the Medicine Creek Treaty changed that by directing the Puyallup to resettle upon 1,280 acres of land that sat "...on the south side of Commencement Bay..." just southeast of what today is Tacoma's Point Defiance Park.¹⁴ The Puyallup knew this place as "Choche-oot-luts," and many of them opposed the location because of its miniscule dimensions, which as two historians have noted, was equal in size to what two married immigrant couples could claim through the Donation Land Law.¹⁵ The Indians were also frustrated by the site's heavily forested terrain, which would force them to invest vast amounts of time and labor into making the property habitable. At the same time, many Puyallup understood that it would be difficult for them to practice many of their pre-treaty subsistence activities if the government resettled them within an ecosystem that most tribal members had little experience with. As importantly, it would preclude the Puyallup from continuing a number of the trade relationships that they had established with local non-Natives. By the summer of 1855, the Puyallup's protests over the treaty site prompted Governor Stevens to offer them another slightly larger reservation at the mouth of the Puyallup River, along the Puget Sound's southeastern shoreline. Tribal leaders grudgingly accepted the new grant, which expanded the size of their holdings to 2,560 acres.¹⁶

¹⁴ Article Two of the Treaty of Medicine Creek, 1854, accessed February 9, 2010, <http://www.washingtonwars.net/Medicine%20Creek%20Treaty.htm>.

¹⁵ Reddick and Collins, 84.

¹⁶ Susan M. Reddick and Cary C. Collins, "Medicine Creek to Fox Island: Cadastral Scams and Contested Domains," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 106:3 (2005): 383-384.

Stevens had made his decision to place the Puyallup on such a small reservation despite the urgings of Indian reformers and sympathizers who wanted the government to create reservations where Natives could continue to pursue many of their long-practiced cultural habits. The governor instead followed the directive of Commissioner of Indian Affairs George Manypenny who had ordered him keep the Indians “separate but proximate” so that Americans could continue to hire them. The commissioner likewise expected Stevens to pack as many Indians into as few reservations that were as limited in size as possible. Manypenny reasoned that this plan would provide more land for incoming immigrants while also saving the government vast sums of money.¹⁷

As the government began putting the treaty into effect Indian frustrations with the proposed conditions overwhelmed their patience. By 1855, a series of misunderstandings and miscalculations between miners, settlers, and many Washington Territory Indians led to a brief war. The spark that enflamed the Puget Sound Indians’ tinder of discontent into an armed confrontation blew in from the eastern side of the Cascade Mountains. Soon after completing the Medicine Creek Treaty negotiations, Stevens traveled through other parts of Washington Territory to secure agreements with its Indian inhabitants. His proposals and the demeanor he used to present them offended the territory’s northern and eastern Natives as much as they had the Medicine Creek signers. The creation of what historian Gray Whaley has described as a “sovereignty swamp” also caused problems. He explains that the Donation Land Law spurred an influx of American settlement upon land that should have remained in the Indians’ possession until the U.S. Senate ratified the treaties. Yet territorial and local officials informed immigrants who were eager to begin farming or mining gold in eastern Washington that they did not have to

¹⁷ Reddick and Collins, “Medicine Creek Remediated,” 81-82.

wait for treaty approval before they entered Indian lands. This led to confusion, frustration, fear, and animosity among the Indians and Americans.¹⁸

For these reasons, hostilities began soon after the governor had returned to Olympia with treaties in hand. Some members of eastern tribes attacked non-Indians who entered their lands much sooner than expected. Some western Washington Indians who had close relationships with the eastern tribes joined the fight to support their friends and relatives, as well as to vent their own anger at the American interlopers.

Combatants spilled some of the first blood around the Puget Sound on October 27, 1855, when a group of Indians ambushed a company of settlers who had volunteered to scout a military road near the White River. One of the casualties was James McCallister, who owned property near the Medicine Creek Treaty site. His close proximity to the Nisqually people had made him an acquaintance of many of them, but their relationship soured when McCallister became openly critical of Indian complaints about the Medicine Creek Treaty.¹⁹ The government immediately went after the supposed perpetrators of the attack, which escalated the war's intensity.

A small portion of the Puyallup tribe, perhaps as many as thirty individuals, joined the fight.²⁰ These combatants tended to be from the outer reaches of the Puyallup's pre-treaty

¹⁸ Whaley, 225-226.

¹⁹ Richard White, "The Treaty of Medicine Creek: Indian-White Relations in Upper Puget Sound, 1830-1880" (M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1972), 90.

²⁰ Herbert Hunt, *Tacoma: Its History and Its Builders, A Half-Century of Activity* (Chicago: J. Clarke Publishing, 1916), 17.

territory, which put them in close contact with discontented neighboring Indian groups. They had also been more susceptible to aggression from nearby settlers.²¹

A prophecy spread by Leschi, a prominent Nisqually who lived near the west side of the Puyallup's pre-treaty territory may have been especially influential upon the Puyallup who pointed their weapons at non-Indians during the hostilities. Early in 1854, we know that he travelled to southern portions of Oregon and spoke of a vision he had, in which the Americans rounded up the Indians and transported them to a stark and cold world. It is probable that he had given this same message to his neighboring South Sound Natives. Many of Leschi's listeners believed that the government's treaties with the Indians proved that his divination was coming true and therefore did not need much prodding to take up arms.²²

Another probable impetus behind some Puyallup's decision to fight was the treaty's assault on their lifestyle. Interestingly, the Commencement Bay aboriginals were not just concerned about protecting their pre-contact customs, they were also trying to defend recent pre-treaty changes they had embraced after contact. This latter point was something that Americans of that period and beyond failed to comprehend. For instance, Herbert Hunt, who published a narrative history of Tacoma in 1916, claimed that the Puget Sound Indian War was the result of two alien cultures coming into contact with each other. In his mind, the war was a consequence

²¹ This would have included Puyallup who lived in the extreme upper and lower geographical portions the Puyallup's settlement range. Wesley Gosnell, Special Indian Agent, report to Isaac Stevens, Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Washington Territory, December 31, 1856, in: Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1853-1874, Letters from Employees, Puyallup Agency, Treaty of Medicine Creek, December 13, 1856 through August 31, 1874. M5 Roll 11, NA-PAR.

²² Gray H. Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee: U.S. Empire and the Transformation of an Indigenous World, 1792-1859* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 214-215.

of “...the grinding of civilization against the weaker walls of savagery.”²³ Two generations later a more heralded historian, Bernard DeVoto, described the cataclysmic contact experience that had occurred across the United States as being the consequence of “a culture...forced to change much faster than change could be adjusted to.”²⁴ Over the years, numerous other historians provided similar analysis in describing the saga of Indian and American relations.

These explanations may have been applicable to certain individuals or groups, but they failed to recognize the complex relations that the Puyallup had with Euro-Americans during the nineteenth century. The treaty indeed maddened Indians because the agreement put new restrictions on a number of their customs, but the Natives were also angry about the limits that the government was putting on many newly constructed relationships and practices.

By the mid-nineteenth century, South Sound Indians regarded their economic interactions with Euro-Americans—as laborers, producers, and consumers—to be quite important. When the pioneer Ezra Meeker came to the Puyallup Valley in the early 1850s, he found the Indians quite eager to provide immigrants with muscle power, supplies, and pack animals.²⁵ Consequently, it is very likely that some of the Puyallup fought because the treaty had threatened their valued economic ties with the newcomers. This may have been the case with Puyallup ranchers who, prior to 1854, kept horses near the Nisqually Plain. They, and some of their Nisqually neighbors—including Leschi—discovered that the Medicine Creek Treaty denied them access to

²³ Hunt, 47.

²⁴ Bernard DeVoto, *The Course of Empire* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952), 93.

²⁵ Ezra Meeker, “Annual Address of Ezra Meeker: President of the Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma,” Delivered January 22, 1904, University of Washington Special Collections.

sufficient forage for their animals, which they raised in order to trade or lease to Americans.²⁶

The treaty put similar restrictions upon Natives who provided settlers with fish and game. Some of the Puyallup who were affected by the treaty in this way therefore pushed back.²⁷

By acknowledging the intricate nature of the Puyallup's economic activity, we can see another misconception about the war: combatants divided themselves along Native versus non-Native racial lines. The reality was that the Indians did not unite into a grand racial confederacy during the conflict but instead chose sides based upon complex reasons, including bonds of kinship and economic interest.²⁸ As a consequence, most Puyallup remained neutral or, in some cases, helped non-Natives find safety. In one case, a group of Puyallup who lived along the White River assured neighboring settlers that they would not attack them. Farther south, a Puyallup named Charlie Salitat, a.k.a. Sahletatl, rode throughout the Puyallup Valley and warned eighty or so Americans who lived in isolation from each other that they were susceptible to an Indian attack. Then there was the case of Medicine Creek Treaty signer Chief Squathan, who

²⁶ Marian Smith, "The Puyallup of Washington," in *Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes*, ed. Ralph Linton (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1963), 26.

²⁷ In a 1904 address to the Oregon Historical Society Ezra Meeker spelled out this point as he spoke of the Indians' economic ties to non-Natives. He explained that many of the Indians saw opportunity in the arrival of the immigrants to the region. He said the government's attempts to construct the Naches Pass was a case in point. According to Meeker, the construction crew had a hard time procuring enough help and supplies to complete the project so they asked Indians to assist them, which they did. "Leschi said he would send as many horses as Baldwin (who had provided 12 horses) and the same terms, and actually did send ten pack animals, and went himself for a season, with four more to move camp." Meeker went on to explain that during the Indian Wars, none of the settlers living in his area were attacked. He said, specifically, that the Indians who signed Medicine Creek left Americans alone during the conflict. Meeker forever believed that Stevens had taken advantage of the Indian signers at Medicine Creek. See: Ezra Meeker, *Annual Address of Ezra Meeker: President of the Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma*, Delivered January 22, 1904, University of Washington Special Collections.

²⁸ Whaley, 207-208, 211.

chose to avoid the conflict by moving his Commencement Bay band across the Puget Sound Narrows to Henderson Bay.²⁹

In any case, there were Puyallup warriors whose anger at the post-treaty conditions evidently melted away the previously described connections they may have had with non-Natives. These Indians made themselves known to their adversaries by attacking militias and government troops and destroying immigrant property.³⁰ Four Puyallup allegedly participated in the so-called White River Massacre, which resulted in the deaths of nine settlers.³¹ Even though these forays infuriated the Americans, some could not help but praise the Puyallup for their combat effectiveness. Militia officer Michael Simmons claimed that tribal warriors were among “...the most formidable we had to contend....”³²

Because the Native Americans had divided loyalties during the Puget Sound Indian War, the event failed to feature grand armies, epic campaigns, or solemn surrenders for historians to lionize. As was the case in many of the Indian wars that took place in nineteenth-century America, this struggle eventually slowed to a halt because members of both sides wanted a return to what they understood as normalcy. For the Puyallup, whether they fought or not, the

²⁹ Hunt, 49; Captain Maloney, letter to General Mason, July 12, 1855, Fort Steilacoom, Washington Territory, Military Department Administration correspondence: governor’s correspondence, Incoming, 1854-1857, Box 1, Washington State Archives-Olympia.

³⁰ “Abiel Morrison,” From the Select committee on Indian Depredation Claims,....” September 14, 1888, UW-ILL; “Hear Claims for Raids by Indians,” *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, August 6, 1899, 5.

³¹ Military Department Administration Correspondence: Governor’s Correspondence, Incoming, 1854-1857, Box 1, Washington State Archives--Olympia; Murray Morgan, *Puget’s Sound: A Narrative of Early Tacoma and the Southern Sound* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), 102-104.

³² Simmons, Report, June 30, 1858.

Medicine Creek Treaty and government conduct during and after the hostilities ensured that normal life would be very different from what it had been.

The government's poor handling of the Puyallup before and during the war continued after hostilities ended. Throughout the conflict, Governor Stevens rounded up portions of the tribe and relocated them to Squaxin and Fox Islands.³³ The Puyallup on Squaxin Island, which sits just outside the then village of Olympia, found themselves living among a group of Indians who had long called the island their home, as well as a portion of the Nisqually tribe. This sudden upward spike in the island's population overwhelmed its ability to provide food for its Indian residents. The Puyallup on Fox Island faced a similar problem regarding food availability. Things did not improve for the aboriginals on these islands when the conflict wound down in 1856. Government agents at both locations ordered the Indian residents to clear and farm the land, but Squaxin Island's gravelly soil was no good for agriculture and the Fox Island Natives did not have access to enough nourishment to tide them over until they could harvest their first plantings. The starvation-related deaths of eighty Indians during the summer and early fall of 1856 were a consequence of these conditions.³⁴ Puyallup at both sites believed that more deaths would follow if they remained at the locations any longer so they pressed government officials to move them to a new place. Stevens wanted to avoid further conflict so he visited Fox Island on August 3, 1856.³⁵

³³ White, 94.

³⁴ Ibid., 98.

³⁵ Ibid., 111; Hunt, 61; Richard Kluger. *The Bitter Waters of Medicine Creek: A Tragic Clash Between White and Native America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 182, 183.

After Stevens reached the wartime encampment, he assembled the Puyallup who were present and then chastised them for complaining about a reservation site that he claimed they had selected. He then uncharacteristically offered his audience a chance to select a new reserve and then listened as tribal leaders asked for a larger spot on the Puyallup River, which possessed enough land to raise horses. Some of the Indians also insisted that the government give them the land where they had long buried their ancestors. Puyallup leaders added that they did not want the government to relocate other tribes to the requested site. Stevens told the Indians he would consider their requests and he then departed for the territorial capital.³⁶

Upon returning to Olympia, Stevens proposed to his superiors that the government reassign the Puyallup to a new 18,060-acre reservation that would better satisfy many of the Natives' needs. It was also a swath of land that would make it easier for the government to implement agriculture based programs. The new reserve sat on the southeast corner of Commencement Bay. It was also within what had been the Puyallup's pre-treaty territory and flanked both shores of the Puyallup River. From the air, its outline was similar in shape to the state of New Hampshire, with a left-leaning panhandle. Since the site sat in the shadow of Mt. Rainer, glacial runoff irrigated significant portions of its surface area. Meanwhile, generations of flooding, ash fall and lava flows had enriched much of the soil with nutrients and transformed it into prime farmland.³⁷

The size of the new Puyallup Reservation proposal dwarfed what Stevens had assigned to other Medicine Creek signers. For example, we can compare the governor's post-war grant to

³⁶ Reddick and Collins, "Medicine Creek Remediated," 89-90.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 93; Aside from requesting more land for the Puyallup, Stevens also asked for \$4,917 to move and compensate thirteen white land claims that sat within his proposed reservation's boundaries.

the Puyallup to what he had given the Nisqually, who lived near Olympia and Fort Nisqually. They received only 4,700 acres of land. Meanwhile, the Indians who resided at Muckleshoot Prairie, just north of the Puyallup, around the Green and the White Rivers, ended up with a mere 3,533 acres.

There were a handful of possible reasons for this discrepancy. The governor not only understood that the Puyallup required a site that could support at least 500 inhabitants, he was likewise aware that even though the Puyallup had asked to live on their own, his superiors wanted to establish a central reservation that would eventually house all of the Medicine Creek Treaty Indians. The Puyallup's new location could supposedly address this latter need. Meanwhile, the reserve's distance from American settlements allowed the governor to carve out this larger swath of property for the Commencement Bay Natives. Nisqually lands were near Olympia and Fort Steilacoom and there were railroad claims on the Muckleshoot's territory. Finally, Stevens's decisions on this issue may also have arisen because he blamed the Nisqually leader Leschi for starting the war and the Muckleshoot for playing a primary role in the White River Massacre. Conversely, the governor may have endorsed a larger grant for the Puyallup as his way of rewarding this potentially formidable fighting force for generally staying out of the conflict.

Finally, there is the possibility that Stevens' generosity toward the Puyallup was due to his concern for his tarnished post-war image. The governor attempted to wage a conflict in which he gave no quarter and a segment of the territory's non-Native residents had criticized him for his harsh treatment of the Indians. He may have wanted to show his critics, Euro-Americans and Natives, that he was capable of reconciliation.

Regardless of his motives, Stevens sent his new reservation proposal to Commissioner of Indian Affairs George Manypenny, who informed Secretary of Interior Robert McClelland that the increase in the Puyallup reservation's size was justifiable.³⁸ McClelland in turn forwarded the recommendation to President Franklin Pierce, who approved the Puyallup's new reservation site on January 20, 1857.³⁹ This location would provide the Puyallup with many advantages they would not have otherwise enjoyed on their original reservation. In essence, the Puyallup had shaped an aspect of the non-Indian world, at least to some degree, to their advantage.

The Puyallup reserve's size, resources, and agricultural potential provided the Indians and reservation officials with numerous ways to pursue their agendas. Still, the conditions saddled the Indian residents with new problems. One of the primary issues that arose for both the Puyallup and the government was the presence of, what was by 1856, a number of non-Indian neighbors who had staked claims on that that was now the reservation. Governor Stevens originally intended that the Puyallup reservation be somewhat isolated from large groups of

³⁸ George Manypenny, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, letter to Robert McClelland, Secretary of the Interior, January 19, 1857, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 12th, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/733/rec/1>.

³⁹ Ibid.; W.W. Miller, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Washington Territory, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1861." UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/155/rec/1>; Alfred Elder, Agent of Puyallup Agency, letter to Commissioner of Indian Affairs William P. Dole, August 8, 1864, University of Washington Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/260/rec/2>; White, 169. Nearly a dozen Puyallup actually settled on the original reservation site and were still there a decade later. U.S. Indian Agent A.R. Elder suggested that the government remove the Indians, sell the land, and then direct the proceeds toward the "benefit of the treaty." See: A.R. Elder, U.S. Indian Agent, letter to T.J. McKenny, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, July 28, 1867, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 12, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/407/rec/8>. The historians Susan Reddick and Cary Collins remind us that the Puyallup received this new land grant without having to go through the treaty negotiation process. See: Reddick and Collins, "Medicine Creek Remediated," 95.

settlers, and initially it was, with the exception of these homesteads. Stevens quickly ordered those farmers to vacate their claims and afterwards reservation administrators assumed that the site would be safe from an onslaught of new settlement for at least a generation.

As the Natives were settling their new location, officials implemented other portions of the Medicine Creek Treaty. The Puyallup's experience with the government's efforts to transform them was problematic from the start. One of the initial waves of tribal members to come to the new reservation, consisting of 200 individuals, arrived late in 1856, even before President Pierce had approved it. The war had been hard on many of these Indians as most of them suffered from starvation and some were near death. Those few who arrived in good condition had likely avoided both the fighting and government confinement. About 550 Puyallup inhabited the reservation by the end of the year.⁴⁰

Once a majority of the Puyallup had arrived, the government hoped to keep them tied to the reservation by housing and feeding them. Yet, a shortage of sawed lumber forced the first Indian residents to inhabit crude, makeshift shelters. Meanwhile, reservation employees tried to push the tribal members toward independence from government support by teaching the Indians basic farming techniques.⁴¹ Most of these war-weary students were emotionally distraught and likely a skeptical audience.

With the end of hostilities in 1856, the government not only hoped to modernize the territory's Indians, but to also create stable enough conditions to lure more Americans into the

⁴⁰ Wesley Gosnell, Special Indian Agent, Report to Isaac Stevens, Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Washington Territory, December 31, 1856, in Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1853-1874, Letters from Employees, Puyallup Agency, Treaty of Medicine Creek, December 13, 1856 through August 31, 1874. M5 Roll 11, NA-PAR.

⁴¹ Ibid.

region. Many settlers came to the South Sound for the same reasons that the Puyallup did thousands of years before: the chance to live in a climatically temperate and resource-rich environment. After they arrived, many of them harvested and exported resources to distant markets. While furs had been an early source of wealth in the Euro-American marketplace, by the late-1850s other commodities became important. For instance, the carpenters who built San Francisco after the gold rush purchased hundreds of thousands of wooden planks from south Puget Sound mills. Near the end of the following decade, one operation in the area was producing upwards of 40,000 board feet of lumber per day.⁴² Californians also purchased foodstuffs grown by Puget Sound farmers. Around the same time, a group of locals discovered a vein of bituminous coal in the Puyallup Valley, which further enhanced the area's economic value.⁴³

The existence of these business opportunities within such close proximity to the Puyallup Reservation gave some Natives the chance to participate in an inter-regional marketplace. However, since land was the most prominent lure for the non-Indian immigrants, the newcomers put the Puyallup Reservation under immediate and constant attack. The first American to live within the area that would blossom into a city was Job Carr. He was a Civil War veteran who came to the Pacific Northwest in order to recover from emotional and physical wounds. On Christmas Day of 1864, ten years to the day after the Medicine Creek Treaty council meeting, Carr was fishing on Commencement Bay with some friends from Gig Harbor. At one point, he noticed a stretch of shoreline that the Puyallup called "Chebaulip." Carr was so enamored with it that he filed a claim on the property the next day.

⁴² Hunt, 117.

⁴³ Ibid., 116.

Other Americans settled around Carr and before long, they named their small settlement Tacoma. The name's origin likely comes from the area's Natives. In 1853, Theodore Winthrop published *The Canoe and the Saddle*, his record of a visit he had made to the region. He noted that the local Natives, including the Puyallup, used the term to refer to the 14,000-plus foot peak that dominated the eastern horizon. Several of the early settlers determined that the name would be proper for their town. One of the first mentions of the appellation came in 1868 when the author of a Portland newspaper article noted that the emerging towns of Tacoma and Vancouver could challenge the future success of Portland.⁴⁴

This observation by the Oregon author suggests that Tacoma was a growing community. The new town's supposed threat to Portland's well-being was partly due to the efforts of an aspiring entrepreneur named Morton Matthew McCarver. In 1868, armed with financial support from two banking friends, he ventured out of Portland and headed north. Many years later the historian Murray Morgan guessed that when McCarver reached Commencement Bay, he gazed across the landscape and "...envisioned a city: wharves and streets and steamships and locomotives; a county courthouse, perhaps a state capitol; he breathed the heady incense of coal smoke and the new-sawn lumber, heard the clang of trolleys and the wail of factory whistles."⁴⁵ Congress's 1862 and 1864 Pacific Railroad Acts, which funded the construction of transcontinental lines across the United States, had pollinated McCarver's imagination. The laws, among other things, stipulated that a company planning to build a northern rail line had to lay track that connected the banks of Lake Superior to the shores of the Puget Sound.⁴⁶ This

⁴⁴ Morgan, 152-153.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 145, 147.

⁴⁶ Hunt, 168.

ribbon of wood and steel would connect the western terminus almost directly to the nation's eastern metropolises.

McCarver concluded that the land owned by Job Carr might interest railroad executives, due to its deep-water portage and the surrounding slopes that gradually ascended away from the shore. He therefore successfully convinced the Civil War veteran to sell him 163 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres for \$1,600. The entrepreneur then purchased more land from other nearby settlers while aggressively promoting the economic promise of this particular spot among other non-resident investors.⁴⁷ McCarver tried to ensure that if a railroad company built its terminus on the South Puget Sound, he would become a very rich man.

The Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR) ultimately won the government contract for the northern transcontinental line and broke ground for it in 1870, along Minnesota's Lake Superior shoreline. Congress then made several decisions that would greatly affect the Puyallup Reservation. Shortly after lawmakers awarded a contract to the NPRR, they gave the company the right to alter its course in Washington Territory, away from a path going through the Cascade Mountains, to one that ran next to the Columbia River. Then, in the fall of 1870, Congress decided against giving the company a large swath of land that went from the shores of the Columbia to just north of Seattle. Both of these decisions increased the possibility that NPRR executives would select a spot along the South Sound for its western terminus. In 1871, company workers began building a line that started in Kalama, just north of the Columbia River, and headed toward the Puget Sound. Within the year, the NPRR had narrowed its choices of

⁴⁷ Morgan, 147-148.

where to put its western terminus to Tacoma or Seattle.⁴⁸ Either place would affect both the reservation officials' attempts to modernize the Puyallup and the Puyallup's efforts to embrace change and preserve customs.

PUYALLUP HORSE AND PLOW FARMERS

As the Puyallup settled upon their new reservation, the government attempted to transform them through agricultural instruction. Government records suggest that effort was an uneven process that never gained the full support from Commencement Bay's Indians. Many of the Puyallup failed to see much logic to obtaining their food in such a manner, especially since foraging had almost always provided them with plenty to eat and they had to invest much less effort to obtain it. Nevertheless, some of the Puyallup who participated in the program shaped it to their needs. They understood that this effort at acculturation could provide them with a food production system that could help make up for the resources they lost after the Medicine Creek Treaty, as well as produce enough extra goods to sell to Tacoma residents. These transactions ultimately strengthened the Indians' understanding of capitalist notions of value and property. The Indians' economic interactions with non-Indians would eventually compel the Natives to adopt Euro-American concepts of land ownership.

The government's decision to turn Indians into yeoman farmers was part of a national plan that had existed for several decades before the Medicine Creek Treaty. Government policymakers felt that instruction in plant and animal husbandry would be the quickest and cheapest way to feed their Indian wards and make them independent of federal assistance. The fact that farming constituted the lion's share of the American economy and therefore had a high

⁴⁸ Caroline Gallacci, "Planning the City of Destiny: An Urban History of Tacoma to 1930" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1999), 99-100.

degree of cultural currency likewise played a role in the government's decision. Thomas Jefferson had insisted that farmers were the backbone of the nation, and social theorists argued that the human pursuit of agriculture represented virtue, integrity, and liberty. Other philosophers believed that a civilization's adoption of agronomy was a key stage in society's march toward its final evolutionary destination of trade and commerce.⁴⁹ Gray Whaley suggests that Indian policy reformers and government officials had an additional and perhaps less high-minded motive in pushing agriculture upon the Indians, which was to give the Natives "instruction in manual labor."⁵⁰

In any case, the government's plan to promote farming among the Indians ignored the fact that prior to the Europeans' arrival in the New World, many Native Americans were already accomplished agriculturalists and virtually all were self-sufficient. While the Puyallup were not farmers, they were skilled foragers. Despite the effectiveness of the Natives' food production strategies, European settlers saw the Indians' subsistence methods as unorganized and inefficient, a perspective that was partly informed by non-Indian racism and Euro-American adherence to John Locke's concept of *vacuum domicillium*. Locke argued that until a man tilled the land it was "empty" and consequently untitled. He suggested that cultivating acreage in the manner of a European farmer not only satisfied God's requirement to "subdue the earth," but

⁴⁹ Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver, BC, University of British Columbia Press, 2002), 48; James Gibson, *Farming the Frontier: The Agricultural Opening of the Oregon Country, 1786-1846* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 159-161, 180; David Rich Lewis, *Neither Wolf Nor Dog: American Indians, Environment and Agrarian Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 8-9; Leonard Carlson, "Learning to Farm: Indian Land Tenure and Farming Before the Dawes Act," in *Property Rights and Indian Economies: The Political Economy Forum*, ed. Terry Anderson (Washington, D.C.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1992), 68, 70, 74; White, 155.

⁵⁰ Whaley, 109.

also gave the tiller rightful claim to the property. European culture considered organized, bountiful, and geometrically uniform gardens to be a symbol of sufficient labor. Non-Natives did not believe that Indians' seemingly haphazard planting or hunting and gathering methods met this standard.⁵¹

Territorial officials were certain that the Puyallup's reservation site would be an ideal location to teach residents how to farm because of its abundance of arable land. According to one official, while the Nisqually reservation land was "so sterile that it will not pay for ploughing [*sic*]..." the Puyallup's farmland was among the best in Washington Territory. Another bureaucrat went so far as to suggest that the Puyallup reservation contained "...more good agricultural land than all...of the other reservations of the Medicine Creek treaty combined."⁵²

⁵¹ John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. C.B. Macpherson (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1980), 1-3, 21; Barbara Arneil, *John Locke and America: The Defence of English Colonialism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 141, 144; Michael Pollan, *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's Eye View of the World* (New York: Random House, 2002), 175; Harris, 49.

⁵² Simmons, Report, June 30, 1858; W.B. Gosnell, report to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs; Oregon and Washington Territories. June 30, 1859, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/117/rec/1>; "Washington Superintendency," October 19, 1862, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/240/rec/11>; A.R. Elder, U.S. Indian Agent, Washington Territory, report to C.H. Hale, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Washington Territory, September 7, 1863, UW Digital Collection, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/203/rec/1>; Henry C. Hale, U.S. Indian Sub-Agent, Washington Territory, letter to T.J. McKenney, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Washington Territory," September 16, 1868, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 12, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/441/rec/1>; T.J. McKenney, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Washington Territory, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/467/rec/3>; H.D. Gibson, U.S. Indian Agent, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," September 28,

At one point, the territory's Superintendent of Indian Affairs insisted that if the government had started teaching the Puyallup how to farm on this land at an earlier date, it would have been long free of the responsibility of caring for them.⁵³

The reservation's relatively large size also gave officials the option to implement part of the Medicine Creek Treaty's sixth article. This section of the document allowed the President to allot tracts of reservation land to the heads of each Puyallup household so they and their family members could participate in the concept of land ownership.⁵⁴

Much of what we know about the Puyallup's response to government programs on their reserve comes from the observations of agency employees. These individuals recorded events as they saw them, often shading their comments with subjective hues that revealed their racial biases or supported their personal goals. According to these officials, Indians who seemed to adopt non-Native ways were "good" while those who resisted were supposedly acting out the role of the savage that nature had assigned them. Consequently, when Puyallup did not respond to farming as planners hoped—and there were more than a few who reacted in this way—

1874, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007,
<http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/642/rec/1>.

⁵³ R.H. Milroy, Superintendent of Indian Affairs Puyallup Agency, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," October 1, 1872, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 12, 2007,
<http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/592/rec/1>.

⁵⁴ The specific wording is: [The President]... may..., at his discretion, cause the whole or any portion of the lands hereby reserved, or of such other land as may be selected in lieu thereof, to be surveyed into lots, and assign the same to such individuals or families as are willing to avail themselves of the privilege, and will locate on the same as a permanent home, on the same terms and subject to the same regulations as are provided in the sixth article of the treaty with the Omahas, so far as the same may be applicable. Any substantial improvements heretofore made by any Indian, and which he shall be compelled to abandon in consequence of this treaty, shall be valued under the direction of the President, and payment to be made accordingly thereof. See: Article Six of the Treaty of Medicine Creek.

officials blamed this behavior on the Natives' alleged shortcomings rather than upon the inadequacies of the program.⁵⁵

A case in point comes from Indian agent Michael Simmons, who was initially hopeful that the government could turn South Sound Indians into planters. Recall that in 1858, he had revealed his optimism in the government's ability to modernize Natives living west of the Cascade Mountains. Ironically, in that same report, he revealed his frustration in working with them. He criticized some Indians for leaving the reservation any time he had assigned them a task he thought that they wanted to avoid. According to Simmons, "Frequently when their attention is most required they take a lazy fit and will not work, the crops being materially injured by their neglect." He, like many of his American contemporaries believed their wards were letting them down, and they theorized that the Natives' actions were a consequence of their being "...filthy, cowardly, lazy, treacherous, drunken, avaricious, and much given to thieving."⁵⁶ On the other hand, when officials came across Indians who tried farming, they often tended to credit the agricultural apprentices' motivations to outside forces. In one instance an observer insisted that the harshness of the preceding winter was the only reason the Natives were "...eager to work and anxious to provide against the [next] coming cold season."⁵⁷ He refused to entertain the possibility that previously non-compliant Indians were resorting to farming because the government had failed to provide its dependents with the food it had earlier promised.

⁵⁵ Whaley, 56.

⁵⁶ Simmons, Report, June 30, 1858.

⁵⁷ W.B. Gosnell, Special Indian Agent, Washington Territory, report to Col. J.W. Nesmith, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Oregon and Washington Territories, June 30, 1857, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/67/rec/1>; Simmons, Report, June 30, 1858.

Puyallup Reservation carpenter John Perkins voiced similar concerns about the Puyallup one year later. By his calculations, only 400 of the roughly 700 Puyallup Indians who had come to the reserve by then had “taken hold to work.” He, like his colleagues, was certain that their reluctance to toil was due to generations of feral existence, which, he believed, included living along salt water, where the Natives were “...exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and sleeping on the damp cold beach with but little clothing or blankets.” Perkins similarly maintained that the Puyallup’s seeming disdain for labor was solid proof that they were “a sickly, miserable, and diseased race of beings.”⁵⁸ These men were certain that if their program were to succeed, the Puyallup would have to compensate for numerous inherent racial shortcomings.

These viewpoints fostered skepticism among many agency officials about the Puyallup’s ability to adopt American cultural practices. This in turn prevented numerous reservation employees from recognizing that the Puyallup’s adverse reaction toward government oversight was partly a function of a flawed Indian program. One problem occurred immediately after administrators had assigned the Puyallup to their reservation. Officials had failed to take into account that members of the Puyallup nation had originally inhabited an array of environments, which had influenced the way that portions of the community had subsisted for numerous generations. Puyallup who had lived along the Puget Sound’s shoreline and had survived on plants and animals that were indigenous to that ecosystem became frustrated when the government relocated them to a prairie. In other situations, the government placed Puyallup on

⁵⁸ John L. Perkins, “Report to the Indian Sub-Agent of Washington Territory.” July 30, 1859, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/121/rec/1>; John L. Perkins, “Report to W.B. Gosnell, Sub-Agent Squaksin, Washington Territory,” June 30, 1860, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/138/rec/1>.

portions of the reserve that had poor soil, lacked sufficient irrigation, or were prone to flooding, all factors that limited its agricultural output. All the while, the government neglected to give the Indians the financial support necessary to help them transition to their new life. Therefore, numerous Puyallup rebelled against the government's plans to one degree or another because these programs were not contributing to the Indians' survival and there was little evidence they ever would. Over time, Puyallup spent limited amounts of time on the reservation, probably because they were exercising their treaty right to hunt and gather in their efforts to diminish their hunger.⁵⁹

Despite these problems, some Puyallup patiently and successfully pursued agriculture. They were not disciples of either Locke or Jefferson, but they had determined that farming was a potentially effective way to survive in the new order in which they lived as well as gain influence and prestige within their tribe. Thus, by 1862 several Puyallup families had joined together and put twenty acres of land to the plow, producing wheat, oats, potatoes, corn, peas, and other vegetables.⁶⁰ Over the next ten years, the Puyallup who chose this path grew in number and the size of reservation harvests expanded. In 1864, Puyallup farmers raised dairy cattle and produced enough excess milk and butter to sell.⁶¹ By 1870, they were growing fruit trees to complement their production of 1,000 bushels of oats, 5,000 bushels of potatoes, 200 bushels of

⁵⁹ White, 164-165; Lewis, 170-176; Gibson, 185; Russell Lawrence Brash, "Puget Sound Indian Demography, 1900-1920: Migration and Economic Integration," *Ethnohistory* 43 (Winter, 1996): 69. Frank W. Porter, III, "In Search of Recognition: Federal Indian Policy and the Landless Tribes of Western Washington," *American Indian Quarterly* 14:2 (Spring, 1990): 116.

⁶⁰ "Washington Superintendency."

⁶¹ William Billings, report to A.R. Elder, U.S. Indian Agent, Washington Territory," June 30, 1864, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/264/rec/1>.

peas, fifty bushels of timothy seed, and assorted other garden vegetables. As of 1872, Puyallup agriculturalists were cultivating a total of 170 acres of land.⁶²

Puyallup also adopted other “civilized” behaviors.⁶³ Officials noted that virtually all tribal members wore Euro-American-style clothing and a growing number of them built and lived in “box-style” homes. One Puyallup named Sitwell enhanced his residence by installing a wooden floor and two fireplaces.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, a group of Indians facilitated the flow of goods and people across the reservation by clearing the Puyallup River of debris and building a thoroughfare that linked their reservation to a military road connecting Ft. Steilacoom to Seattle.⁶⁵

The Indians’ behaviors prompted government officials to insert bits of admiration among their catalog of criticisms of the aboriginals. For example, one observer claimed that the Puyallup who produced the expanding harvests were “smart and intelligent farm hands.”⁶⁶

⁶² Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1870, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/560/rec/15>; A.H. Lowe, Farmer in Charge, Puyallup Reservation. letter to Colonel Samuel Ross, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Washington Territory, August 1, 1870, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/560/rec/1>; Barlow, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872.”

⁶³ Billings, Report to A.R. Elder, June 30, 1864.

⁶⁴ Byron Barlow, Farmer in Charge, Puyallup Indian Reservation, letter to T.J. McKenney, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Washington Territory, September 18, 1871, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/474/rec/1>.

⁶⁵ William Billings, Puyallup Agency Carpenter, report to A.R. Elder, U.S. Indian Agent, Puyallup Agency, June 30, 1863, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/206/rec/1>.

⁶⁶ Report of the Commissioner, 1870; Lowe, letter to Colonel Samuel Ross, August 1, 1870.

Washington Territory Superintendent of Indian Affairs C.H. Hale favorably contrasted the Puyallup with members of neighboring tribes when he stated that “many, very many” of the Indians under his watch were “indolent and worthless as ever.... They are...without any ambition, without any aim in life that is calculated to call into action either moral or intellectual energies of the mind.” He then added that the Puyallup conversely “...have been doing remarkably well.”⁶⁷ By 1865, observers noted that growing numbers of the tribe seemed to be mimicking their American neighbors.⁶⁸ At one point the reservation’s assistant farmer went so far as to suggest that some of the Indians were actually worthy of being role models for many non-Indians. He reported that the Natives’ habits were shielding them from liquor and that if Americans were as concerned with the ills of drinking as the Puyallup, “they would soon become a very temperate class of people.”⁶⁹ In 1871, the reservation’s head farmer added that the Puyallup labored “with a zeal and industry that might be imitated to advantage by some of their white brethren.”⁷⁰

We can see that the reservation officials’ remarks about the Puyallup were inconsistent, ranging from one end of the spectrum to the other. If one compares the statements that these officials made over time, it can be hard to imagine that they were talking about the same people.

⁶⁷ C.H. Hale, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Washington Territory, letter to William P. Dole, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Wash, D.C., September 1, 1863, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/190/rec/1>.

⁶⁸ William Billings, Ass’t Farmer of Puyallup Reservation, letter to A.R. Elder, Esq., U.S. Indian Agent, June 30, 1865, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/315/rec/1>.

⁶⁹ Ward, report to A.R. Elder, June 30, 1863.

⁷⁰ Barlow, letter to T.J. McKenney, September 18, 1871.

These variations in tone may have been because of the high turnover rate among reservation employees. Over time, new men made different comments than their predecessors because they had dissimilar expectations of their wards. In other cases, new agents disparaged the efforts of their predecessors to make themselves look better. Then again, there were also discrepancies in the reports due to a measurable growth in the Puyallup's willingness to participate in the government's Indian policy.

THE PUYALLUP IN THE MARKETPLACE

Government officials liked to think that when the Puyallup did show supposed improvements in their behaviors, it was the reservation's employees and the programs they administered that were the cause. However, these successes were as much due to the Indians' own decision making as they interacted with local non-Natives in the marketplace. As I discussed in Chapter One, the Puyallup had long seen outsiders as a source for new ideas and technologies that they could use to sate cultural needs and wants. It was therefore natural that members of the tribe would continue to seek out and integrate aspects of American culture into their own after 1854. Between 1855 and 1872, many Puyallup became very dependent upon their economic relationships with their non-Native neighbors because the Medicine Creek Treaty had taken much of their surrounding environment away from them and the government failed to provide them with enough food and supplies. Some Puyallup made up for that deficit by raising their food and some of these farmers sold their excess yields to non-Natives. Other Indians continued to earn money by working for individuals and businesses located outside of their reservation.

Some Indian policy reformers were encouraged by these cross-cultural behaviors because they had assumed that the marketplace would foment assimilation, a perspective not so different from that held by Hudson's Bay Company administrators who used trade with the Indians as a way to prod them to adhere to European values and behaviors.⁷¹ Since some of these characteristics included a respect for property ownership, it is likely that between 1855 and 1872, the marketplace served as an incubator for future Puyallup acculturation and agitation. There was a good chance that the farmers who confronted Barlow in 1872 were using understandings of American economic values and behaviors they had obtained in the marketplace to justify their insistence that the government give the Puyallup the same property protections enjoyed by local non-Indians.

The Puyallup's proximity to Tacoma and the resulting interactions between Indians and non-Indians suggested to officials that using commerce to modernize the Indians could work. Numerous Puyallup satisfied their basic needs by continuing to take advantage of local labor demands for ranchers, farmers, trappers, fishermen, loggers, miners, and domestic and

⁷¹ There is a vast literature on the marketplace's ability to create a common set of behaviors among participants. See: Helga Dittmar, *The Social Psychology of Material Possessions: To Have is to Be* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 7-9, 36, 41, 52, 70, 73, 79-80, 172; Tim Dant, *Materiality and Society* (Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press, 2005), 18; Terry Anderson, "The Property Rights Paradigm: An Introduction," in *Property Rights and Indian Economies: The Political Economy Forum*, ed. Terry Anderson (Washington, D.C.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1992), 2, 24; Karl Polanyi. *The Great Transformation* (New York: Octagon Books, 1975), 72, 75, 131; Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 57, 65, 76, 79, 184-87; Timothy J. Shannon, "Dressing for Success on the Mohawk Frontier: Hendrick, William Johnson, and the Indian Fashion," in *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500-1850*, eds. Peter C. Mancall and James H. Merrell (New York: Routledge, 2000), 353, 355, 358.

production workers.⁷² One of the offshoots of this activity was that more and more Puyallup became comfortable and successful when dealing with Americans.

Washington Territorial officials took note of these Puyallup's actions and sometimes trumpeted what they saw. In 1862, the territory's Superintendent of Indian Affairs suggested that the Indians who earned money were "...fast ceasing to care for the worthless baubles and trinkets which tickle the fancies of the untamed savages, and are not only willing to receive, but desire to have, something substantial like the whites."⁷³ Several years later, the Puyallup reservation's assistant farmer added that the Puyallup's participation in the local economy had brought "...a great improvement in them; they are advancing toward civilization as fast as can be expected. The most of them take pride in imitating the white settlers of the country in their manner of living."⁷⁴

There were times when the Puyallup's trade connections turned them into integral parts of the local economy. Settlers from all around the area visited a Puyallup named Chickman Jack, who operated a blacksmith shop on the reservation where he created and repaired assorted

⁷² Martha C. Knack and Alice Littlefield, "Native American Labor: Retrieving History, Rethinking Theory," in *Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives*, eds. Alice Littlefield and Martha Knack (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 13-14; Myron Eells, *The Indians of the Puget Sound: The Notebooks of Myron Eells*, ed. George Pierre Castile (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 304-305; Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities Around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 98.

⁷³ B.F. Kendall, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Washington Territory, "Report of the Washington Superintendency, 1862, University of Washington Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/239/rec/1>.

⁷⁴ Billings, report to A.R. Elder, June 30, 1865.

items.⁷⁵ Other Puyallup earned money by transporting people and supplies up and down local rivers in their canoes and across land on their horses.⁷⁶ One set of tribal members established a successful logging operation on the reservation. Meanwhile, the Puyallup Reservation became an important source of food for local non-Indians. In the spring of 1860, some settlers became concerned that if Puyallup farmers failed to plant crops, South Sound residents would face shortages of particular staples.⁷⁷ In 1865, members of the tribe sold over \$6,000 worth of furs, fish, and agricultural products, including \$500 worth of beef cattle, \$200 of hogs, and \$50 of chickens.⁷⁸

While these conditions pleased reservation officials, many Puyallup still made decisions in the marketplace that illustrated their independence from government authority. These actions often caused agents and their associates to cringe. Reservation employees attempted to monitor and control the Natives with the help of language they found within the Medicine Creek Treaty. Article Four gave the President leverage over how the Indians spent their annual annuity payments, which were supposed to go towards the recipients' "use and benefit." Authorities interpreted this to mean investing funds into home or land, or purchasing seed, stock, and tools, which they believed would make the Indians less reliant upon their pre-treaty subsistence

⁷⁵ Henry Sicade, "Henry Sicade's History of Puyallup Indian School, 1860-1920" Cary C. Collins, ed. *Columbia* (Winter 2000-01), accessed July 11, 2008, <http://www.washingtonhistory.org/wshs/columbia/articles/o400-al.htm>.

⁷⁶ W.B. Gosnell, Indian Agent, Washington Territory,, "Report to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Washington Territory, 1861," UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/160/rec/1>.

⁷⁷ Petition from Pierce County Citizens, December 29, 1860, Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1853-1874, Letters from Employees, Puyallup Agency, Treaty of Medicine Creek, December 13, 1856 through August 31, 1874, M5 Roll 11, NA-PAR.

⁷⁸ Billings, letter to A.R. Elder, Esq., June 30, 1865.

methods. Meanwhile, Article Five stated that the Indians could only use their land for agricultural purposes unless they received special permission from government authorities and Article Nine prohibited the Indian signers from trafficking in alcohol, a product with which numerous Indians had had a long and tragic history.⁷⁹

These controls proved to be relatively ineffective in part because officials failed to keep the Puyallup on the reservation and under the agent's gaze. Consequently, as with agriculture, the Indian Office's plan to use the marketplace to transform the Indians did not always go as they anticipated. This meant that the Puyallup continued to exercise agency despite experiencing a diminishing middle ground. For example, many Natives were selective about which Euro-American marketplace perspectives they would incorporate into their lives. One key distinction between Euro-American and Puyallup economic culture was the emphasis that each society placed upon the group and the individual. Non-Indian capitalists and proponents of Indian reform supported the notion, at least in theory, that individuals compete in the marketplace on their own and one's merits determined one's level of success.⁸⁰ Most of the Puyallup, on the other hand, apparently still felt that individuals were supposed to put the group's needs ahead of their own, though this view diminished over time among a number of tribal members.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Article Four, Article Five, Article Nine, and Article Twelve of the Treaty of Medicine Creek.

⁸⁰ Dittmar, 1-4, 190-191; Steven Spitzer, "The Rationalization of Crime Control in Capitalist Society," in *Social Control and the State: Historical and Comparative Essays*, eds. Stanley Cohen and Andrew Scull (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983), 325; Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 41, 44-45.

⁸¹ Marian W. Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 33, 35, 49-52; Polanyi, 57.

The Puyallup also frustrated reservation officials by utilizing money in ways that were more indicative of their pre-treaty customs than American culture. For example, the Puyallup quickly turned annuity payout gatherings into festivals. All across the South Sound Indians treated the events as celebrations where, as one government commentator sordidly exclaimed, "...frolic and games became the order of the day..."⁸² Tribal members also used material goods to sponsor their own potlatches, which they used to verify the strength of their personal power, and develop relationships and influence among fellow reservation residents. Hence, the Medicine Creek Treaty did not end the Puyallup's legacy of using outsiders to maintain their customs as much as it gave the Natives the opportunity to retain them.

To the dismay of Indian Affairs officials, other Indians used their annuity payments for traditional gambling events, which indigenous cultures from across the continent used to fulfill social and spiritual requirements. Many communities engaged in these games as a non-violent form of competition that often reinforced friendship.⁸³ Gambling was so important to the Puyallup that they had a gamblers' society. When they gathered, supporters and participants performed songs and dances in order to please the spirits whom they hoped would help their village or tribal representatives achieve victory. Prior to contact with non-Indians, contestants wagered their personal property, which could be tools or clothing. In some cases, male players staked their wives. After contact, the Indians introduced money into their gambling practices.

⁸² W.B. Gosnell, Sub-Agent Washington Territory, report to Edward R. Geary, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon and Washington Territory, June 30, 1860, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/134/rec/1>; Wayne P. Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver, B.C.: Talon Books, 1987), 207; White, 162.

⁸³ Donald Lee Fixico, *American Indians in a Modern World* (Lanham: Alta Mira Press, 2008), 185, 187.

Myron Eells, who recorded a number of Puget Sound Indian behaviors during the mid-nineteenth century, said that at times pots would contain hundreds of dollars. Indians not only gambled for different reasons than Euro-Americans, the Natives also adhered to dissimilar protocols. For example, players would occasionally forfeit all of their property to their opponents, often on their last wager. However, it was common for a loser to ask the victor to return the wager and for the winner to honor the request.⁸⁴

Puget Sound Natives who worked for liquor or spent their money on it also angered reservation officials. Fur traders had introduced alcohol as a form of currency in North America because it was relatively easy to make and transport and it had an addictive quality. Unfortunately, it also fomented violence and poverty among the Indian users so government officials attempted to quash its distribution to the Natives.⁸⁵ The 1834 Indian Intercourse Act prohibited merchants from selling liquor to aboriginals but authorities had a difficult time

⁸⁴ Jerry Meeker, interview by Alfred Smith, 1948, Alfred J. Smith Papers, Accession # 4515-001, Special Collections, University of Washington; Hunt, 18; Eells, 205-206.

⁸⁵ Historians and modern day researchers have debated why liquor has had, and continues to have, such a devastating impact upon Native Americans. Some argue that the Indians' problems with alcohol have a cultural basis. They explain that while the pre-contact Indians had hallucinogenic items for religious uses, they did not have any experience with something as powerful as liquor. Consequently, when non-Native liquor traders promoted drinking in excess, rather than in measured quantities, the substance overpowered them. Another set of researchers contend that many Natives did not have the biological disposition to consume liquor because they, among other ethnic groups, lack a specific enzyme that can successfully break down alcohol. Finally, one might understand the Indians' adverse relationship with alcohol as being a consequence of numerous traumas that rained down upon Natives after contact. Disease, relocation, American transformation efforts, the allotment policy, racism, loss of resources and poverty all contributed to what some American Indians refer to as the "soul wound." See: Cindy L Ehlers and Ian Gizer, "Evidence for a Genetic Component for Substance Dependence in Native Americans," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 170 (2013): 161-162; William J. Szlemko, James W. Wood, and Pamela Jumper Thurman, "Native Americans and Alcohol: Past, Present, and Future," *The Journal of General Psychology* 133:4 (2006): 439-441; Peter Newman, *Empire of the Bay: The Company of Adventurers that Seized a Continent* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 363-364.

enforcing it. Eventually, some officials determined that the only way to prevent the Indians in Oregon and Washington from spending annuity payments on whisky and other vices offered by “unprincipled white men and half-breeds...,” was to distribute material items to the tribes instead of cash.⁸⁶

Alcohol availability was just one of many aspects of the market place that government officials feared would corrupt the Puyallup. These dangers included the Indians’ exposure to other outside influences. For example, in the course of using the marketplace, some of the Natives unsettled their guardians by aping some of their scandalous or apparently unprincipled American neighbors. Ironically, there were officials who were suspicious of Indians who adopted some American behaviors too quickly; perhaps because they were failing to act in ways that non-Natives expected them to. In one instance, the reservation’s farmer-in-charge criticized the previously mentioned Puyallup loggers for aggressively dropping reservation trees that the government had designated for the benefit of the entire tribe.⁸⁷ Evidently, these Indian lumberjacks had been overly zealous in embracing the tenets of capitalism.

Nevertheless, the Puyallup relied upon trading with Americans because they could obtain items that the government had failed to provide. Indians who traded with their neighbors undoubtedly found it could be a difficult experience because aspects of it seemed quiet strange. Regardless, for nearly two decades after the Medicine Creek Treaty, Puyallup consumers,

⁸⁶ W.H. Waterman, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Washington Territory, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” September 7, 1865, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/309/rec/3>; Milroy, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” October 1, 1872.

⁸⁷ Barlow, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872.”

producers, and laborers used what economic opportunities they could to fulfill their various needs.

THE PUYALLUP AND GOVERNMENT-RUN SCHOOLS

Between 1855 and 1872, as the federal government attempted to mold the Puyallup adults into farmers, ranchers, merchants, and consumers, it also established a government-run Indian day school on the reservation. Officials hoped that providing younger members of the tribe with instruction in trades, rudimentary academic subjects, and American cultural habits would exorcise them of their pre-treaty habits. The government's fervor for formalizing Indian education grew as its attempts to teach the Natives farming and capitalism produced uneven results. Policymakers surmised that focusing their reform efforts upon young and supposedly untainted Indian minds would prove more successful. The government-run Puyallup Reservation School, like other reservation programs, was fraught with shortcomings and failed to meet up to its promise. However, some Puyallup used the school to their benefit. In the short term, it helped narrow the cultural gap between the Indians and their neighbors. Over time, a group of graduates emerged from the school who used their newfound skills to become successful businessmen in the American marketplace. Some individuals within this cadre of alumni would later spearhead efforts to free tribal members from government land controls within the Medicine Creek Treaty.

The Puyallup were no strangers to the concept of organized learning when the government provided them with a school. They had long used a structured educational process to pass on important aspects of their culture from one generation to another and to help individual youths discover how they could contribute to their village's well-being. Yet most

Americans refused to recognize the Puyallup as being educated in any sense of the word because of the Indians' supposed lack of civilization. Indian policy reformers predicted that the Natives' ignorance of Euro-American ways would lead them to a tragic end, so they tried to save them from this fate by exposing them to an American education program that would "...rescue [Natives] from the superstitions of their fathers..." as well as help them fit into non-Indian society by teaching them the concept of "possessive individualism."⁸⁸ Proponents of government-run Indian schools developed a long list of specific goals that included imparting to the Indians Euro-American notions of dress, communication, value, labor, religion, citizenship, individualism, and gender roles.⁸⁹ Ironically, while the Puyallup, like most societies, educated their own children to preserve culture, the government planned to use the Indian school to destroy one.

The American effort to educate the Puyallup was a vestige of programs that the Spanish had begun in the seventeenth-century while attempting to subjugate and integrate the Indians. The English used a similar strategy with the Natives in portions of New England, as exemplified by colonists' establishment of Dartmouth College in 1769. Americans initiated their own Indian education system in the early nineteenth century. Treaties with the Creeks, Cherokees, and

⁸⁸ Quincy Brooks, Instructor of Squaxin Island School, letter to W.B. Gosnell, Indian Agent of Washington Territory, September 20, 1857, cited in: White, 138; David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1995), 23.

⁸⁹ Adams, 23, 28-29, 149, 153, 154; Alice Littlefield, "Learning to Labor: Native American Education in the United States, 1880-1903," in *The Political Economy of North American Indians*, ed. John Moore (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 44, 46-47; Joel Spring, *Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality: A Brief History of Dominated Cultures in the United States* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2001), 4-5, 8-9; K. Tsianina Lomawaima, "To Remain an Indian": *Lessons in Democracy From a Century of Native American Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006), 49; Jon Allan Reyhner and Jeanne Eder, *American Indian Education: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 12.

Delaware provided these tribes with support for instruction in reading, writing, and agriculture and mechanical arts. In 1819, Congress hired instructors to live among the Indians and teach them vocational and basic academic skills. Five years later, federal legislators earmarked \$10,000 to finance thirty-two Indian schools that served approximately 916 students. Subsequent treaties between the American government and Native tribes also contained provisions for the creation and support of Indian schools. By 1871, the government had established 286 learning institutions that served 6,061 Indian students.⁹⁰

The government mapped out its plan to educate the Puyallup in Article Ten of the Medicine Creek Treaty. This section directed the Indian agency to establish and support an “agricultural and industrial school” for a twenty-year period as well as provide “suitable” instructors, including individuals versed in carpentry and blacksmithing.⁹¹ In the beginning, most reservation employees were hopeful that government-run education would effectively modernize Puyallup youth. In 1857, an instructor who worked with the Indians stated, “Let them be educated that they will profess the habits, thoughts and impulses of civilized men, and will be as much superior to the present race as they are now below us.”⁹²

One could argue that within a generation the Puyallup Indian School met some of this instructor’s expectations because it contributed to the emergence of a modestly numbered group of individuals who were comfortable operating in the non-Indian world. Nevertheless, the reservation’s education program generally saddled the Puyallup with more problems than it provided prospects. The Puyallup children living on Squaxin Island became the first tribal

⁹⁰ Reyhner and Eder, 44-47; Prucha, *The Great Father*, 144, 289, 1152.

⁹¹ Article Ten, Treaty of Medicine Creek, 1854.

⁹² Brooks, letter to W.B. Gosnell, September 20, 1857.

members to attend a government-run learning center in late 1857. This school was actually nothing but a small room, housed within the agency headquarters building. Its meager size was not a problem because there were only thirteen potential students, eight boys and five girls. Only eight members of this baker's dozen attended class, as the other five had joined their parents on a seasonal hunting and gathering foray.

The students' first instructor was Quincy Brooks, who had scant success teaching this group to read and write. After a couple of months, the more advanced students could boast of little more than a familiarity with the letters of the English alphabet. Sadly, only one of these pupils could read a simple sentence.⁹³ When Brooks left the school that winter the government replaced him with another teacher named Richard Lane. All of the island's children participated in his class, most likely because their families had secured their harvests and the winter was typically when the pre-reservation Puyallup gathered in their primary villages and gave instruction to their children.

The government established a new school for the Puyallup on their post-war reservation but many of the old problems remained. For instance, even though the newly relocated Puyallup community now provided instructors with more students, their numbers were still well short of full participation. Meanwhile, in 1864 the thirty-three enrolled pupils had a spotty attendance record. Some students consistently warmed their classroom benches, as was the case with a student named William who was present for fifty-eight days and another named George who came to class on forty-nine occasions. Many others attended class for as little as a third of that

⁹³ White, 148.

time. Female attendance was especially abysmal. Two young women, Jane and Yesia, were present seven days while another named Ann joined her classmates on just four occasions.⁹⁴

As was their habit, officials placed most of the blame for the students' poor classroom performance and chronic absences on the Puyallup. A common target was the children's after-school contact with their fellow tribal members. Instructors claimed this "...lead [*sic*] [students] to indulge in their old-established notions, which has a tendency to lessen their interest in their studies."⁹⁵ Michael Simmons believed that when the Indian children were at home, their parents exposed them to "evil examples," which reversed any progress the instructor may have achieved in assimilating the pupils.⁹⁶

These observers failed to recognize the Puyallup's historical emphasis upon education, which remained intact after the Medicine Creek Treaty. Evidence for this comes from the fact that in 1860 tribal leaders devoted a portion of the reservation's communal lands for the construction of an Indian school. The Puyallup who stood behind this decision argued that learning to read and write English would strengthen rather than diminish tribal unity because it would foster better communication between full and mixed-blood Indians. Other reservation residents understood that once they were educated in the Americans' ways, they could become a conduit between the Indian and non-Indian worlds. Puyallup who became cultural intermediaries not only helped their fellow Indians interact with the expanding population of

⁹⁴ Cyrus Ward, Assistant Farmer, Puyallup, Washington Territory, letter to A.R. Elder, U.S. Indian Agent, Olympia, Washington Territory, August 25, 1864, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 12, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/262/rec/1>.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Simmons, Report, June 30, 1858.

Americans in the area, they also enhanced their personal prestige on both sides of the reservation's boundaries.⁹⁷

Time would show the wisdom of those Puyallup who supported government-run Indian education, but not until after 1873, when Tacoma's influence upon Puyallup Reservation residents began expanding. Up to that time, it was difficult for the Indians to see much benefit in the schools. Consequently, students participated in a lackluster manner, perhaps because their parents wished to have their sons and daughters educated in the pre-treaty Puyallup way or because they wished to avoid the assorted controls that the government had put upon the tribe.⁹⁸ Then again, reservation life had disrupted the Puyallup's subsistence activities to the point that the community needed every able-bodied member to secure an adequate food supply. This may explain why reservation administrators so often complained about the Puyallup's "roving habits," which especially affected student attendance during harvest time.⁹⁹

Some government authorities understood the Puyallup were experiencing difficulties and argued that the Indians should not bear all of the responsibility for their actions. As early as 1861, W.B. Gosnell, the Indian Agent of Washington Territory, predicted that the Natives would continue to abandon the reservations until the government made these places more appealing to the inhabitants. He believed that the Indian Office had grossly underestimated the cost of supporting the Indians throughout the region and urged his superiors to immediately increase the

⁹⁷ Gosnell, report to Edward Geary, June 30, 1860; Sicade.

⁹⁸ Edmund Danzinger, Jr., *Great Lakes Indian Accommodation and Resistance during the Early Reservation Years, 1850-1900* (University of Michigan Press, 2009), 133, 138; 133, 138; Harmon, *Indians in the Making*, 97, 114, 117-118.

⁹⁹ Elder, letter to William P. Dole, August 8, 1864.

annuity payments and invest more funds into reservation infrastructure and programs.¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile, a Puyallup Reservation Indian school employee wanted authorities to invest in more than just books. He insisted that the government could raise student attendance numbers if it provided the pupils with basic items like food and clothing.¹⁰¹

Regardless, once again the Puyallup suffered because the government failed to support its Indian programs. Gosnell was correct in identifying federal lawmakers' unwillingness to fund the Puyallup Indian School sufficiently. From time to time, the fiscal shortfalls at the reservation school were so dire that officials shut it down completely, as was the case in 1868.¹⁰² More often, the dearth of money prevented instructors from providing their students with proper materials, as evidenced when all of the original students had to share a single book for their lessons.¹⁰³

The government's deficient Indian budget likewise forced the Puyallup Indian students to learn in poorly maintained facilities. The Puyallup's first school structure on their new reservation was a compact sixteen-foot square "one-room shack" that was supported by walls "of old refuse undressed lumber, one inch in thickness." The building had just one door and window, which made ventilation an issue on warm days. Unfortunately, the cracks that scarred the building's walls were a bigger problem during the cold and damp non-summer months

¹⁰⁰ Gosnell, "Report to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Washington Territory, 1861"; "Washington Superintendency," October 19, 1862.

¹⁰¹ Hale, letter to T.J. McKenney, September 16, 1868.

¹⁰² Ibid.; Elizabeth Shackelford, "A History of the Puyallup Indian Reservation" (Thesis, College of Puget Sound, 1918), 43.

¹⁰³ Sicade.

because the partitions failed to lock in heat and ward off the chill.¹⁰⁴ Equally discomfoting were classroom furnishings, which consisted of a couple of hard benches that offered the students little comfort.¹⁰⁵ Topping off the list of problems, officials constructed the school within the Puyallup River's flood plain, which led to the occasional closure of the building. The soggy ground likewise inhibited the instructors' ability to give the students proper lessons on how to maintain a home and garden as many Americans would.¹⁰⁶

Puyallup students also continued to endure poorly trained and overworked teachers, a problem not peculiar to their reservation. Competent teachers have always been a crucial component in the educational process. In order to foster learning, instructors need to have the skills to make personal as well as intellectual connections with their pupils. Some Washington Territory officials understood this and lobbied for the employment of well-trained and experienced individuals who could focus exclusively on their craft. In 1861, Washington Territory Superintendent of Indian Affairs W.W. Miller was certain that such personnel would provide young Indians with many of the same advantages that he assumed the American education system was affording its non-Native students.¹⁰⁷

The government consistently failed to hire caring and competent instructors because it generally offered applicants meager pay and isolated postings, which forced the government to

¹⁰⁴ L.F. Thompson, Teacher, Puyallup Reservation, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871," UW Digital Archives, accessed April 12, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/475/rec/1>.

¹⁰⁵ Sicade.

¹⁰⁶ Barlow, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872;" Thompson, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871"; Milroy, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," October 1, 1872.

¹⁰⁷ Miller, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1861."

employ teachers from a questionable pool of candidates. In 1856, for example, an aspiring teacher named Mr. Melvill [*sic*] brought a letter of introduction to Isaac Stevens. Warren Gove, the document's author, asked the governor to consider hiring the note's bearer to be the Puyallup reservation teacher. Gove was convinced that Melvill would make a good teacher because "...he is a man of good habits and has a family." Gove assured Stevens that if he offered Melvill the job, he would "except" it.¹⁰⁸ To his credit, Stevens did not hire the applicant.

Meanwhile, the government, in its never-ending effort to save money, forced many of the teachers it did hire to perform additional duties outside of their educational responsibilities. Such was case of Cyrus Ward.¹⁰⁹ When he became the first instructor at the post-war Puyallup reservation site, he also worked as the reservation's carpenter and farmer-in-charge, which meant he had limited time to spend with his students. After five months, the head of the Puyallup agency allowed Ward to return to his original duties but most of the teachers who followed him also had additional obligations.¹¹⁰ Occasionally those responsibilities prevented them from assuming their instructional duties until well into the fall, which delayed the start of school. On one occasion a student named Willie Wilton, who officials believed was the most academically advanced member of the student body at that time, guided the class until the instructor could finish with a previous commitment.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Warren Gove, letter to Isaac Stevens, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, December 29, 1856, Folder: "Land Use Files, 1855-1920," Box 1 Series 20, Puyallup Indian Agency, RG 75, NA-PAR.

¹⁰⁹ Reyhner and Eder, 49. Some government documents also refer to Ward as Cyril.

¹¹⁰ Shackleford, 43.

¹¹¹ Sicade.

These less-than-adequate teachers usually walked into classrooms that were populated by difficult and skeptical students who would have challenged even the most seasoned and innovative educator. One of the first obstacles that the teachers came up against were Indian pupils who had previously learned in a style and pace that differed from that offered by these instructors. L.F. Thompson, a Puyallup Indian schoolteacher during the early 1870s, initially believed that he could get many of his charges to succeed in his classroom by using repetitive and monotonous drills. He quickly discovered that his goals were too lofty, for members of his class remained unable to pronounce many of the letters in the English alphabet and their unfamiliarity with numerous words subsequently prevented them from comprehending the meaning of sentences.¹¹²

The Puyallup students' general failure to thrive under Thompson's strategy, and the success that the Puyallup had had with their pre-contact educational practices, suggests that the pupils may have benefitted from a different instructional approach. Curriculum and delivery are two of the basic elements in the educational process and the methodologies used by teachers at the Indian school were problematic for the Puyallup. Many of the students had difficulty mustering enthusiasm about basic academic topics that were not specific to their customs. For instance, while Puyallup education had stressed one's place within the environment, American education argued that humans were separate from nature. Another difference was that a large portion of the Puyallup's pre-treaty educational system involved hands-on activities and movement across space. In contrast, government Indian education at this time emphasized rote memorization in an indoor learning environment where teachers demanded that students remain still and attentive.

¹¹² Thompson, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871."

It is easy to see why the Puyallup students, like other aboriginal pupils across the country, rebelled against these conditions. They did this by playing hooky, vandalizing school property, half-heartedly participating in school activities, and retaining many of their pre-treaty cultural practices.¹¹³ By the early 1870s, Washington Territory Superintendent of Indian Affairs R.H. Milroy bluntly reported that his region's Indian education efforts had failed to produce satisfactory results. As far as he knew the school had yet to teach any Indian students to read or write.¹¹⁴ When one Puyallup Indian Reservation employee described students moving "toward their advancement in the arts of civilized life," he neglected to offer any specific evidence to support his claim. He likely had few examples to offer because the government had failed to create an inviting and effective school for the young Puyallup. The fact that in the fall of 1871 student attendance at the Puyallup reservation school had dropped to eleven students—ten males and one female—spelled this out.¹¹⁵

Between 1855 and 1872, the Puyallup Reservation Indian School had a litany of shortcomings, which precluded most Indian students from obtaining much of an education. Yet, as bad as the school's conditions were, some Puyallup used what they could of it to their advantage. Their lessons increased their familiarity with the non-Indian world that surrounded their reservation. The school experience likewise enhanced their ability to communicate with non-Natives and comprehend American concepts of material value and political and economic rights. These benefits became most evident after 1872, when the young grew into adulthood.

¹¹³ Adams, 223, 229, 231.

¹¹⁴ Milroy, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," October 1, 1872.

¹¹⁵ Thompson, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871."

A COMING INVASION

Between 1855 and 1872, the government's plan to modernize the Puyallup on the farm, in the marketplace, and in the classroom did not go as officials hoped. An additional frustration arose due to the reservation's exposure to a growing population of Americans who complicated the government efforts. For instance, during this seventeen-year period, administrators often blamed Puyallup ill behavior on the Indians' supposed propensity to gravitate to non-Native civilization's basest elements. In what was a standard refrain in nineteenth century Indian-non-Native relations, an 1868 observer claimed that many of the aboriginals who associated with their neighbors became "...a degraded people, contracting all of the vices of the whites and none of their virtues"¹¹⁶ Another suggested that the Puyallup's contact with outsiders pushed them toward alcoholism. He reported to a colleague, "As is the case with nearly all of the Indians, they like whisky, and some of them will go off and hang around the towns, where there is always to be found a plenty of trifling white men who make their living by selling whisky to the Indians."¹¹⁷

Tacoma's presence made the government's efforts to control the Puyallup even more challenging because the settlement's expanding population produced an ever-growing clamor for non-Native access to reservation land. These demands fed Puyallup fears that locals would begin encroaching upon their reservation. In 1857, a number of Puyallup had anxiously watched government authorities dislodge settlers who had established farms on the post-Fox Island-agreement reservation. Some of these intruders had been loath to leave their lands due to its

¹¹⁶ Hale, letter to T.J. McKenney, September 16, 1868.

¹¹⁷ Perkins, "Report to W.B. Gosnell, June 30, 1860.

heightened value. One claimant named Byrd Wright would not sell his claim back to the government because it refused to pay him the \$480 he argued it was worth.¹¹⁸

It is difficult to ascertain just how many non-Natives lived in the area between 1855 and 1872, but the U.S. Census of 1870 indicates that seventy-three individuals lived in Tacoma.¹¹⁹ Meanwhile, the surrounding area certainly contained at least that many non-Indians who had established homesteads. This number would grow markedly after 1871, when a new and ultimately disruptive force appeared on the Puyallup's horizon. It was during that year that NPRR construction crews began building a rail line from the Columbia River northward toward the Puget Sound. This in turn attracted more speculators into the land bordering Commencement Bay. By the end of 1872, investors had established forty-nine federal land patents that they then parceled into subdivisions, town plats and town additions. By 1873, over 700 deed transactions involving over 400 individuals had taken place. Though non-residents possessed a majority of these claims, the population in and around Tacoma grew to the point that some residents believed that the reservation would soon block the city's growth.¹²⁰

Most of the land that the newcomers purchased initially sat somewhat west and south of the Puyallup reservation. Nevertheless, the influx of immigrants spawned a handful of property disputes between Puyallup and the new arrivals. Reservation officials believed the best way to solve this problem was to mark the reservation's official boundaries. In 1868, Washington Territory Superintendent of Indian Affairs T.J. McKenny requested that the Indian Office direct

¹¹⁸ Gosnell, Report to Isaac Stevens, January 31, 1857.

¹¹⁹ United States Census of Population and Housing, 1870, accessed November 4, 2015, <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>.

¹²⁰ Gallacci, 97-102.

funds toward the “surveying and defining [of] the boundaries of the Indian reservation heretofore unsurveyed.” A year later, after further investigation, McKenny noted that the treaty lands stipulated by the Medicine Creek Treaty and the actual Puyallup reservation boundaries did not match. He wrote in one report: “This discrepancy between the land described in the treaty and that actually in possession of the Indians is a source of adventure on the part of certain white men which is liable to cause some trouble, unless immediately suppressed.” As of 1871, the government had still not attended to McKenny’s requests. He continued to urge that the need for a survey was becoming “...more apparent every day; as...settlers [are] constantly coming in [and] disputes are continually arising as to the boundaries.”¹²¹

Ironically, but not surprisingly, non-Native aspirants of Puyallup reservation land argued that that they were the actual victims in all of this confusion, much like Americans in other parts of the country had done to satisfy their thirst for Indian lands. In late 1860, land disputes between the Puyallup and some of their American neighbors had gotten contentious enough that a group of settlers drew up a petition describing their fear of a Puyallup uprising. The document read, “We the citizens of the Puyallup valley [*sic*]...are led to apprehend immediate danger from the Indians that are around us and in our midst.” The signers then asked the authorities to round up the Indians and keep them in “strict custody.” They added, seemingly longingly, “We hope that if there is to be an Indian war it may soon commence and speedily be brought to a close.”¹²²

¹²¹ T.J. McKenny, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Washington Territory, “Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” 1868, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/435/rec/1>; T.J. McKenny, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Washington Territory, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” 1869, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/491/rec/3>; McKenny, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871.”

¹²² Petition from Pierce County Citizens, December 29, 1860.

The Puyallup Reservation's Acting Indian Agent at that time was the former teacher, Richard Lane, who called on the military to investigate the validity of the petitioners' claims. He was particularly interested in discovering the truth of rumors that the Puyallup were abandoning the reservation and hoarding ammunition and that they had murdered a local settler. The inquiry revealed that the Americans were the antagonists in this episode as some of them had crossed reservation boundaries to take resources. Investigators found no evidence that the Natives were planning to go to war over the issue. Lane meanwhile learned that the Indians were off their reservation because they were harvesting seasonal foods and that they were accumulating ammunition in preparation for upcoming hunts. On top of that, the agent discovered that there had been no murder. Thus, the accusations were nothing more than settlers' attempts to persuade the government to remove the Puyallup from their reservation land.¹²³

Disputes between the Puyallup and some of their neighbors continued over the next decade. In 1869, tribal members took their turn to lodge complaints. Three hundred of them met with their reservation agent-in-charge and demanded that the government remove settlers who had encroached upon their lands. The Puyallup would rely upon this type of tactic in the future as well. Lane promised his audience that the government would look into the matter.¹²⁴

¹²³ Richard Lane, Acting Indian Agent, Puyallup Reservation, letter to Edward R. Geary, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Washington Territory, December 29th, 1860, Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1853-1874, Letters from Employees, Puyallup Agency, Treaty of Medicine Creek, December 13, 1856 through August 31, 1874. M5 Roll 11, NA-PAR.

¹²⁴ J. Hambleton, Agent in Charge, Puyallup Reservation, letter to Samuel Ross, September 4, 1869, in Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1853-1874; Letters from Employees, Puyallup Agency, Treaty of Medicine Creek, December 13, 1856 through August 31, 1874, M5 Roll 11, NA-PAR.

By 1872, these land issues compelled some Puyallup Indian agency officials to consider the possibility that the Puyallup had become civilized enough to warrant dissolving the reservation. They reasoned that since one could find a school, an increase in the number of box-style homes, and a growth in tilled reservation acreage, the Puyallup were now prepared to live unsupervised among their surrounding neighbors. While there was evidence both for and against such a claim, these officials may have wanted to shut down the reservation because they believed such a decision would provide an antidote to the headache spawned by Americans who were constantly trespassing on Puyallup lands.

It is at this point that we return to Byron Barlow who, in the fall of 1872, witnessed some of his charges acting in ways that he believed were peculiar. R.H. Milroy, the territorial Superintendent of Indian Affairs, was also aware of the Indians' curious behaviors. After several trips to the reserve, he complained that the Puyallup's gardens, which had annually shown improvements in their size and yield, had become unorganized and aesthetically displeasing. After one inspection he exclaimed, "These patches and small fields are miserably fenced with rails, poles, logs, and brush; the fences are mostly grown up and hid by weeds and brush that are everywhere spreading and making headway for the entire possession."¹²⁵ His complaint was, in some ways, a reiteration of previous frustrations voiced by reservation officials, whom the Indians had angered by seemingly rejecting modernization. Yet, there was a difference this time because Milroy's comments, like Barlow's, came on the heels of reported improvements.

The Puyallup farmers eventually revealed the reasons behind their actions. They told Barlow, that they feared that "...they shall...some day [*sic*] be removed and the reservation sold to the whites..." and that they therefore would not invest any more labor or money into their

¹²⁵ Milroy, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," October 1, 1872.

lands until the government followed through with its treaty promise to allot the reservation. It was only after this was done that these Puyallup would “...feel secure and have an object for which to labor.”¹²⁶

Tribal members made a similar case for allotments to Milroy when they told him that they were constantly arguing with non-Natives over wandering cattle and access to wildlife habitats, and they pleaded for the government to quickly survey their reservation and then divide and allot the lands to the Indians so they could specify what was and was not theirs. The Puyallup spokesmen also showed a degree of bravado by suggesting that the government should grant patents (titles) on the allotments as well.¹²⁷

These Puyallup were asking for rights located in Article Six of the Medicine Creek Treaty. In that portion of the document, Isaac Stevens had referred directly to a just concluded 1854 treaty with the Omaha Indians for an allotment protocol.¹²⁸ The Omaha Treaty stated that the President could survey a reservation and then award the Indian residents sections of land. Officials were to base the size of land grants upon recipients’ marriage status, the number of members in their households, and the location of the reservation.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Barlow, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872.”

¹²⁷ Milroy, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” October 1, 1872.

¹²⁸ Article Six, Treaty of Medicine Creek, 1854, accessed February 9, 2010, <http://www.washingtonwars.net/Medicine%20Creek%20Treaty.htm>; George P. Castile, “Edwin Eells, U.S. Indian Agent, 1871-1895,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 72 (April 1981): 63.

¹²⁹ Single males who were twenty-one years or older received a 1/8th section (a section was 640 acres); a family of two received a one-quarter section; a family of three but not more than five a one-half section; a six to ten member family got one section; and families over ten got an extra one-quarter section for every five additional members. See: Article Six, Treaty with the Omaha, March 16, 1854, accessed April 3, 2010, <http://www.firstpeople.us/FP-HTML-Treaties/TreatyWithTheOmaha1854.html>.

Milroy saw logic in the Indians' request to partition the reservation. He believed that "...each reservation is a little quasi-independent or foreign government within the county in which it is situated." This meant that Indians and non-Indians adhered to different authority and he understood that this situation heightened tensions between the two groups.¹³⁰ Therefore, in the fall of 1872 he urged the President to waste little time in implementing the Medicine Creek Treaty's article regarding allotments and patents. He likewise believed that if the government took this action nationwide, it would have the opportunity to have "...all the Indian reservations...speedily absorbed by the States and Territories and counties in which they exist, and the Indians...turned ... [into] American citizens, prepared to perform their duties as such, and to take care of themselves individually."¹³¹ Milroy added that allotments were the "first vital and fundamental step" toward complete Indian assimilation. He urged the government to award each Native his own "property in the soil and a fixed home, where he may confidently surround himself with the comforts of civilization...." In the Superintendent's mind, allotment would breed a civilized man, whose expectations, "both physical and mental, are without end, and the ceaseless efforts to gratify them leads to industry, enterprise, discoveries and progress."¹³²

The Indian Office agreed with Milroy and ordered him to conduct a precise survey of the Puyallup Reservation that would specify the exact location of the border between Indian and non-Indian lands. Officials told him that he should also use the survey information to grant

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

sections of the reservation to “such individuals or families as are willing to avail themselves of the privilege....”¹³³

CONCLUSION: PUYALLUP ACCOMMODATION OF THE MEDICINE CREEK TREATY

After 1854, the Puyallup found themselves in the midst of some of the most significant cultural changes that they had ever faced in their long history. Over the next eighteen years, tribal members responded to the resulting conditions in myriad ways. In 1855, authorities attempted to settle tribal members on to a reservation and modernize them by providing instruction in horse and plow farming and establishing a reservation school. Before the Puyallup participated in this process, they demanded and got a larger reserve. Then, as the Indians adjusted to their post-treaty life, they continued their pre-treaty hunting, gathering and trading customs. One of the Puyallup’s next issues was the ineffectiveness of government programs, which did not work as their creators and administrators had hoped they would. Issues with funding and execution were among the forces that tempered the Indians’ enthusiasm to participate. Nevertheless, some Indians took to farming and used their harvests to contribute to their subsistence needs and material wealth, which concurrently helped them maintain some of their pre-and-post treaty customs. The Puyallup’s experience in the marketplace also helped many of them meld American concepts of value and property rights with their own traditions. Puyallup who participated in these endeavors became more comfortable in the Americans’ world and better understood the opportunities and hazards that non-Indians represented.

¹³³ Article Six, Treaty of Medicine Creek.

By 1872, American settlers were entering the southern Puget Sound region in large numbers, hoping to take advantage of the fish, timber, and fertile land that the Puyallup had enjoyed for generations. While many of the Indians knew the immigrants could provide them with newfound possibilities, they also feared that the newcomers would eventually take what remained of their post-treaty lands. Tribal members therefore searched for a way to prevent this from happening.

These conditions were not unique to the Puyallup, for there are numerous historical narratives that have focused upon how Indians attempted to repel American settlement of their lands. They employed an assortment of means to do this, ranging from war to accommodation. Between 1855 and 1872, we can see that members of the Puyallup tribe also tried a variety of measures to survive in their post-treaty world. What made the Puyallup's situation somewhat unusual from other Native Americans' was that they faced these conditions in close proximity to a non-Indian village on the outskirts of their reservation. Government officials originally presumed that the reservation status of the Puyallup's land would protect the Indians from unwanted outside influences and trespasses. However, the reserve's porous borders did little to prevent people and ideas from moving back and forth across it. In 1872, a small group of Puyallup used some of these non-Indian ideas in their effort to protect their reserve. Historians have shown us that it was common for Indians to shun government efforts to civilize them, and the Puyallup farmers' decision to stop making improvements on their farms seems indicative of this narrative. Yet, these Puyallup were different because they had previously made substantial progress towards becoming successful yeoman farmers. In doing so, they had shown Barlow that they that they were not slothful, stubborn, or rebellious.

It is important that we acknowledge the actions of these Indians, especially when considering the history of reservation allotment. Elsewhere, non-Indians often advised the aboriginals to accept allotments because they hoped that the policy would make surplus land available to American farmers and ranchers. The actions of the recalcitrant Puyallup farmers represented an additional impetus behind the use of allotment. On the one hand, these Puyallup were doing what their ancestors had done, which was to accommodate outsiders' ideas and institutions to satisfy some of their needs. The Indian protestors' call for allotments was their way of linking the tribe's legacy of adaptation to their present situation. On the other hand, these disgruntled Puyallup farmers were arguing that the government's agricultural program was hurting them, not because it was pushing them in directions they did not want to go, but because it was preventing them from going in those directions as fast as they wanted. The Indians not only desired to protect their land, but also to work in their fields and trade in the marketplace as other Americans did. The protestors insisted that disputes that had occurred between the tribal members and their neighbors were destined to become more common, and perhaps more violent, as additional immigrants settled in the area.

Between 1855 and 1872, the Puyallup successfully accommodated aspects of the Medicine Creek Treaty to alter the size and makeup of their reserve. These proved to be short term fixes to what proved to be longer term problems. After 1873, conditions would compel the tribe to call for even more applications of the treaty as they sought to achieve their goals.

CHAPTER 3: TASK TIME, CLOCK TIME AND THE PUYALLUP'S PUSH FOR
RESERVATION PATENTS,
1873-1883

“The clock is not merely a means of keeping track of the hours, but of synchronizing the actions of men.”

Lewis Mumford¹

THE MESSAGE OF CLOCKS

In 1883, a handful of Puyallup Indians posed an important question to the government administrators of their reservation: Would authorities grant Puyallup allottees total control of their land, free of any oversight? Officials had a difficult time responding to this query. The Indian Office and Congress eventually wanted to give the Puyallup independent control of their allotments, but only after administrators felt that the Indians had integrated into American society to a high enough degree. One problem with this approach was that the men responsible for deciding when the Natives had reached this point did not agree on what a civilized Indian looked and acted like.

In an effort to formulate a response to the Natives' request, the government assigned newly appointed Puyallup Indian Reservation agent Edwin Eells to conduct a tribal census that cataloged the Indians and their economic behaviors. Eells's subsequent count was far from comprehensive for it contained information on only 200 of the reservation's residents, a number that constituted less than half of the tribe's population. The missing Puyallup may have been off on seasonal hunting or employment forays, or they might have relocated to other locations to be with friends or family. In any case, the results say a lot about the kind of attributes that American proponents of Indian modernization hoped the Natives would have. We also know

¹ David S. Landes, *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1983), 13.

that this particular count marks an early method used by government authorities in their decades-long effort to measure how acculturated the Indians had supposedly become. Over time, census takers took notice of things such as tools and appliances, as well as luxury items like musical instruments and, after the turn of the century, automobiles.² The 1883 census of the Puyallup was, therefore, part of a government Indian policy that assumed that what one owned determined who one was. Eells's investigation was significant because it shed light on the ways in which at least a portion of the Puyallup tribe was adjusting to government programs and the presence of the nearby city of Tacoma.

Eells carried out his survey by visiting Puyallup homes. Upon entering a residence he automatically divided his hosts into two primary categories: "Indians," of which he recorded 161 souls, and "half-breeds," whose population he set at thirty-three. This suggests that approximately a quarter of his subjects were offspring of Indian and non-Indian relationships. Eells chose not to put six individuals into either group because he considered them foreigners. The agent then wrote down every resident's name—both Indian and Anglo titles—age, and gender, as well as his or her ability to speak and read English. This latter category was the only one in which the percentage of half-breeds outnumbered full-blooded Indians (57.5% to 18%).³

Eells then directed his gaze toward specific artifacts within the residence. Since the agent's goal was to measure how much each Puyallup family had supposedly transformed, he looked past objects that he believed reflected Indian custom. This would have included things like canoes, fish traps, and stone or wood tools. He instead listed objects that he and the

² Philip Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 144.

³ Edwin Eells, "1883 Census," Edwin Eells Papers, Box 2, Folder 8; Edwin Eells, Unpublished Autobiography, MS 76, Box 1, Folders 20-22, u.p., WSH-Tacoma.

reformers believed were representative of a Euro-American world. This included the Indians' horses, cattle, or sheep, and the number of acres each Puyallup farmer had "cultivated," "broken," and "fenced." He also inventoried wagons, hay presses, and mowing machines, along with the season's hay, potato, and oat yields.⁴ In Eells's mind, the presence of these animals, implements, and crops showed that the residents had responded to some degree to the government's efforts to teach them Euro-American style agriculture.

Eells likewise noted certain technological apparatuses one might find in a nineteenth-century non-Native home. Thus, under the heading of "miscellaneous property," the agent created columns for wood-burning stoves and sewing machines. All of this evidence would have worked in the Puyallup's favor as officials pondered whether to grant the Indians complete control of their allotments.

Interestingly, Eells listed a fourth artifact in this section. These items were something that Eells may have heard upon entering an Indian's residence and he recorded the contraptions' presence on the right-hand side of the document, like an exclamation mark at the end of a sentence. They were clocks, and he gave them a distinct column because he may have thought the devices were especially indicative of modernization. An owner would likely have possessed a timepiece due to his or her economic interactions with city residents or his or her attendance in the government-run school system. While some Puyallup had these objects in their homes, they probably used them for activities that occurred beyond the reservation's boundaries.

Eells did not indicate how or why the owners obtained their clocks or whether he found them in conspicuous or discreet locations. He also neglected to note whether they were operational and keeping accurate time. What we do know is that twenty-seven of the sixty

⁴ Eells, "1883 Census"; Eells Autobiography.

homes that Eells entered (45%) had them. In addition, while most of these families owned just one, a fifty-three-year old Indian named Judy Jockman possessed, perhaps proudly, three of them.⁵

We can guess that the Puyallup owned timepieces for various reasons. Some Indians may have obtained them for their aesthetic value while others possessed them because they were curiosities. Reservation clock owners might have invited visitors to their homes, to stare in wonderment at the timepieces' moving hands and listen to the chimes and constant ticks and tocks. These clocks would have seemed magical to many of the Natives. Clock owners may also have obtained the apparatuses for reasons that were important to Puyallup culture. An individual who owned a clock may have enjoyed enhanced status within the reservation community, while others could have received a clock while attending one of the occasional potlatch ceremonies that remained an important part of Puyallup society.

Some Puyallup also owned timepieces because they were traders, laborers, and consumers in the American marketplace. These individuals were embracing Euro-American notions of social organization that had emerged during the industrial age. Their clocks helped them adjust their behaviors, economic activity, and morality in ways that integrated them more tightly into these realms of Euro-American society. Hence, some of the time devices that sat in Puyallup homes were planks in a bridge that particular Indians had constructed to connect themselves to the local non-Native culture.

These Puyallup were, to a degree, participating in a rising phenomenon occurring in late-nineteenth century American urban society. George Woodcock labeled it the "Tyranny of the

⁵ Eells, "1883 Census"; Eells, *Autobiography*.

Clock.”⁶ He contended that humans who adopted clocks into their lives were changing their temporal world, away from natural time and toward clock time. Proponents of this new method of organization emphasized increasingly precise measurements of time and productivity. Between 1873 and 1883, Tacoma’s relationship with clock time was sporadic but growing. In 1873, the Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR) announced that Tacoma would be its western terminus. Consequently, over the next ten years, an assortment of businesses emerged in and around the city and they, along with the expanding presence of the NPRR, pushed residents to synchronize their lives to meet time tables and quotas. The railroad industry’s 1883 decision to create a national standardized time tied the people who lived in and around Tacoma ever tighter to the concept of clock time.

These events affected many of the Puyallup, whether they adhered to clocks or employed customary concepts of time. The sounds of measured time in Tacoma, whether they were factory whistles or locomotives moving down the track, filled the ears of Indians and non-Indians alike. Meanwhile, as the number of individuals who set their lives to clocks grew in the area, the physical space between the city and the 18,060-acre Puyallup Reservation narrowed. Many Puyallup continued to fear that as the city crept closer, the danger of losing their reservation land grew. A small contingent of reservation growers and ranchers had addressed this concern in 1872 after they stopped making improvements on their plots. They claimed they would not restart their efforts until the government granted them allotments and patents, which, they believed, would make the land theirs forever. The Indian Office placated the worried farmers by promising to assign allotments to the Indians.

⁶ George Woodcock, “The Tyranny of the Clock,” accessed October 11, 2013, www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~rrojas/TyrannyofClock.html.

By 1873 these Puyallup had returned to their fields but Tacoma's expansion still continued. While this worried most of the Indians, government authorities hoped that the town's juxtaposition to the Puyallup's reservation would be an effective tool in their crusade to modernize the aboriginals. Officials were predicting that the city's non-Native residents would inspire the Indians to adopt Euro-American notions of independence and hard work, as well as crave the material rewards that supposedly came to those who adhered to these ideals. After 1873, the number of Puyallup who incorporated these and other aspects of local non-Native culture into their lives expanded and by 1883, a large number of Puyallup, to some degree or another, dressed like their American neighbors, and many spoke some level of English. However, the Natives did not adopt aspects of this alternative culture in equal measure. Some reservation residents made only minimal changes to their lives. Meanwhile, many Puyallup discovered that imitating supposedly virtuous and hardworking Americans did not automatically bring material comfort. Most Indians who participated in the non-Indian marketplace worked low-paying jobs and, therefore, lived in poverty.

Despite these results, one particular group of Puyallup Indians emerged between 1873 and 1883. These young, self-assured men had participated in government programs such as the reservation's Indian school, and some belonged to families whose parents had successfully traded with or worked for local Americans. Meanwhile, a noticeable number of Indians had become adept at farming. These individuals knew a lot about the Euro-American concepts of trade, property, capital, and time. A portion of this group, unlike most of their fellow tribal members, used this knowledge to become financially successful.

Some reservation officials believed that this particular group of Puyallup represented the first wave of civilized Indians they had hoped to create. While these Natives had certainly

adopted aspects of American culture, they probably cared less about appeasing reservation officials than about gaining influence and prestige among their own people. Between 1873 and 1883, many of them concluded that they would meet their goals if they could obtain total control of their most financially valuable asset, their land. Unfortunately, government authorities were hesitant to cede this power to tribal members.

In hindsight, we can see that the Puyallup's protests for allotment in 1872 constituted one of several early acts of tribal engagement with the federal government concerning implementation of the Medicine Creek Treaty. Between 1873 and 1883, a group of tribal members built upon their earlier gains by agitating for the enactment of additional sections of the treaty. As area west of the reserve continued to fill with settlers after 1873, tribal members continued to fear that they would lose their land. By 1883, a set of reservation residents, who were more progressive than most of their fellow tribal members, responded by pressing the government to grant allottees more protections and increased control over their lands through the issuance of patents and the removal of land sales prohibitions and lease restrictions. They were demanding that the government grant their tribe the same property rights that local American landowners possessed. The Natives who supported this policy assumed it would mean, at the very least, that the only way that Americans could ever get control of Puyallup land was to buy it from the allottees. This could put much needed income in the hands of the numerous poor Indians while simultaneously providing more financially successful tribal members with investment capital.

The Puyallup who pushed for the enactment of specific portions of the Medicine Creek Treaty between 1873 and 1883 used similar tactics as their predecessors who had obtained a larger reservation and allotments: they accommodated the ideas, methods, and technologies of

the Americans to meet their needs. This included the employment of American laws and institutions. Their efforts illustrate the complexity of American Indian history during the mid-to-late nineteenth century. At a time when a significant number of western Native Americans were trying to resist American culture and government policy, some Natives, like a portion of the Puyallup tribe, were acculturating at a pace that may have met or exceeded the expectations of reservation officials. Agent Eells's 1883 census exhibits how a portion of the Puyallup nation did this through the acquisition of material goods, including clocks.

Eells believed that the Indians' possession of certain things signified his wards' acceptance of the supposed uniform order of the non-Indian world. In some small cases he was correct. Yet, an analysis of how and why some Puyallup emulated aspects of American culture reveals that they pursued these actions for other reasons as well. Consequently, Puyallup acculturation created as many dilemmas for government authorities as solutions.⁷

CLOCK TIME

The men responsible for developing the Native American reservation programs hoped to transform as many aboriginals as possible into people who would act and think like what theorists imagined a typical American did. These policymakers believed that Indian participation in the marketplace was a key element in this process. Participation included the idea that Natives learn the supposed uses and virtues of a particular item and then eagerly earn money to purchase it. Then, once that item was in the Indians' possession, they would behave in

⁷ For examples of Native American resistance and accommodation to government assimilation programs, see: Emily Greenwald, *Reconfiguring the Reservation: The Nez Percés, Jicarilla Apaches, and the Dawes Act* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 1-2, 7-9, 27, 144-145; Edmund Jefferson Danzinger, Jr., *Great Lakes Indian Accommodation and Resistance during the Early Reservation Years, 1850-1900* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), ix, xi, 26, 56-57, 195, 206.

a certain way. It is therefore not surprising Eells listed an item like a woodstove in his census. Indians would have to work hard to earn the money to buy one and once they possessed it they would be more likely to use the appliance to prepare their food as a typical American of that era would. Indian reformers believed that cooking one's food with this particular appliance was a symbol of health and civilization.

During the mid-to-late nineteenth century, proponents of Indian modernization assumed that the aboriginals' possession of clocks would have a similar effect. Consequently, Eells' 1883 discovery that a small portion of the Puyallup tribe was measuring time as he did probably heartened him. The agent would have also been encouraged because some of these Indians were apparently participating in the Euro-Americans' constant effort to achieve economic and social stability. Time offered an aspect of order by providing points of reference for one's life and by dictating how one interacted with his or her environment and each other. Eells would have hoped that the Puyallup would use clock-driven time to establish how they behaved during a particular interval. If all went well, these expectations would evolve into a type of morality.

For better or worse, Eells was ignoring the fact that the Puyallup had long adhered to a time system that fit their needs. The Indians' temporal structure possessed some of the same qualities as time systems used by Euro-American culture, including six basic "temporal dimensions": Sequence, duration, planning, rhythmic regularity, speed, and synchronization.⁸

⁸ Cultures use *sequence* to determine what comes before and after a particular event. Societies also use the notion of *duration* to give meaning to a measure of how long an event takes to occur. *Planning* is a concept that cultures use to create a more certain future. *Rhythmic regularity* refers to a culture's creation of and adherence to a certain "pace." Western societies have emphasized that this pace be one that reflects increased rates of *speed*. Finally societies use the concept of *synchronization* to coordinate activities. See: Jeremy Rifkin, *Time Wars: The Primary Conflict in Human History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1988), 49, 53, 60, 61, 63.

While Euro-Americans developed clocks to give these dimensions a more specific definition, the pre-treaty Puyallup had standardized them by using the rhythms of their environment.

The Puyallup began intertwining aspects of clock time with their customary understanding of periodization during the nineteenth century, and they, like non-Natives, adopted clock time in stages. Before humans developed clocks they employed an intricate time keeping system that E.P. Thompson labeled as “task time” or a time to get things done.⁹ Pre-clock humans participated in task time by marking the rhythms of nature, which directly affected their subsistence activities. They paid close attention to changes in the weather, star positions, and animal and plant behaviors. Humans based their lives on the relatively consistent comings and goings of these events.¹⁰

Prior to contact, Puyallup society, like that of other Native American groups, organized their lives according to task time. The Commencement Bay Indians identified a year as “long time,” which they broke into seasons that informed them when to accomplish specific duties. Each season’s particular nuances further guided the Puyallup as they completed assorted subsistence, social, and ritual practices. They labeled spring as “the coming of summer” and fall as the “coming of winter.” Others broke the seasons into more defined categories. There were those who knew late winter as “frog’s face” or “when frog talks,” which indicated the coming of

⁹ E.P. Thompson, “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,” *Past and Present* 38 (1967): 60.

¹⁰ Rifkin, 27; Chery Well, “Sons, Moons, Clocks, and Bells: Native Americans and Time,” Paper delivered at USC History Seminar, December 1, 2008, 5, accessed, April 19, 2009, http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~philipje/usc_History_seminar/Wells/Wells_Suns_Moons_reaching.pdf; Irving Hallowell, “Temporal Orientation in Western Civilization and in a Pre-Literate Society,” *American Anthropologist*, 39, 4 (October-December 1937): 37, 652, 664; Eva Hoffman, *Time* (New York: Picador, 2009), 123; George Woodcock, “The Tyranny of the Clock,” accessed October 11, 2013, www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~rrojas/TyrannyofClock.html.

spring.¹¹ The Puyallup used these and other precepts of time to dictate when to occupy their satellite settlements, when to harvest wapato and fish, or when to educate their young. Puyallup who occupied distinct environments within their territorial range, e.g., foothills, prairies, or coastal lands, reacted to these time markers in different ways.

This system satisfied the Puyallup's needs for thousands of years. Over that period, individuals imbedded these natural rhythms and cycles into their lives, like an internal biological clock.¹² Yet, despite the effectiveness of Puyallup task time, Americans who entered the South Sound region derided the Indians for living a life that appeared chaotic. Even as late as the 1950s, one observer condescendingly noted that the pre-contact Coastal Salish system of time measurement fell short of that used by a more sophisticated culture."¹³ This commentator, just like many of the Puget Sound's early non-Native settlers, was blind to the fact that the Puyallup respected notions of human productivity, predictability, specificity, and standardization. The

¹¹ The Puyallup also described spring as "blow time," or a period when "everything tips over," a reference to the preponderance of spring storms. Later on, the season became a time when "the wind dies down," or "quiet now" time. The Puyallup further defined temporality through a full moon cycle. Meanwhile, a day had four parts: Pre-dawn darkness, mid-morning, mid-afternoon, and post sunset darkness. See: Marian Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 135-136; Arthur C. Ballard, "Calendric Terms of the Southern Puget Sound Salish," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 6 (Spring 1950): 84, 86, 96.

¹² Hoffman, 19, 20, 24. Virtually all life forms, including bacteria, have an internal clock, which is one of nature's oldest identifiable characteristics. Pamela Stern describes how the aggregate biological clocks of a community contribute to their survival. The Inuit identified seasons as times when certain resources were available to them. Resource availability in turn guided the Inuit's social behaviors. During the summer months, they broke into small groups and lived separately from each other on land because that is when food was the scarcest. It was during this time that they devoted their attention to repairing and constructing implements for the upcoming hunt. Then, during the winter, the Inuit moved off the land and on to ice. They hunted more during this time and they lived closer to each other so everyone could pitch in to procure as much food as possible. See: Pamela Stern, "Upside-down and Backwards: Time Discipline in a Canadian Inuit Town," *Anthropologica* 45 (2003): 4.

¹³ Ballard, 80.

Indians just accomplished their goals in a way that reflected their own understanding of their world.¹⁴

The clocks that sat in Puyallup homes in 1883 were a small part of a long human legacy of creating a social order that reflected the changing needs of a civilization, especially in the realms of production and trade.¹⁵ The Puyallup's use of the timepieces helped them to understand and navigate the new capitalist world emerging around them. They were responding to the fact that Western traders had long used clocks to organize their interactions with consumers. The Middle Ages saw the rise of market time, which established intervals when unabated movement and trading of goods could occur.¹⁶ Later, Adam Smith argued that factory owners could use clocks to organize their systems of production and economy. He believed that calibrated time allowed one to convert his or her experiences into tactile objects that one could divide, fill in, or expand, as well as save.¹⁷ Clocks, therefore, helped the Puyallup to convert nature and human activity into commodities. A day ceased being a group of experiences and

¹⁴ Rifkin, 31-33, 47, 69-70, 85-86; Landes, 7.

¹⁵ Historians credit the Egyptian sundial as being one of the first "mechanical" time-keeping devices, which in turn led to the development of the twenty-four hour day. Further to the east, the Chinese created water clocks. Astronomers in both societies used these "clocks" to track the motion of the heavens, though most people of that era treated them as curiosities as much as anything else. Churches in the Middle Ages used timekeeping devices to schedule prayers and by the fourteenth century, government bureaucrats utilized them to organize societies into functioning units. Landes, 27, 33, 58, 62; Woodcock; Dan Falk, *In Search of Time: The Science of a Curious Dimension* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2008), 56-59.

¹⁶ Rifkin, 86; Landes, 72-73; Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders*, translated by Thomas Dunlap (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 245-246.

¹⁷ Hoffman, 133; Woodcock; Hallowell, 649.

became a standard set of parceled hours, minutes, and seconds, which one could use to calculate the speed, duration, and value of a particular human endeavor.¹⁸

While the Puyallup had employed their customary time system in similar ways, their historic understanding of time was inadequate for succeeding in the Euro-American market economy because it failed to stress the western concepts of punctuality, duration, pace, and efficiency. Meanwhile, entrepreneurs used clocks to convert labor into infinitely smaller parts that had value. Managers expected laborers to be as productive as possible during these time slots. Founding Father Alexander Hamilton was one of many proponents of this concept. His 1791 “Report on Manufactures” explains the advantages of “division of labor,” which, he argued, made workers more effectual with their time.¹⁹

The commodification of time gave both workers and managers something over which to bargain and the Puyallup who understood and adopted this concept into their lives had a leg up

¹⁸ Hoffman, 130.

¹⁹ Alexander Hamilton, “Report on Manufactures,” Communicated to the House of Representatives December 5, 1791, accessed February 9, 2015, www.constitution.org/ah/rpt_manufactures.pdf. Hamilton explained that division of labor helped address the problem of lost time, which he argued took place whenever workers transitioned from one task to another. He explained that when a worker shifted their attentions, they likely had to obtain or organize a new set of tools, materials, and machines. Meanwhile, a transitioning worker’s attention becomes less focused as they fall prey to “the interruption of the impulse... from being engaged in a particular operation—the distractions hesitations and reluctances, which attend the passage from one kind of business to another.” Hamilton and Jefferson debated each other over the role timekeeping should play in the American economy. Thomas Jefferson envisioned an agrarian-based nation, whose citizens were relatively free from centralized power. He believed that clocks were representative of a despotic manufacturing-based economy. He was certain that the rise of this type of economy would lead to the nation’s ruin. On the other hand, Hamilton, who was perhaps the country’s strongest supporter for an industrially-based economy, countered that the nation’s fiscal strength and stability was dependent upon the concepts of order and structure that one could find on the “factory” floor. Michael O’Malley, *Keeping Watch: A History of American Time* (USA: Viking Publishing, 1990), 7, 9, 23.

on those who did not. Yet, managers can also use time to dominate workers by regimenting and standardizing the people who adhere to it.²⁰ Many critics of clock time discuss its suffocating nature. In his essay on the tyranny of time, George Woodcock wrote, “The movement of the clock sets the tempo of men’s lives—they become the servants of the concept of time, which they themselves have made, and are held in fear, like Frankenstein by his own monster.”²¹ In Woodcock’s mind, a freedom-loving society should fear the clock more than governmental power. The clock consequently could have a potentially suffocating effect on the Puyallup who chose to interact with it.

Indian reformers and reservation administrators understood the power of the clock and they hoped that they could use it to transform their wards into independent and productive members of society. These bureaucrats believed in the concept that “time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power.” Yet, the Puyallup’s response to clocks suggests that Woodcock overstated the influence of this phenomenon, for there were occasions when the Indians used clocks and clock time to resist authority and pursue their own agendas.²²

CLOCK TIME IN THE SOUTH PUGET SOUND

Isaac Stevens and the advisors who helped him create the Medicine Creek Treaty hoped that the American government could modernize the Puyallup as quickly as possible. These officials believed that teaching the treaty Indians how to farm would be an important first step in

²⁰ Nancy D. Munn, “The Cultural Anthropology of Time: A Critical Essay,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21 (1992): 104-105; Thompson, 94; Dohrn-van Rossum, 8-9, 289, 23, 305; Rifkin, 91; O’Malley, 39.

²¹ Woodcock; Munn, 109-110; Rifkin, 103-104.

²² Landes, 69; Munn, 111-112.

that process. Since farmers of this period relied upon task time, it is easy to assume that the clocks Eells found in his 1883 census were more for show than for use. However, such a conclusion ignores the fact that both before and after the treaty, the Puyallup had traded with and worked for Euro-Americans, experiences that may have exposed numerous Indians to the discipline of the clock.

The Puyallup's economic interactions with Americans grew significantly after 1873, when the city became the epicenter of the Puget Sound region's connection to the eastern United States. Tacoma began as a small settlement that sat in the northwest section of the roughly 1,800 square miles of Pierce County, in the Washington Territory. Over time, the town became the primary economic and social gathering place for the surrounding inhabitants. An 1873 census indicated that despite the county's sparse population of 1.08 persons per square mile, most of the settlers lived within ten miles of the western border of the Puyallup Reservation.²³ The first Americans living around the Puyallup Reservation were predominantly resource extractors or farmers who had taken advantage of the 1850 Donation Land Act. Over time, developers and speculators joined their ranks. The Puyallup, as they had done with the HBC, tried to use the immigrants to their advantage.²⁴

Some of the Puyallup's new neighbors, especially entrepreneurs, brought clock time culture with them to the region. The most significant of these particular newcomers were representatives of the NPRR. The South Sound's railroad history began during the early 1870s,

²³ The county had 293 homes, 230 families, and 1,399 non-Indians living within its boundaries. See: Herbert Hunt, *Tacoma: Its History and Its Builders, A Half-Century of Activity* (Chicago: J. Clarke Publishing, 1916), 220.

²⁴ Caroline Gallacci, "Planning the City of Destiny: An Urban History of Tacoma to 1930" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1999), 20-22.

after company officials assigned a crew to the Puget Sound to establish a western terminus for the company's transcontinental rail line. On July 14, 1873, members of the expedition sent word proclaiming, "We have located terminus...at a point on the south side of Commencement Bay in township twenty-one range three east of the Willamette meridian."²⁵ This was momentous news for Tacoma speculators because they knew that the NPRR's decision would lure more American immigration and businesses into the area and thus drive up local land values. These investors anticipated becoming very wealthy if everything played out as they hoped.

The NPRR's terminus announcement propelled a surge in the development of Tacoma's infrastructure, because a number of residents wanted to create a railroad town that would rival the west coast metropolises of Portland and San Francisco. Things started out slowly, for by the end of 1874, citizens had made only modest improvements to the town. One project that gave locals a degree of civic pride was the construction of the city's first sidewalk, which linked a prominent hotel to a primary meeting hall. Inhabitants also attempted to display a degree of cosmopolitanism by constructing homes with shutters and organizing the city's first regularly scheduled church services.²⁶

Tacoma's efforts at urban improvement ultimately failed to pay off as investors hoped they would. NPRR officials wanted to ensure that their company, rather than independent speculators, cashed in on the local land rush so they established the Tacoma Land Company in September of 1873. The enterprise in turn purchased a large block of land that lay between Tacoma and the Puyallup Reservation. The NPRR then built its railroad depot and associated buildings on a portion of it. Locals quickly referred to this development as "New Tacoma" and

²⁵ Cited in Hunt, 190.

²⁶ Ibid., 234.

its emergence and growth, along with a national recession that began in 1873, foiled the hopes of many of the area's original land speculators. Most importantly to this story, the NPRR's decision immediately placed the focus of the area's urban growth at the doorstep of the Puyallup Reservation's western border.²⁷

New Tacoma grew quickly and by the late 1870s there was a noticeable divergence in the population and physical size of the two American settlements. By 1878, 2,885 individuals were living in Pierce County, an increase of 600 residents from the previous year. Despite its sidewalk, Tacoma City remained the home of just 350 people, while New Tacoma's population stood at 614, a number that exceeded the Puyallup Reservation's 560 inhabitants.²⁸ Over time, the gap between the dimensions and populations of the two Tacomas grew much wider.

New Tacoma's approach toward the Puyallup Reserve was significant to the Indians in several ways. The expanding city increased the south Puget Sound Natives' commercial possibilities because they were now able to trade with merchants from distant markets. During the early 1870s, Indian and non-Indian consumers could spend their earnings at just a handful of businesses that included a lumber mill, saloon, photographer, painter, two dry goods establishments, a blacksmith, a hotel, and a wagon maker. By 1883, the new portion of the city contained at least fifty business operations. A steamer also ran to Olympia and Seattle on alternating days, and on October 1, 1883, the first transcontinental rail shipment, which numbered nineteen freight-filled cars, rolled into New Tacoma.²⁹ Many of these operations employed clock time to set business hours, delivery times, and work schedules. These

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 190; Gallacci, 112, 129-130.

²⁸ Hunt, 243.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 175-176, 302-303.

operations meanwhile filled the air with clock time sounds in the form of whistles, bells, and the movement of trains. Puyallup consumers, laborers, and merchants all had to adjust their understanding of time to conduct transactions in this environment.

Tacoma's presence affected the Puyallup in other ways as well because the town, like Fort Nisqually before it, served as an important outpost for imperialism. Recall that Fort Nisqually had been one link in a chain of HBC trading centers throughout the Pacific Northwest, and it shrank the distance that existed between the south Puget Sound and eastern metropolises. Europeans used the fort to intensify their "...regime of control, centered on private property, the law, and government administration" over the region's aboriginals. The company's actions imposed upon the Pacific Northwest's inhabitants new methods of measuring, weighing, counting, and commodifying land and resources. Tacoma played a similar role as the fort because it too served as an entryway for capitalism to enter the region. The Americans' advantage with Tacoma was the presence of a railroad, which turned the city into a much bigger doorway to Euro-American commerce than Fort Nisqually had been. This enhanced the rate and thoroughness at which the Americans could govern the region.³⁰

Clocks became a significant part of this process and they were especially useful for South Sound Americans attempting to impose standard concepts of control and morality upon workers and customers. By 1883, Tacoma became part of a growing national movement in which adherence to clock time became an ethic that one should respect.³¹ Time would show that some

³⁰ Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 126, 185-186, 189; Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 6-7.

³¹ Headrick, 54, 131, 142-143, 145, 189-190; Landes, 7, 47, 71; Dohrn-van Rossum, 348; Deloria, 144-147.

of the Puyallup clock owners had adopted “time obedience” and developed a set of behaviors that were in harmony with public and corporate time.

PUYALLUP RESPONSES TO A CLOCK TIME SOCIETY

The Puyallup and many of their American neighbors had begun transitioning to clock time before 1873. The area’s early non-Native farmers likely did not follow clock time very closely, but they generally had an easier time making the change than the Native Indians because they were more apt to frequent businesses whose owners set their commercial hours to clocks. Many settlers who farmed also used almanacs to guide their lives; although these documents shared similarities with the Indians’ pre-contact notions of task time, they also reinforced upon readers the idea that strict adherence to any type of time control was the best way to make money and to please God.³²

Eells’s 1883 census suggests that some Puyallup were making this transition as well, and in doing so they would have learned a new vocabulary and started practicing a novel set of customs. This included an understanding of the measurements of seconds and hours, and the concepts of “schedule,” “late,” “early,” “waiting,” and so on.³³ The Puyallup integrated some level of these new ideas with their pre-treaty understandings of time, though they did not all embrace clock time in equal degrees.³⁴

³² O’Malley, 19.

³³ Well; Stern, 3. Stern explains that one significant impact that time had upon the Inuit was the concept of schedule. Her subjects had used clocks to order when specific activities occurred, such as athletic practice, television viewing, church, meals, and so on. This meant people became less inclined to allow for “drop-in” visits. Stopping by a friend’s home unannounced for a cup of coffee was replaced by “See me at such a time.”

³⁴ Deloria, 6; Stern, 9.

Puyallup tribal members' varied reactions to clock time became yet another arena in which reformers and government officials categorized aboriginals as being cooperative or obstinate. Indians who willingly adopted such Euro-American ideas and technologies were considered to be good while those who rejected them were bad. Indian policy reformers and reservation authorities were, in essence, grouping these Natives as conservatives, who were often the targets of their scorn or progressives, who were Indians that fellow tribal members should emulate.³⁵

Despite government officials' use of progressive or conservative labels, the dividing line between these two groups was never as clear or static as administrators supposed. This was especially true with many of the Puyallup since almost all of them had adopted aspects of Euro-American culture while still retaining noticeable portions of their indigenous identity.³⁶

Many Puyallup accepted clock time as well as other aspects of American culture between 1873 and 1883, which should have pleased government observers to no end.. For instance, a number of the Indians had adopted elements of Western health practices. Before Euro-

³⁵ This point is exemplified by a comment issued by one government official in 1891. He angrily referred to some "conservative" Indians as "antagonistic and irreconcilable," and he chided them for wanting to return to the past and spending their days in a state of idleness. This same critic showered celebratory prose upon progressive Indians who seemingly embraced his idea of Euro-American culture. In this observer's estimation, progressive Indians were Christians whose lives had benefited from "missionary enterprise and devotion." He added that these Indians' adoption of non-Native ways showed that they possessed "an awakened moral purpose, newborn, or well-developed, the stirring of an enlightened conscience, and of a long-dormant intellect." See: Herbert Welsh, "The Meaning of the Dakota Outbreak," *Scribner's Magazine* 9 (April 1891): 43-45, cited in Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 644.

³⁶ This point is made by Awakuni-Swetland's analysis of the Omaha tribe. Mark J. Awakuni-Swetland, "'Make-Believe White-Men' and the Omaha Land Allotment of 1871-1900," *Center for Great Plains Research and Department of Anthropology*, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (August 1, 1994): 202, accessed July 7, 2013, <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1235&context=greatplainsresearch>.

Americans introduced their version of medicine to the Puget Sound, the Natives relied on various pre-contact strategies to heal their maladies, including the use of herbs, plant and animal extracts, and shamans.³⁷ After 1856, a number of Puyallup tribal members abandoned this style of healing because of government pressure or because they believed that American physicians had more personal power than Native healers, which would have been consistent with aboriginal beliefs. Regardless, after 1873, enough Indians were visiting the reservation doctor that one observer remarked that many tribal members had “condemned and abolished the practice of making tamanamous or incantations and other heathen rites heretofore used in cases of sickness.”³⁸

During this time, more Puyallup also began complying with American notions of law and order. Prior to contact, tribal members had their own understanding of law, which included concepts of private justice, a system for parties to negotiate their grievances, a protocol for punishment, and recognition of the effect of spirits on the actions of the accused. This legal system served the Indians’ needs but American settlers wanted nothing to do with this style of social control. The newcomers instead demanded that the Natives adhere to a western European-style legal system where the authorities maintained a written and generally static code, carried out punishments in public, provided limited negotiation between the state and the accused, and only permitted the state to carry out punishments of transgressors.³⁹

³⁷ Smith, 76-78, 91.

³⁸ M.G. Mann, Puyallup Reservation Teacher, report to R.H. Milroy, US Indian Agent, Puyallup Agency, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” August 10, 1878, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/717/rec/>.

³⁹ Brad Asher, *Beyond the Reservation: Indians, Settlers, and the Law in Washington Territory, 1853-1889* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 32-33.

Soon after the Puyallup had moved to their reservation, they began using elements of American law in their lives, albeit in ways that fit their customs. For instance, as early as 1863, some Puyallup sought adjudication for “complaints against...each other, and settling difficulties which arose between them.” However, instead of taking their case to a tribal elder or leader, they went before the reservation carpenter who likely would have employed his understanding of American law to render a decision.⁴⁰ In 1878, the Puyallup took a more active role in the administration of this system. This was when the government organized a six-man reservation police force and a six-member Indian Council that acted as a court of law. The Native police rendered decisions in criminal offenses while the six council chiefs heard civil cases. These courts only had jurisdiction over Indian-on-Indian issues that occurred while the adversaries were on the reservation. However, convicted Indians could appeal their case to the reservation agent.⁴¹ Upon final judgment, the guilty paid their debt to society in typical American legal system fashion. The convicted forfeited money for fines, labored without pay on the reservation farm, or sat in a small log jail that the Indians called “Skookum House.” Incarceration was an especially difficult experience for the Indian prisoners. They slept on a straw covered floor, consumed a daily diet of bread and water, and moved around with an iron ball chained to their

⁴⁰ William Billings, Puyallup Agency Carpenter, Report to A.R. Elder, U.S. Indian Agent, Puyallup Agency, June 30, 1863, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/206/rec/1>.

⁴¹ Elizabeth Shackelford, “A History of the Puyallup Indian Reservation” (Thesis, College of Puget Sound, 1918), 34-35. The government paid each police officer \$5 per month, save for the chief officer who earned \$8 per month. In 1887, an Indian jury tried all of the cases.

legs.⁴² Even though authorities used the reservation jail primarily for minor offenses, most Puyallup considered confinement to be worse than death.⁴³

Some reservation officials were convinced that the Puyallup's incorporation of American law into their society had brought much needed stability to the reservation. According to reservation agent R.H. Milroy, in 1879, "There is really not a more orderly and law-abiding community in this Territory than on said reservation."⁴⁴ Milroy also suggested that the process was doing much to modernize the Indians. He exclaimed that the Indian police system "...was a most beneficial idea, and is doing much to accelerate the progress of Indian civilization."⁴⁵

Authorities claimed that Puyallup acceptance of the Christian faith was also hastening their integration into American society. The number of tribal members who attended Christian services grew over time and by 1878 the reservation's Protestant congregation numbered 160 souls. These parishioners appeared to adopt a set of ethics that non-Natives preferred. The Indians came to weekly services generally "...well dressed, and as cleanly and as orderly in their behavior as an ordinary country congregation of whites." Meanwhile, more tribal members

⁴² Henry Sicade, "Henry Sicade's History of Puyallup Indian School, 1860-1920" Cary C. Collins, ed. *Columbia* (Winter 2000-01), accessed July 11, 2008, <http://www.washingtonhistory.org/wshs/columbia/articles/o400-al.htm>; Jerry Meeker, interview by Alfred Smith, 1948. Alfred J. Smith Papers, Accession # 4515-001, Special Collections-University of Washington.

⁴³ Alfred Elder, Agent of Puyallup Agency, Letter to Commissioner of Indian Affairs William P. Dole, August 8, 1864, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/260/rec/2>.

⁴⁴ R.H. Milroy, US Indian Agent, Puyallup Agency, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," August 28, 1879, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/759/rec/1>.

⁴⁵ R.H. Milroy, Puyallup Reservation Agent, *Annual Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, For the Year 1881* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1881), 165.

participated in Christian marriages and, according to one observer, church services were having “...a very marked and observable effect upon the moral deportment of the Indians of that reservation.” At one point, Milroy opined, “The elevating and purifying effect of Christianity was never more apparent among any people than among the Puyallups,” who he believed had as “...much Christian zeal and sincerity... [as]...any community of whites of like size in this Territory.”⁴⁶

Church attendance exposed many of the Puyallup to aspects of a clock time based morality. Church sermons often involved nurturing a respect for the efficient use of time by criticizing Indians who supposedly wasted it by gambling and drinking alcohol. Indian Congregationalists apparently were less likely to participate in these vices. At one point Milroy claimed that church going Puyallup exhibited a “decrease of idleness, [an] increase of industry; more at home, less gadding about, &c.” He continued, “As has been shown, upon the Puyallup Reservation, where the Indians have for years had the constant presence and active efforts of zealous, Christian teachers, civilization and Christianity have taken root and have [fostered] vigorous life and growth.”⁴⁷

When reservation officials and the clergy lectured the Puyallup about time management, they aspired to make their audience more progressive in the marketplace and they assumed that Natives who accepted these lessons would quickly adopt the American way of life. Several pieces of evidence suggest this was happening to some degree. Between 1873 and 1883, the

⁴⁶ R.H. Milroy, US Indian Agent Puyallup Agency, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” August 31, 1880, UW Digital Collection, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/778/rec/2>.

⁴⁷ R.H. Milroy, US Indian Agent, Puyallup Agency, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” August 20, 1878, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/716/rec/2>.

Puyallup participated in the off-reservation economy in several ways that required an adherence to both clock time and task time. The primary source of income for Indians who lived both on and off the reservation during this period was agriculture. Reservation Puyallup worked their own fields, often harvesting enough extra products to sell at local markets. A reservation farmer named Sky-uck was among this group. His farming operation was successful enough to create a personal estate that some observers valued at \$20,000 upon his death in 1890.⁴⁸ Many Puyallup worked for other farmers, especially in the fall when Puyallup Valley hops growers hired large numbers of Native workers. The Puyallup were the Indians most closely involved with this crop and it is safe to say that their historical adherence to task time influenced their willingness to pick hops.⁴⁹ For several decades into the twentieth-century, it was common for young and old community members to drop whatever they were doing in the fall and hire themselves out to American farmers who needed as many hands as they could find to gather and ship the crop.⁵⁰ The Puyallup who rushed to the hop fields occasionally infuriated other employees because a number of the Indians were students or workers of businesses that also needed their labor at this time.

Puyallup likewise earned a living through other task time activities, including gathering and selling items they had harvested from local waters. A handful of Natives traded these and other goods to Tacoma residents for rags that they turned into floor rugs and then peddled back

⁴⁸ “Indian Jim was True,” *Tacoma Daily Ledger* (June 30, 1890), 3.

⁴⁹ The previously mentioned Sky-uck supposedly picked the first box of hops ever harvested in Washington Territory. Sky-uck’s Anglo name was Jim Meeker. “Indian Jim was True,” 3.

⁵⁰ Milroy, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” September 20, 1876.

to the Americans. Indian women also made socks that they sold to the owners of local dry goods stores.⁵¹

The Puyallup who relied upon task time for their survival still had to adhere to clock time at some level. Meanwhile, the number of clock related jobs in the South Sound grew over time and some of these operations hired Puyallup workers. These vocations required the Indians to be at a specific location at a certain time or complete a task within an allotted period. For example, Puyallup were among the roughly 100 Indians who helped construct a twenty-five mile NPRR line of track from Tacoma to the Puyallup Valley coalfields in 1877. They built six of those miles within the Puyallup reservation.⁵²

One could argue that Puyallup participation in these economic activities illustrated a level of progressive behavior, as did the Indian workers' ability to perform their jobs in a manner that was satisfactory to their employers. Some officials believed that tribal workers who respected clock time tended to avoid instances of "...Indian drunkenness or any disorderly conduct..." while also adhering to Euro-American controls.⁵³ Such behaviors turned the Puyallup into sought-after workers. When Ezra Meeker, became a Puyallup Valley hops magnate during the late nineteenth century, he was one of the area's biggest boosters of Indian labor. The Puyallup worked so well for him that he came to rethink his initial racial biases against Indians. Earlier in his life, Meeker had felt that many Natives lacked ambition and intelligence and he claimed they

⁵¹ Hunt, 133.

⁵² R.H. Milroy, "U.S. Indian Agent, "Report of Agents in Washington Territory," August 20, 1877, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/696/rec/>.

⁵³ Milroy, "Report to the Commissioner," August 28, 1879; Milroy, "Report to the Commissioner," September 20, 1876; Milroy, "Report to the Commissioner," August 20, 1878; Milroy, "Report of Agents," August 20, 1877.

only employed honesty when it served their self-interests. However, he became far less critical after he had been among them for a while. Meeker hired the aforementioned Sky-uck to work for him and happily claimed that the Indian took "...pride in doing his work well and in learning the ways of the whites." When Meeker needed 700-1,000 workers to harvest hops in the fall, he unhesitatingly hired Indians to fill most of his positions because he felt that they were willing to toil long and hard. He also complimented his aboriginal workers for keeping their word, paying their debts, and honoring their contracts. "I have had this class contract for clearing land, and I must say they [the Puyallup and other Indians] stuck to their work and completed their contracts as loyally as the average of the white men in the same line."⁵⁴

In the mind of some government officials, the Puyallup's decision to spend some of their wages on Euro-American consumer goods was further evidence of their growing progressivism. Authorities believed that the Indians' shopping habits were proof of a Native dependence upon their wages. Certainly no later than 1879, one would have found it difficult to find a tribal member who was not wearing clothes similar to those of their American neighbors. According to one official, "All [Puyallup] have discarded the blanket, breech-clout, and leggings, and adopted the style of dress of the whites and follow the fashions as near as their means will permit." Some female Puyallup were equally active in this fashion transformation, for they fancied themselves as "...close observers of the fashion follies of their white sisters, and make the ingenious and energetic efforts to have their dresses in the latest style."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Ezra Meeker, *Pioneer Reminiscences of Puget Sound* (Seattle: Lowman & Hanford, 1905), 222-226.

⁵⁵ Milroy, "Report to the Commissioner," August 28, 1879.

The Puyallup were just as fond of other possessions that they could obtain from the local market economy. Proof of this comes from an 1877 letter written by a young Puyallup named Peter Stanup and published by the city's newspaper. Stanup proudly informed readers that some of his fellow tribal members had their homes stocked with furniture, and those who lacked it would be purchasing it before long. He added, "Whenever [the Indians] know what they want, they always make up money enough to buy or make what they need."⁵⁶ A reservation schoolteacher substantiated Stanup's claims by reporting to his supervisors that the Puyallup's accumulation of a numerous items showed that they were "materially more prosperous than they have ever been before...."⁵⁷ Based upon this information we should not be surprised that Eells found clocks during his 1883 survey. It may be safe to assume that a few Puyallup clock owners were acting like nineteenth-century members of the British working class who had bought clocks as a sign of their advancing standard of living.⁵⁸

Puyallup acceptance of some aspects of western-style health care, American-style justice, Christianity, and market capitalism illustrated that tribal members were integrating parts of non-Native culture into their lives. Government observers would have undoubtedly seen these folks as good, progressive Indians. However, while these Puyallup embraced portions of western society with varying amounts of passion, none assimilated completely. They instead shaped these non-Indian cultural characteristics to fit their needs, which consequently frustrated government officials who claimed that Indians who failed to become adequately modernized

⁵⁶ Peter Stanup, letter in: Darlene Reiter, "Peter Stanup: A Leader among the Generous People." UW-Tacoma Community History Project, 1998.

⁵⁷ Mann, report to Milroy, August 10, 1878.

⁵⁸ Thompson, 69-70.

were inherently flawed. Agent Milroy, who wrote his share of glowing reports about Puyallup progressivism, could be equally critical when the Indians committed actions of which he disapproved.

More than a few Puyallup held on to traditions because of habit or because of the effectiveness of their old ways. For instance, when dealing with the sick, a number of tribal members continued to practice “temanimous, witchcraft, [and] incantations for the sick,” despite the tribal council’s prohibition against such acts. In one case, a Puyallup named Martin received wounds from a shotgun blast while attempting to steal some property. After he fled the scene, the injured man went to a non-Native doctor who successfully removed the pellets from his wounds. Martin evidently had a nose for trouble for before long he was involved in another altercation and acquired a serious neck wound. This time he chose a more customary cure by submitting to the advice of his inner power, which told him to submerge himself into a nearby river for as long as he could stand its cold. Witnesses recalled that he howled in anguish as the water lapped up against his gash, but this painful therapy paid off. In time, and supposedly without the aid of a non-Native physician, his wound healed.⁵⁹

On the legal front, Indian police officers who were obligated to uphold the dictates of the reservation agent stayed quite busy dealing with a host of offenses that reflected pre-treaty customs more than post-treaty practices. Such was the case in 1878, when a seventy-year-old Puyallup shot and killed a shaman whom he accused of using a curse to murder several of the bereaved attacker’s children.⁶⁰ There were also cases in which the perpetrator’s offense was to

⁵⁹Smith, 65.

⁶⁰ Milroy, “Report to the Commissioner,” August 28, 1879.

“waste” their time through gambling and drunkenness.⁶¹ In other cases, the Puyallup likely crossed aboriginal as well as non-Native lines of acceptable behavior. In 1874, Indian police sought one Jane Samson, whom the court had charged with abandoning her ill husband for another man. The agency’s Indian Council and police force also dealt with assorted lesser crimes, including spousal abuse, divorce, fights, theft, and kidnapping. Nevertheless, there were also situations where the Natives’ actions reflected decisions that offended Americans but would not have upset their reservation neighbors.

Between 1873 and 1883, many of the Puyallup also frustrated reservation officials by habitually leaving the reservation for extended periods. Many of those who ventured off the reserve did so to hunt and gather, work, marry, attend ceremonies, or participate in potlaches and gambling contests. These actions not only allowed Puyallup to pursue some of their pre-treaty practices, they also freed the Indians from government surveillance and harassment.

Non-Native employers, not unlike Hudson Bay Company officials from an earlier time, became especially irritated with some Puyallup’s unwillingness to corral their urge to wander or practice Euro-American notions of efficient time management. Businessmen who ran their operations based upon clock time expected their Native employees to devote their attentions toward a certain project for a specified time. A number of the Puyallup, meanwhile, were inclined to work in “spurts of a few hours, or, at most, a few days at a time....” This did not necessarily mean that the Natives were lazy, but it may have reflected their belief that work was only necessary to meet their needs and they did not see the sense in laboring beyond that point. Hence, there were Puyallup who hired themselves out to merely accomplish their personal goals,

⁶¹ Meeker interview; “Chief of United States Indian Police Force,” January 14, 1874, Flett Papers, MS 120, Box 1, Folder 13, WSHS-Tacoma.

which may or may not have aligned with their employers' needs, and then walked off the job to pursue other interests. One reservation official stated hopelessly that these Indians "consider time of no value."⁶²

Such episodes show that the Puyallup's responses to a clock time way of life was hard to organize into neat categories because they varied, based on the individual and the situation. Many Puyallup responded to government and marketplace pressures by transforming their behaviors in ways that suited them. Occasionally, their actions pleased reservation officials, but just as often the Indians acted in ways that infuriated non-Indians because they thought that the Puyallup were seemingly rejecting civilization and using their time unwisely. We can compare Puyallup Reservation administrators' concerns about the Natives' behaviors to complaints leveled by English "mercantilist moralists" as they chastised the English poor for their unwillingness to adapt to industrial clock time. When Milroy ranted, "The habits, barbaric ideas, and vices of the adult savage are to a great extent fixed and unchangeable," he was echoing nineteenth-century British capitalists who insisted that anyone who was unable to respond to the "incentives and disciplines" of industrial time, was lazy, childlike, and prone to scheming.⁶³ Yet, what these incidents more accurately suggested is that the Natives responded to clock time in ways that best fit their needs. Some of the Indians who ignored the tenets of clock time were not being obstinate so much as they feared it, did not comprehend it, or saw no sense in it. It was also likely that many Puyallup understood that their old ways of time discipline were much less restraining than the tyranny of the clock. Many twenty-first century Americans would undoubtedly agree with them.

⁶² Milroy, "Report to the Commissioner," September 20, 1876.

⁶³ Milroy, "Report to the Commissioner," August 20, 1878; Thompson, 80, 91.

THE PUYALLUP'S PUSH FOR PATENTS

Between 1873 and 1883, The Puyallup adopted varying aspects of American culture into their lives, but since they embraced changes at different rates from each other, intra-tribal divisions arose during this period. Disagreements were nothing new for the Puyallup. Recall that when hostilities broke out in the South Sound in 1855, some tribal members fought against the American settlers, some stayed neutral, and others aided their non-Native neighbors. This heterogeneity endured after 1873 and it contributed to the rise of at least two factions within the Puyallup tribe. Members of each group debated what role American culture and the Medicine Creek Treaty should play in the tribe's and the reservation's future.

Since the Indian participants in these confrontations had integrated portions of Euro-American culture into their lives, they generally did not take an either-or stand on the issues before them. One source of discord within the Puyallup community was how to respond to the environmental change that the new settlers had imposed upon the South Sound after they arrived. These changes became more pervasive after 1873, and as the Americans altered the Natives' physical space, they concurrently pushed the Indians to shift their conceptual understanding of nature, from a reservoir of life (plant, animal, and spirit) into a transferrable commodity. Many Puyallup had a difficult time accepting this new mindset.⁶⁴

The Americans' pressure to resettle the Puyallup on a fraction of their original territory inflicted the most immediate environmental change upon them. Even those Natives who chose to live off from the reserve were unable to escape the consequences. For example, through the

⁶⁴ Robert Bunting, *The Pacific Raincoast: Environment and Culture in an American Eden, 1778-1900* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), x-xi, 1-2, 15-18; Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1984), xiv.

1870s, some Indians continued to live on plots of land along Tacoma's waterfront while others resided on some of the unclaimed spaces between New Tacoma and the reservation. Initially, Americans did not mind that Indians inhabited these off-reservation locations because they contributed to the local economy. Tacoma residents' attitudes about the non-reservation Indians changed with the arrival of new settlers and the growing presence of the NPRR. These factors increased property values all around the South Sound, which caused the Americans' demand for land to outweigh their need for Indian workers. Meanwhile, the growing number of job-seeking immigrants further devalued Puyallup labor. City authorities thus forced the Native inhabitants to vacate many of these off-reservation sites.⁶⁵

Many Puyallup feared that a similar fate awaited them regarding their reservation land. Some of these individuals hoped the newly promised allotments would protect them, but it took several years for the government to put the policy into effect. Milroy began the process in 1873 by surveying the reservation in order to divide the land into tracts and specify the exact location of the border between Indian and non-Native lands. Administrators then used the information to grant sections of the reserve in 1874 to "such individuals or families as are willing to avail themselves of the privilege...."⁶⁶ Indians who were not interested in farming generally did not get property.

Seventy-four Puyallup individuals and family heads, almost all of them men, received allotments within the first year. The number of allottees jumped up to 122 in 1876. Most of the Puyallup families received forty-acre grants. Twenty-eight more Indians obtained allotments

⁶⁵ Gallacci, 57-58; Marian Smith, "The Puyallup of Washington," in *Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes*, ed. Ralph Linton (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1963), 29.

⁶⁶ Article Six, Treaty of Medicine Creek.

within the next year, which expanded the number of allotted reservation acres being cultivated to 945. By the end of August 1880, the Puyallup reservation had become the home to 164 allottees who possessed claims that were generally forty to eighty acres in size.⁶⁷

The Puyallup and reservation administrators were optimistic about allotment's effects, but the policy put them on an uncharted path, as almost all of the participants had to deal with numerous unanticipated problems. To begin with, the government's distribution of allotments to the Puyallup did not go smoothly. Non-Native encroachment on the reservation continued after 1873, so before some Indians could possess their allotments, the government had to once again clear away squatters.

Another issue arose because the Puyallup had moved on to the reservation before the government had rules in place that dictated who could settle where. This allowed tribal members to determine home sites among themselves and the result was that headmen and other leading members of the community generally had first choice of the land. Most of these individuals selected spots near water, which was not difficult to do on their reservation. Problems arose when the new survey lines cut across these previously determined settlements. Reservation officials calmed disputes by awarding allotments to those who either had occupied the land in question the longest or had made the most improvements upon it. In other cases, authorities split

⁶⁷ H.D. Gibson, H.D. U.S. Indian Agent, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," September 28, 1874, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/642/rec/1>;

Puyallup Reservation Allotment List, 1876, Folder: "Land Use Files, 1855-1920," Box 1 Series 20, Puyallup Indian Agency, RG 75, NA-PAR; Milroy, "Report of Agents," August 20, 1877; Milroy, "Report to the Commissioner," August 31, 1880.

allotments into two or more pieces to ensure that each qualifying individual or family got what was coming to them. The Puyallup were reportedly satisfied with this method of adjudication.⁶⁸

The reservation agent also found that the Indian Office had failed to offer any guidelines as to how officials should determine when an Indian was prepared to accept a parcel of land. The authors of this policy had neglected to take into account the tribe's diverse membership, who accepted the opportunities and responsibilities of allotment in their own way and at their own pace.

Perhaps the most frustrating dilemma Puyallup Reservation officials faced was determining who actually qualified to receive an allotment, especially when it came to establishing an individual's particular tribal affiliation. This was a problem that American authorities had with the Indians throughout this era. The Puyallup, just like members of other Indian nations, categorized themselves in ways that were much more dynamic and fluid than the government would have liked. Individuals who had indirect ties to the Puyallup community approached the reservation agent about obtaining a piece of the valuable reservation. This included mixed bloods and non-Natives who were married to Indians. To complicate matters even more, the Puyallup, like all populations of humans, led dynamic lives. Some moved, married, divorced, remarried, had children with multiple partners, and left numerous heirs. Therefore, officials had to employ an imperfect and often shifting calculus to determine the

⁶⁸ D.C. Beaty, Farmer-in-charge, Puyallup Reservation, letter to E.P. Smith, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 1, 1874, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/645/rec/6>; Gibson, "Report to the Commissioner," September 28, 1874; E.S. Stevens, Acting Indian Commissioner, letter to Edwin Eells, U.S. Indian Agent Puyallup Agency, Folder: "Letters Received From the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," Box 1, Series 25, 1882-1894, 1909-1918, RG 75, NA-PAR.

validity of a claim whenever a supposed tribal member requested an allotment. For example, in one case Puyallup Reservation Agent Edwin Eells asked his superior how to deal with “half-breeds” whose Indian fathers had married non-Native women and had “exercised the rights of American citizens” [i.e. voted]. He also inquired about what to do when a non-Native man married an Indian woman who was officially part of the tribe and then had settled on reservation land.⁶⁹

It would have been difficult for officials to create a specific allotment procedural code that would cover each possible case. Administrators consequently rendered rulings on a case-by-case basis, which meant that their decisions were inconsistent. In one instance, Eells asked the Indian Office how he should respond to an allotment request from a Puyallup-Nisqually woman who had been married for thirty years to a one-quarter Indian who was also a naturalized American citizen. At the time of the request, the woman possessed an 80-acre parcel on the Nisqually Reservation and lived with her spouse on a 160-acre non-reservation claim. The agent advised against giving the grant, but the Commissioner of Indian Affairs said the woman’s pedigree indeed qualified her for the land.⁷⁰

The fact that the Puyallup were among the first wave of Pacific Northwest Natives to receive allotments from the government meant that whenever officials confronted problems, they had little if any precedent to follow.⁷¹ Regardless, this problem did not slow government support

⁶⁹ H. Price, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, letter to Edwin Eells, Puyallup Reservation Agent, December 22, 1882, Letters Received from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1882-1913, Box 1, Folder 1, NA-PAR.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ The Indian Office’s decision to allot the Puyallup’s land actually predated the General Allotment Act of 1887, also known as the Dawes Act, which some historical studies erroneously refer to as the start of the allotment movement in the United States. In reality, the government

for allotment. In 1881, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Hiram Price stated allotment would have “...the effect of creating individuality, responsibility, and a desire to accumulate property. It teaches the Indians habits of industry and frugality, and stimulates them to look forward to a better and more useful life....”⁷²

While the Indian Office saw allotment as a tool for transforming the Indians, Native Americans displayed mixed enthusiasm for the system during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some favored it because the policy provided them with a restricted title to their land, which they believed gave them the security to plant crops or lease their property without losing it to non-Natives.⁷³ Other Indians, especially younger or mixed blood members of the tribe, used allotment to obtain wealth, which allowed them to challenge the reservation’s long established political hierarchy whose members were mostly older, more conservative tribal members. These up and coming members of the community transformed themselves into a

had created an allotment policy well before the Puyallup experienced it. Colonists first used allotment in early-seventeenth-century Massachusetts colony after courts decreed that the government should give land-grants to Indians living on English plantations. An 1805 treaty with the Choctaw and the 1817 treaty with the Cherokee each contained language pertaining to allotments. By the time that the government had abandoned its treaty policy with the Native Americans in 1871, it had created close to seventy treaties with Indians that contained some aspect of allotment within their terms. Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 231; Prucha, *The Great Father*, 660; D.S. Otis, *The Dawes Act and the Allotment of Indian Lands* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 3; Danzinger, 97.

⁷² Hiram Price, “Report of October 24, 1881, in House Executive Document No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, 47th Congress, 1st Session, Serial 2018, pp 17-19, cited in *Americanizing the Indians: Writings by the “Friends of the Indian,” 1880-1900*, ed. Francis Paul Prucha (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 89.

⁷³ Greenwald, 27; Awakuni-Swetland, 229-231.

version of the *nouveau riche*, and in their new role they were able to wield tribal economic and political influence within their Native community.⁷⁴

Despite its potential, allotment failed to give government officials and the Indians everything that they wanted. This was partly because the westward rush of immigrants prevented the policy from being in place long enough for members of either group to achieve their goals. In 1860, some 1.4 million non-Indian settlers lived in the Trans-Mississippi west. By 1890, the number jumped to 8.5 million, a population increase of just over 600%. As Americans moved onto western lands their demands for food, services, and acreage pressured the government to change its vision for allotment, from being a tool of Indian reform to being an allegedly legal way to open up space for new settlers.⁷⁵ Consequently, lawmakers in Washington, D.C. thrust allotment upon Indians before most were prepared to accept its responsibilities and deal with its pitfalls. In the meantime, many Natives had a difficult time using their land to its fullest potential due to a lack of training and capital. The fact that a large portion of the Indians' land was ill suited for horse and plow agriculture made the policy equally vexing for many allottees.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Paula Wagoner, "An unsettled frontier: property, blood and U.S. federal policy," in *Property Relations: Renewing the Anthropological Tradition*, ed. C.M. Hann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 137; Banner, 289; Otis, 41, 44-45, 95; Danzinger, 106; Rose Stremelan, "'To Domesticate and Civilize Wild Indians: Allotment and the Campaign to Reform Indian Families, 1875-1887,'" *Journal of Family History* 30 (July, 2005): 265, 289.

⁷⁵ Banner, 235; Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier: 1846-1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 4.

⁷⁶ Leonard Carlson, *Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land: The Dawes Act and the Decline of Indian Farming* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 4, 32, 36, 43, 54, 167, 173; Otis, 13, 15, 21, 32; Wilcomb Washburn, *The Assault on Indian Tribalism: The General Allotment Law (Dawes Act) of 1887* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1975), 20.

Regardless of allotment's possibilities and problems, qualifying Puyallup were generally eager to receive their individual plots from the government. It also appears that the possession of allotments compelled more Puyallup take up farming. These Indians were evidently convinced that at least for a time, the designations would keep their land in their possession. As soon as officials began surveying the land, the Indians started "making arrangements for building good houses, clearing and fencing large fields, and...farming in earnest."⁷⁷ In addition, a number of the Natives sought extra employment off the reservation to earn money to purchase provisions and building materials for their residences.⁷⁸ By the late summer of 1874, portions of the reservation that had been dormant due to Indian fears of losing their lands were now full of activity. A year later these Puyallup were "...building small houses, some of them of sawed lumber, some log-cabins, and others contenting themselves with their movable huts, while they spend their time clearing their land...." The surveys had supposedly shown the Puyallup that "...each man has his fixed boundary, established by Government."⁷⁹

The Puyallup's renewed focus upon their farms contributed to growth in their yearly harvests. The agent's annual reports to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs reveal that between 1876 and 1879, cultivated land grew from 715 to 1,054 acres. By 1879, Puyallup farmers harvested, among other things, 1,050 bushels of wheat, 4,600 bushels of oats, 4,000 bushels of potatoes, and 975 tons of hay. The Puyallup also raised 320 horses, 360 head of cattle, 254 hogs,

⁷⁷ Byron Barlow, Farmer in Charge, Puyallup Reservation, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873," UW Digital Archives, accessed April 12, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/623/rec/1>.

⁷⁸ Beaty, letter to Smith, September 1, 1874.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

125 sheep, and three mules.⁸⁰ The reservation agent responded to this progress by urging the government to grant the Puyallup the right to vote, which he argued would be one of the final steps needed “to stimulate and encourage Indians to prepare themselves for citizenship.”⁸¹

There emerged, from this cadre of farmers, a group of individuals who grew enough food to feed their families and sell to outsiders. Over time, they used some of their profits to develop a larger percentage of their fields and produce more yield. Since Tacoma’s population was growing at a rapid rate during this time, there was seldom a shortage of customers. A few of these growers and ranchers probably thought they could become even more successful if they could buy more land than they already possessed.

We can see that between 1873 and 1883, the Puyallup were becoming more involved with the government’s agricultural program. Many members of the tribe, however, did not take allotments, or once they got a parcel of land, they did not work it. In fact, a number of Puyallup avoided farming altogether because it was not in their nature to stay tied to a plot of land.

Agent Milroy believed he could push these recalcitrant Puyallup toward agriculture by assigning his staff to advise them on how to use their time more productively. At one point Milroy observed, “Having no fixed habits of industry, they [the Puyallup who avoided farming] are, as a general rule, unable by their unaided wills, and without external help or inducement in some form, to labor steadily and continuously for themselves.”⁸²

⁸⁰ Milroy, “Report to the Commissioner,” September 20, 1876; Milroy, “Report to the Commissioner,” August 28, 1879.

⁸¹ Milroy, “Report to the Commissioner,” August 28, 1879.

⁸² Milroy, “Report to the Commissioner,” September 20, 1876.

Milroy was misdiagnosing the problem because he failed to consider the diversity of his wards. He also neglected to acknowledge the impacts that Tacoma's expansion was having on the Puyallup during the late 1870s and into the early 1880s. One issue that continued to be problematic was American settlers' clamor for the Indians' land. Even after the government had surveyed the reserve, non-Indians did little to hide their urge to settle on the reservation's rich soil and some continued to enter the reservation to steal lumber, poach game, and claim property.

Over time, the reservation boundaries seemed to offer the Puyallup little security. In one case during the early 1870s, a non-Indian named Gale had attempted to take ownership of a reservation parcel by constructing a cabin upon it and then planting crops nearby. The Puyallup dealt with the intruder by chasing him away and burning down his home. Gale responded by recruiting a group of armed men to help him reclaim his site, but the reservation agent intervened before any further violence to property or flesh took place.⁸³ More common were situations like an 1874 case in which a local farmer's cattle wandered on to the Puyallup reservation. The animals' failure to respect the reservation's boundaries fomented a dispute between the herd's owner and Indians who wanted to keep the cows.⁸⁴ Between 1873 and 1883, reservation residents continually pressed government authorities to be more vigilant in keeping trespassers at bay.

These intrusions upon reservation land during the 1870s and the government's continued eviction of the interlopers likely made some of the Puyallup more willing to embrace Euro-American notions of land ownership. These Indians hoped that having title to land gave one as

⁸³ Richard White, "The Treaty of Medicine Creek: Indian-White Relations in Upper Puget Sound, 1830-1880" (M.A. thesis, University of Washington, 1972), 173-174; Hunt, 143.

⁸⁴ Letter to R.H. Milroy, October 1, 1874.

much control of a piece of property as if they had constructed a wall around it. These aboriginals began to think there was power in imaginary lines of title and opportunity in the concept of transferring land possession from one person to another.

Calls from NPRR administrators and city officials to increase Tacoma's commercial activity and physical size heightened the Puyallup's concerns about the sanctity of their reserve. These demands for growth were partially a response to Tacoma's competition with Portland and Seattle to become the chief city of the Northwest. Tacoma boosters believed that the city's port facilities and railroad connections made it the logical choice for that distinction. They argued that Tacoma's location and facilities made it the most convenient and profitable place for inland farmers to send their products for shipment to foreign and domestic markets. They added that the port also gave railroads the opportunity to collect additional shipping fees on their trip back east by filling their cars with goods from Asia.

Meanwhile, the NPRR had invested heavily in Tacoma's future growth by retaining over half the stock in the Tacoma Land Company, which possessed around sixteen thousand acres of property in the Tacoma area. Hence, the railroad company directly benefitted from land sales and its board of directors did not want to see anything get in the way of those transactions, including the Puyallup Reservation.⁸⁵ In an effort to remove the Indians from their homes, company officials tried to make the case that the Puyallup lands were part of the land grant the government had earlier given to the NPRR. These men wanted the Indian Office to shut down the reservation and move the inhabitants to the Tulalip Reservation, just north of Everett. This would give the railroad company increased harbor space to load and unload freight, more land to

⁸⁵ "Tacoma's Sure Future," *Daily Ledger*, September 20, 1883, 2.

sell to incoming immigrants, and relief from having to construct a circuitous rail line around the reservation in order to connect with depots to the north and east of Tacoma.⁸⁶

Many of the Puyallup who watched government officials chase off trespassers after 1873 and witness the city creeping closer to their homes understood that their possession of allotments would not end outsider threats to their land. It was at about this time that two new factions emerged within the tribe regarding how to protect their lands. Coincidentally, it was also around this time that Agent Milroy sought to end the Puyallup's hereditary leadership system by mandating that members vote for their chiefs and tribal council.⁸⁷ Balloting occurred annually and before long the reservation's future became one of the primary points of contention among individuals seeking political office. Candidates of both factions shared a concern that the government follow through on its Medicine Creek Treaty promises, but they disagreed over how the community should respond to the government's modernization programs and the continued growth of Tacoma.

Inhabiting one side of the debate were conservative—though this latter group might also be seen as moderate—tribal interests, who were generally older and part of the tribe's hereditary political structure. Members of this group, who wanted to preserve the political status quo, were also inclined to greet radical change of any type with suspicion. In 1948, Jerry Meeker recalled that these individuals had certainly adopted aspects of non-Native culture, but they believed the tribe's strength lay in its members' ability to retain the habits and beliefs that the Puyallup nation had used rather successfully for eons of time. The conservatives/moderates were also leery of too much modernization because they believed that government sponsored programs were

⁸⁶ Gallacci, 57-58.

⁸⁷ Hunt, 179.

nothing more than a backdoor attempt to take what remained of their land. They wanted the Indian Office to protect allotments and tribal reservation lands because they feared that non-Natives would swindle tribal members at every available chance.⁸⁸

The rivals of these cautious tribal members were predominantly younger Indians who readily adopted certain aspects of American culture, especially economic practices. Members of this group did not shun tradition, but they did not prioritize it. They instead enthusiastically pushed for tribal modernization, which they felt involved implementing policies that would “...get things like whites, to get good roads, etc., on the reservation.”⁸⁹ A segment of this contingent had attended government-run Indian schools, accepted Christianity, learned English, and worked for and traded with non-Natives. Some of these more progressive traders were successful farmers. Others were employees, business owners, and even investors, and they had all become confident in their abilities to succeed in the marketplace. Along the way, many of these individuals had embraced a number of clock time behaviors that they believed they could use to their advantage. The progressives saw the older leaders as being lazy and ineffective, and one of their slogans was, “Get rid of that old chief who did nothing.”⁹⁰ They mockingly referred to their philosophical rivals as “the barefooted ones,” in reference to their apparent affinity for the past and they chastised them for being unduly suspicious of American culture. As the city of Tacoma became more prominent in the Indians’ lives, the progressives’ understanding of modernization gave them increased influence within the tribe.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Meeker interview.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ “Indians are Republicans,” *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, October 5, 1888, 5.

The barefoots and the progressives did see eye to eye on one issue, which was a distrust of the government, especially when it came to protecting their reservation. However, while the barefoots wanted the government to become more diligent in keeping non-Natives from accessing Indian land, the progressives pushed for something different. They claimed that American authorities were not permitting the Puyallup to integrate into the off-reservation community in a suitable manner and pace. By 1883, many progressives wanted to adapt the Medicine Creek Treaty to their needs by obtaining patents on their allotments. Proponents of this policy claimed it would provide allottees with additional legal protections over their lands because state and local courts would enforce the titles.

There was a third perspective as well, which came from a small group of the progressive tribal wing. They complained that according to the treaty, a patented "...tract shall not be aliened or leased for a longer term than two years; and shall be exempt from levy, sale, or forfeiture...." Authorities had inserted these limitations to ensure that the Indians did not lose access to, or ownership of, their land until the government had determined there was no longer a need for the reservation.⁹² This branch of the progressive faction believed patents were too restrictive and too weak to protect allottees from losing their lands. They therefore wanted the government to enact an additional clause of Article Six, which gave tribal members the right to sell their allotments or lease them for indefinite periods of time. Supporters of this policy believed that the Americans would inevitably get the reserve's land so the Indians might as well receive something in return for their property.⁹³

⁹² Article Six, Treaty with the Omaha.

⁹³ Meeker interview.

The pro-alienation Puyallup conducted an extended campaign to achieve their goal. By the mid-to-late 1870s, several individuals emerged to take a leadership role in this movement. Some of these men formed close alliances with local non-Native businessmen who would also benefit from Indian alienation rights. These American entrepreneurs very well may have planted the idea of land sales in the minds of receptive Puyallup. In any case, this interest group was devoted to achieving their goals and willing to confront authority when pursuing their goals. Their confidence was rooted in some of their early life experiences. This was especially true for those individuals who attended the Puyallup Reservation's government-run boarding school.

THE PUYALLUP BOARDING SCHOOL: A TOOL FOR MODERNIZATION AND A SEEDBED OF ACTIVISM

The concept of Indian boarding schools was born at a time when critics from around the nation were lambasting the government-run Indian day schools for their inability to educate and assimilate their students. As was their habit, school administrators, including those at the Puyallup reservation, often put much of the blame for these failures upon the Indians. Their common complaint was that the students who attended day schools would return home at the end of each and have contact with the older members of their tribe, which supposedly reversed any progress that the teachers had made toward transforming their charges. A few educational theorists determined that the solution to this dilemma was the industrial boarding school, where the government would keep students sequestered from their fellow Natives around the clock.

Proponents of the boarding school model believed that isolating Indian children would allow the teachers to "...completely [restructure] the Indians' minds and personalities."⁹⁴

The Indian boarding schools that emerged after 1870 were in essence the government's attempt to construct an intellectual and cultural quarantine zone within the reservations. Authorities believed that these isolated environments would allow faculty to deconstruct each individual Indian's ethnic identity. School staff attempted to do this by cutting the students' long hair, forcing them to wear uniforms, prohibiting them from speaking their native tongue, and rechristening them with Anglicized names. Meanwhile, the pupils lived in buildings that represented Euro-American concepts of space and they interacted with common non-Native technologies. At mealtimes, the schools' kitchens offered their boarders a Euro-American-style diet and the staff expected the students to consume their servings by using what they deemed to be appropriate mealtime etiquette. Boarding school officials also chipped away at their students' "Indian-ness" by offering industrial and domestic instruction alongside basic academic lessons. Thus, female Indians learned how to keep a home similar to the way that reformers thought a non-Native homemaker would, while males took lessons on how to use construction tools and operate in manufacturing workspaces.⁹⁵

Since converting Indians into members of the working class meant teaching them about the concept of time discipline, Indian school educators inundated their students with notions of

⁹⁴ David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1995), 97.

⁹⁵ Alice Littlefield, "Learning Labor: Native American Education In the United States, 1880-1903," in *The Political Economy of North American Indians*, ed. John Moore (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 44; Adams, 52; Joel Spring, *Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality: A Brief History of Dominated Cultures in the United States* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2001), 28.

time thrift and time productivity. Faculty insisted that class members adhere to regimented schedules that the schools defined with bells, mechanical clocks and organized calendars. The historian Alice Littlefield has called the combined efforts of Indian school personnel the “proleteriatization” of the Indians.⁹⁶

The idea for boarding schools in Washington Territory first emerged in the mid-1850s, just after the Puyallup had settled on their new reservation. Washington Territory officials pushed for this style of education more intensely after 1870.⁹⁷ By 1872, territorial Superintendent of Indian Affairs Milroy told his superior that if the government continued to permit Indian children to live with their “savage parents” while attending white-run schools, “...they will naturally absorb from these parents their ideas, habits, manners, customs, prejudices, and superstitions, which do not harmonize or assimilate with the education received.”⁹⁸

The government responded to these concerns on the Puyallup Reservation by constructing a \$4,000, two-story industrial boarding school in 1873. Its ground floor contained a classroom, blacksmith and carpentry shops, and boys’ washroom. The male students’ quarters were on the second floor. A covered walkway linked this structure to a second building that sat to the rear. It housed a kitchen, dining room, and quarters for the instructors and their families, and its second floor contained the girls’ living space. The school’s location represented another

⁹⁶ Adams, 113-120; Spring, 28; Well; Thompson, 84; Littlefield, 44.

⁹⁷ Byron Barlow, “Report to the Commissioner, 1873”; L.F. Thompson, Teacher, Puyallup Reservation, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871,” UW Digital Archives, accessed April 12, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/475/rec/1>; White, *The Treaty of Medicine Creek*, 150.

⁹⁸ Milroy, “Report to the Commissioner,” October 1, 1872.

important improvement, for it sat away from the Puyallup River's flood zone, which allowed instruction to occur during the early spring rainy season.⁹⁹

The facility gave proponents of Puyallup modernization new hope because aside from sequestering the Indian pupils it also provided teachers with an environment in which to offer a more sophisticated curriculum. Puyallup students attended classes in which, among other things, instructors tried to teach them how to be industrious and economical in their habits, which meant adopting "a high appreciation of the value of time." Pupils found themselves attempting to adhere to a schedule and completing as many tasks as possible within a certain period. The teachers were especially adamant that their male students apply these qualities to agriculture and industrial arts. They meanwhile gave female students "a thorough knowledge of cooking, washing, sewing, and all other ordinary household and kitchen duties," that reflected time discipline.¹⁰⁰ The instructors reinforced these concepts by forcing the male and female students to adhere to a strict school day schedule that they parceled into specific blocks of instructional time. For instance, the reservation agent dictated that one-sixth of the students' educational time be spent on "plain common-school English education" so they could wean themselves from their native tongue.¹⁰¹

Puyallup Reservation officials hoped that the boarding school would solve what they saw as the problem of the uncivilized Indian. One Puyallup Reservation official, in a moment of

⁹⁹ Shackleford, *A History of the Puyallup Indian Reservation*, 37; "History of Cushman School," Found in: "Correspondence with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1907-1920," Box 10, Folder: Education Schools: July 7, 1913-June 8, 1914," NA-PAR; Charles Roberts, "The Cushman Indian Trades School and WWI," *American Indian Quarterly* 34 (Summer 1987): 221; Sicade, "History of Puyallup Indian School."

¹⁰⁰ O'Malley, 42-43.

¹⁰¹ Milroy, "Report to the Commissioner," September 20, 1876.

optimism and unfortunate candor, claimed that educating the Indian through boarding schools would be a much more effective way of dealing with what he called the “Indian problem,” than the bullet, alcohol, or disease.¹⁰² Yet, the school, along with other similar institutions across the western United States, proved to be a false hope to both Indians and reservation officials. The failures were predominantly due to the cultural and personal damage the institutions inflicted upon several generations of Native students. The Puyallup’s boarding school had an array of shortcomings, some of which the Indian pupils painfully endured. One of them was the facility’s inability to house its tenants in relative comfort. Children slept on beds made of straw and they endured extremely frigid conditions during the winter. On some mornings, the chill stiffened their hair to the point that they could not run a comb through it.¹⁰³

The Puyallup students, as before, also continued to study under instructors of questionable abilities and, occasionally, dubious intent. A case in point was the Puyallup school’s first female teacher. She fell ill soon after she arrived and was unable to perform her job for an extended amount of time. When she finally returned, she found that the students’ level of knowledge had surpassed her own so she immediately quit. On another occasion, the Reverend M.G. Mann, upon becoming the reservation’s sub-agent, quickly hired several of his in-laws to instruct the students. They spent more time promoting their religious platform than they did teaching the pupils how to read, write, and discover solutions to arithmetic problems.¹⁰⁴

While it is correct to assume that these and other problems significantly compromised the quality of Indian education on the Puyallup Reservation, there was another narrative at work:

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Sicade, “History of Puyallup Indian School.”

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

between 1873 and 1883, some Indian students used the institution to their advantage. Their numbers were limited but their presence should not surprise us because a large number of Puyallup valued education and some believed that government schools could provide them with opportunities to improve their lot both on and off the reserve. A few Puyallup embraced this conviction strongly enough that whenever they felt that the school was falling short of their expectations they used activism, and occasionally militancy, to try to make things right. Some of the Indians who learned how to agitate while in school became campaigners for tribal concerns later on in their lives.

The educational career of a Puyallup named Henry Sicade illustrates this. From an early age, Sicade took actions that showed his desire to integrate American education in his life and succeed among non-Natives. He was never shy about standing up to authority when he felt it was hamstringing his efforts, and his experiences as a student were a seedbed for direct actions that he took against the government and American society well into his adult life.

Henry was born in 1866 to parents who wanted their children to take advantage of government-run schools. He attended the government reservation school through 1879 and did well enough in his studies to enroll at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon. After he graduated from there he spent his adult years successfully working in both the non-Native and Indian worlds. At the time of his death, in 1938, one local writer stated, “His life proved to what prominence an Indian may advance....”¹⁰⁵ Sicade credited his non-Indian education with

¹⁰⁵ “Henry Sicade,” editorial, *Tacoma News Tribune*, December 15, 1938, in Northwest People Index File, Tacoma Public Library.

helping him to cross the cultural divide between the Puyallup and non-Native worlds, and he maintained a strong advocacy for the American run school system throughout his life.¹⁰⁶

One of Sicade's first experiences with activism occurred after he enrolled at the reservation boarding school and became involved in a revolt against a pair of instructors. At the Puyallup school, students not only endured poorly trained teachers, they also encountered staff who preferred to manage their classroom with sticks rather than carrots. It was on this issue that some of the students stood up for what they believed were their rights, including the expectation that the teachers treat their pupils with respect. One instructor, who also worked as the reservation physician, habitually smacked students with a board to keep them in line.¹⁰⁷ Another educator used a long switch to the same end. Sicade recalled, "When that big switch came down on the table with a whack, that meant order. Everybody got a touch of [it], and the blue marks on backs and legs told of the iron rule of the teacher." Instructors even doled out corporal punishment for trivial transgressions. The students were particularly fearful of one staff member who swatted victims until they cried out. Unfortunately, his attacks often produced open wounds.¹⁰⁸

Some of the Puyallup children responded to this rough treatment by leaving the school. Others remained in class and endured the punishments because they, or more likely their parents, believed that government-run education was vital to their future. Sicade was among the

¹⁰⁶ "Henry Sicade: A Short Sketch by His Daughter, Sally Sicade," in Northwest People Index File, Tacoma Public Library; "Henry Sicade: Pioneer of Pierce Co. Dies at 72," *Tacoma News Tribune*, December 14, 1938, in Northwest People Index File, Tacoma Public Library; "Henry Sicade" editorial.

¹⁰⁷ White, *The Treaty of Medicine Creek*, 154.

¹⁰⁸ Sicade, "History of Puyallup Indian School."

Puyallup who stayed at the school, but at one point he and some of his classmates had had their fill of the switch wielded by the teacher named Hill. After one disciplinary episode, Sicade and a few other students grabbed their instructor by the beard and threw him to the ground. They then warned him that if he did not abandon his use of force “he would get his own medicine.” Hill immediately left the school to pursue his professional career elsewhere. The government then hired a new instructor who waved his switch with fervor equal to Hill’s. The students, perhaps encouraged by the success of their first campaign against what they saw as unbridled authority, confronted the new instructor as soon as he began using the whip. On a designated day, they came to class early, armed with wooden ax-handles and clubs and barricaded themselves inside of the school. When the teacher approached the building he found the front door barred so he attempted to enter through a window. The students thwarted this flanking move with hot irons and whacks to the head from their implements. In their fury, the students warned the instructor not to come back. He, like Hill, never did.¹⁰⁹

Sicade’s experiences reveal that there were Puyallup who wanted to participate in government assimilation programs, but on terms of their choosing. The actions of these students suggest that there were occasions when some Indians willingly stood up to government officials who failed to fulfill their pledges or satisfy expectations. One might argue that these Natives were displaying an unwillingness to waste time.

Sicade was not alone. One of his classmates and fellow activists was Jerry Meeker who, like Sicade, spent parts of his life attempting to fashion government policies to his needs. Meeker was born in 1862, and for the first fifteen years of his life, he was, by his recollection, “a regular wild Indian.” He and his family made seasonal forays to their satellite settlements to

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.; Also see: Sicade, *The Cushman Indian School*, found in Shackleford, 2-3.

collect berries, plants, and fish and then during the wintertime, at his mother's insistence, Jerry took instruction from tribal members who taught him about the Puyallup's traditional ways. During this time, he "discovered" his power and, according to Meeker, "I was graduated in an Indian way."¹¹⁰

While Meeker was a child, his parents worked for Ezra Meeker. Jerry recalled that his father, the previously mentioned Sky-uck, cut wood and helped run their employer's farm while his mother kept the Meeker household. They earned \$30 per month plus board for their labor. The young boy saw how his family benefited from these jobs and how their hard work earned Ezra Meeker's respect. Before long, Jerry's parents became close enough with their employer that they took his surname as a sign of gratitude for the opportunities that he gave them.¹¹¹

Even though Jerry's parents believed that it was important for their children to understand Puyallup customs, they also felt that young Indians would need other skills if they were to succeed in their rapidly changing world. Consequently, they enrolled their son at the reservation boarding school when he was sixteen years old. Two years later, Meeker attended the Chemawa School in Salem, Oregon, where he experienced his own frustrations with the American education system. Meeker noted that while at the institution he and his fellow students spent as much time clearing the local grounds of brush and other debris as they did learning in the classroom.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Meeker interview.

¹¹¹ Ibid., Jerry said that his first name was taken from a local Irish farmer who lived near the Meeker farm; Hunt, 62.

¹¹² Meeker interview; Cary C. Collins, "Oregon's Carlisle: Teach 'America' at Chemawa Indian School," *Columbia* 12 (Summer 1998): 6, 8. The Chemawa School began operation in 1880, in Forest Grove OR, some twenty-six miles southwest of Portland. The founders placed the first buildings on land they rented from Pacific University and some nearby farmers. In 1885,

After Meeker graduated from Chemawa, he returned to the South Sound and used an assortment of skills, which he learned from the non-Native schools and from his father's economic interactions with non-Indians, to pursue both task time and clock time activities. In the spring and summer, he farmed his allotment, raising grains and livestock to sell. Then during the winter months, he took advantage of Tacoma's growth by performing clock time related jobs as a carpenter, earning \$8-\$10 per day building doors and windows. He also went into business with several other Indian investors by purchasing a thrashing machine for \$1,500 and then leasing it out to local non-Native and Indian farmers. Meeker claimed that their investment provided the group a healthy financial return.¹¹³

A third member of the tribal pro-land alienation cadre was Peter Stanup. Through the early 1890s, Stanup's wit, intelligence, and charisma helped him become the primary leader of this coalition. He, like his Puyallup colleagues, believed that tribal members should embrace the world of the Americans and he eventually urged the government to help the Puyallup in this transition by releasing them from its oversight and protection.

Stanup was born in 1857 or 1858 and was the only one of his parents' children to survive into adulthood. The Stanup children's inability to live beyond adolescence afflicted his own offspring as well; five of his seven children also died young. Stanup, like Meeker, went to the Chemawa after attending the Puyallup Reservation boarding school. Then he, like Sicade,

officials moved the school to a site just north of Salem. The first graduates completed the equivalent of a fifth-grade education in 1885. Meeker's complaint about his time in the fields was due to the fact that he was among eight Puyallup boys who travelled to Salem to participate in the construction of the relocated Chemawa School facilities.

¹¹³ Meeker interview.

enrolled at Pacific College where he earned his credentials to become a minister.¹¹⁴ After Stanup finished his education, he returned to Tacoma and quickly integrated himself into the off-reservation clock based economy. In addition to working on the reservation as a minister for the tribe's Presbyterian congregation, he took a clock time position in town as a typesetter for the local newspaper.¹¹⁵

Stanup and Meeker both understood the power of entrepreneurs in American society and had thus developed relationships with local non-Native businessmen.¹¹⁶ They joined with Tacoma's developers and investors in claiming that the Puyallup could handle their own economic affairs and should therefore have more control over their destiny, especially when it came to questions of land. Of course, the Puyallup activists' non-Native allies were not interested in the aboriginals' modernization or the concept of Indian land rights. They also cared little for Stanup's and Meeker's campaign for equal treatment. However, they did see the Indians' allotment alienation movement as a vehicle to obtain Puyallup Indian property.

Henry Sicade, Jerry Meeker, and Peter Stanup believed that they represented Indians who could successfully adapt to American culture. These men also acted as cultural bridges between the Puyallup and the surrounding population and provided the tribe with an effective set of communicators who could articulate certain interests and grievances to important and influential

¹¹⁴ Ibid.; Reiter.

¹¹⁵ Reiter.

¹¹⁶ Henry Sicade chose another course at this time of his life. When he finished school he succumbed to wanderlust and headed east to take jobs in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, where he worked as a cowboy. Sicade enjoyed some "Forest Gump" moments, as he participated in a cattle drive through the Dakotas and into Canada, fought in a range war, and spent an evening on the town with Calamity Jane. He also traveled through the Midwest and New England before he returned to the reservation. See: "Henry Sicade: A Short Sketch."

non-Natives. These Indians' ability to accumulate wealth also transformed them into tribal members with significant influence..

From 1873 through 1883, as a number of Puyallup became more involved in the local market economy, they also became more aware of clock time behavior and morality, and land commodification. At some point, Sicade, Meeker, and Stanup concluded that their tribe's best interests, as well as their own, lay in selling their land at handsome prices. To get the government to change its reservation policy on this issue, the activists had to show Indian reformers and reservation personnel that they and their fellow tribal members were culturally transformed enough to be free of government management.

Peter Stanup attempted to prove the Puyallup's transformation toward modernization in several ways. One of his first salvos in this campaign came in his aforementioned 1877 letter to *The Herald*. At one point in the piece, he appealed to white sensibilities about virtue and hard work by describing to readers how many of the local Puyallup had become successful agrarians. "They [the Indians] work on their farms every day except Sunday, clearing, fencing, building houses to live in and other necessary houses besides." He boasted that the Natives' efforts were bearing fruit. "Their barns are full of hay and grain. Their cattle, horses and other animals are kept tolerable fat, and therefore they can work with their teams in the spring." Stanup, careful that he did not make the Indians appear as a threat to their non-native neighbors, added that though many of the Puyallup were thriving farmers, they remained humble and thankful for their success. He explained how on Sundays he and his fellow tribal members "...put on their best clothes and go to church and also on week days, they say their prayers, just as well as on Sunday, and never forget that they are Christians and are trying to leave the old habit and do good while

they live in this wicked world.”¹¹⁷ Stanup suggested to his readers that the Puyallup possessed some of the virtues that Americans prized and, therefore, the Indians ought to have the chance to enjoy the same rights and opportunities that all white citizens did. He hoped that his audience would agree enough to help him pressure government officials to take a similar point of view.

Despite this and other efforts, the pro-alienation progressives had a difficult time making a case for increasing the Puyallup’s control over their lands. One particular hurdle for this group was that many tribal members continued to practice traditional habits, which government officials believed showed a lack of civilization and sophistication. With this in mind, sometime around 1883, Peter Stanup and Jerry Meeker stepped up their campaign to gain outright Indian ownership of their allotments. They argued with the conservatives that while patents would prevent the government from pushing the Puyallup off their allotments, land alienation rights would give the Indians the chance to take advantage of their property’s growing value. They assured tribal members that if an allottee was not interested in selling their parcel they did not have to. However, they also reminded critics of their policy that if they did not want to work their land, land alienation rights would allow them to exchange it for capital and pursue another interest. Time would show that this latter idea intrigued progressive and barefoot Puyallup alike.

A few territorial officials were also open to the idea of awarding alienation rights to the Puyallup. As early as 1876, some had suggested that issuing outright land titles to the Indians would hasten Indian transformation. The Puyallup’s inconsistency at claiming or working their

¹¹⁷ Stanup, letter to *The Herald*.

allotments prompted reservation agent Milroy to contend that giving the inhabitants total ownership of their lands would compel them to pay more attention to it.¹¹⁸

By 1883, Agent Milroy concluded that alienation rights would provide non-Native farmers and businessmen legal access to reservation land, which undoubtedly pleased the Puyallup. However, right around that time the government replaced Milroy with Edwin Eells, who was less certain about the wisdom of releasing the Indians and their land from government oversight. Still, in September of 1883, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs directed the new agent to create a list of Puyallup allottees who had settled on their lands and improved them. The government would use this information to decide whether the Puyallup were prepared to own their lands without any restrictions.¹¹⁹

CONCLUSION: COUNTING CLOCKS

One can imagine that as Edwin Eells conducted his 1883 census he often travelled across rough and muddy trails to reach each home. Most of the sites that the agent came across were nothing more than simple one-room structures, though a few of the fancier homes had multiple rooms and fencing to pen in animals or protect crops. When the agent reached a destination, he probably began the proceedings with a shouted greeting across the property or a knock at the entryway. On cold and wet days, which are typical around Puget Sound, the Puyallup homeowners likely invited the visitor to come inside so he could warm himself in front of a fire and engage in a bit of small talk. Discussions could have included comments on the weather, the health of family members, or the bounty reaped from recent crop harvests or hunting and fishing

¹¹⁸ Milroy, "Report to the Commissioner," September 20, 1876; Milroy, "Report of Agents," August 20, 1877.

¹¹⁹ Price, letter to Eells.

forays. In some homes, the sound of a clock's pendulum or chime would have filled in any breaks in the conversation. At some point Eells would explain the purpose of his visit and then get down to the business of documenting the human, animal, and material contents of each household. The agent probably stayed until he saw nothing else to record or his sense of time told him he had other places to be. He would then bid goodbye to his hosts and depart for his next stop to begin the process over again.

At the beginning of this chapter, I suggested we might be surprised that Eells had found clocks in some Indian homes. It seems hard to imagine how most rural nineteenth-century indigenous peoples, and non-Natives for that matter, would have used timepieces in their lives. Although many of these people organized themselves according to the movement of the sun or the comings and goings of seasons rather than the movement of clock hands, there is evidence that some Puyallup had adopted aspects of a clock-driven life.

By 1883, clocks were playing an especially important role in towns like Tacoma. This is when the United States bowed to the needs of railroad companies and adopted standard time. Prior to this, each locality had its own "apparent" time, which one determined by recording the point at which the sun was directly over their specific location. Consequently, cities like Tacoma, Portland, and San Francisco, though longitudinally similar, had different local times. These discrepancies made it difficult for railroad companies to keep consistent, accurate, and safe schedules. On November 18, 1883, "The day of two noons," cities all across the region became part of the Pacific Standard Time Zone, which put them under a regionally aggregate "mean" time.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ During the 1870s, railroad companies had established some eighty different local time zones across the United States, which made scheduling train travel very difficult. In 1879, Sanford Fleming produced a plan that divided the world into twenty-four time zones, whose time

Standard time had a significant effect on the city of Tacoma and its local population because it represented another step in the increased homogenization of society. It took clock time to another level by quashing notions of individualized time in a particular locale. Standard time therefore attempted to conjoin human behaviors. As one observer has written, “Standard time offered a framework for social reorganization along new principles...of fixed, regular, and automatic control.”¹²¹ Standard time made railroads, and not nature, the primary source of time. In its role as a railroad terminus, Tacoma became a city that was immersed in standardized clock time.¹²²

As a government bureaucrat, Eells was an adherent of clock time and standard time. He understood and practiced concepts of punctuality and time productivity and he expected others, including Indians, to do the same. Eells recorded Puyallup clocks because he saw them as a symbol of modernity and a characteristic of civilization, which he believed were requisite attributes for potential Indian landowners. However, Eells did not necessarily believe that possessing a clock made one modern. He was therefore uncertain whether Indian clock owners should automatically become unrestricted landowners. The historian Philip Deloria reminds us that the agent lived in an era when most non-Native observers of Indians believed that aboriginals who bought technologies did so as an act of “squandering.” They argued that the Natives’ supposed amusement with trinkets was the primary reason behind their purchase of

represented the solar high noon of the central-most meridian in each region. Each zone would be one hour different from the others that touched it. Greenwich, England was time “ground zero.” See: Falk, 72-73.

¹²¹ O’Malley, 86.

¹²² Ibid., 67; Rifkin, 113-114, 145.

these items. These critics felt that most Indians were too simple-minded to understand the real purpose of their newly obtained possession.¹²³

It is almost certain that some of the Puyallup who owned clocks in 1883 had purchased them because their timepieces' looks and sounds charmed them, they were practicing conspicuous consumption, or they were looking for increased prestige from their fellow tribal members. However, it is just as certain that some of these Puyallup clock owners were men, and perhaps women, who were integrating themselves into American society in ways that Indian reformers had hoped that they would. We might see many of the pro-alienation Puyallup as examples of this. They knew that submitting to the discipline of the clock was a price they had to pay to enter American society. However, Puyallup clock owners did not obtain the devices to become less Indian. They accommodated clocks, along with stoves, plows, and sewing machines to improve the quality of their lives as Puyallup. Henry Sicade, Jerry Meeker, and Peter Stanup and many other tribal members wanted to do more than just fit into non-Native society. They also wanted a degree of agency within it, which they believed would help them retain and enhance their tribal standing. To achieve these goals, some progressives challenged government officials to fulfill the Medicine Creek Treaty's patent and land alienation protocols. The evidence suggests that these Puyallup believed that their acceptance of a clock time lifestyle was helping them to act and think like Americans. Sicade, Meeker, and Stanup adhered to clock time protocols to show that they were civilized, which they believed qualified them for the same rights and privileges that many Americans enjoyed.¹²⁴ They used clocks and clock-driven

¹²³ Deloria, 143-147.

¹²⁴ O'Malley, 151; Dohrn-van Rossum, 316.

behaviors to show that the time had come for the government to start treating the Puyallup as the people that reservation officials claimed they were trying to create.

CHAPTER 4: THE PUYALLUP'S CAMPAIGN FOR LAND SALES RIGHTS, 1883-1893

THE STANDOFF

In the early afternoon of May 15, 1893, two groups of men stood glaring at each other on a parcel of the Puyallup Indian Reservation that belonged to a resident named John Cook. The government had allotted the Native just over 160 acres of the reserve in 1873 and through the years he had built a home there and farmed a small section of his plot. Otherwise, it remained covered with trees and wild vegetation.¹ These men had assembled at the site to contest Cook's right to develop a recently cleared portion of his land. According to one observer, this was where "the Indian reservation plot" thickened.²

Twenty-four armed American soldiers, led by company commander Captain Carpenter and reservation agent Edwin Eells, stood on one side of the field. Earlier that day, they had sailed across Commencement Bay from Tacoma and set up a temporary base near Cook's property. The soldiers then gathered their weapons, and at approximately 1:30 p.m. advanced towards men that Eells had determined to be reservation interlopers. The soldiers' mission was to chase off these supposed trespassers.

This was not the first time that Puyallup Reservation intruders had forced government authorities to act. However, these alleged invaders were different from previous ones. For instance, while most trespassers attempted to conceal themselves, the men on Cook's land did not hide. In fact, the group's organizer, a non-Native businessman named Frank Ross, had

¹ Edwin Eells, 1890 Reservation Survey, Patent 12, found in: Edwin Eells Papers, MS 76, Box 3, Folder 10, Washington State Historical Society (WSHS). Cook's allotment was precisely 160.73 acres.

² "War Goes Merrily On," *Daily Ledger* (Tacoma), May 16, 1894, 4.

boasted to anyone who would listen that he was leasing a piece of Cook's land, hiring a crew to clear a strip of it, and then construct a railroad track upon it. He added that he would do all of this without government permission and he dared authorities to try and stop him.

Puyallup tribal members made up most of Ross's group, although on this day, five non-Natives—an assistant engineer and four King County deputy sheriffs—stood with the Indians. According to one observer, they were there to protect "...the Indian citizens from the hated regulars." (Ross was away from the worksite that afternoon.)³ An important member of this contingent was Peter Stanup, an influential tribal member and an advocate for Indian land rights. He was a business partner and confidant of Ross, and he had a financial stake in the project. Stanup stood with the alleged trespassers because he wanted the government to give Puyallup tribal members the right to dispose of their reservation land as they pleased.

The Indian crewmembers were busy chopping, sawing, and digging when the soldiers arrived. They then stopped their work and watched as the armed men took positions near the project site. Shortly thereafter, Captain Carpenter stepped forward and sternly commanded the work party to disband under orders of the President of the United States. One of the Puyallup shouted that they would not do this. Then Stanup stepped out from among his colleagues and, according to an observer, "whipped a paper from his pocket upon which was a type-written

³ "War Goes Merrily On," 4. Today, the King County-Pierce County line is further north than it was at the time of this incident. The county line originally bisected the Puyallup Indian reservation. In 1900, a group of Puyallup reservation residents sought to have the section of the reservation that rested in King County transferred to Pierce County. Only six Indians and four non-Natives voted on the measure and they approved the boundary move 10-0. These results suggest that voter eligibility was based upon the location of your residence. King County officials were against the transfer and challenged the legitimacy of each voter. At one point, an observer stated that there were more officials than there were voters. "Mandamus Suit for Annexation," *Daily Ledger*, December 22, 1900, 2; "Unanimous Vote for Annexation," *Daily Ledger*, February 20, 1901, 2; John McDonald, "How Pierce County Took Part of King County," *News Tribune and Ledger*, clipping found in Northwest Room Files, Tacoma Public Library.

statement.” The document was a court brief signed by Cook and it stated that the government had granted him title to his land and he had subsequently leased it to Ross. It added that the lessee had the legal right to do this.

Stanup handed the paper to Eells and Carpenter, they read it, and then the leaders of each group began “parleying” with each other in an agitated manner. Suddenly there was some “scuffling and jostling, between...[them]...but there was no weapon drawn, nor was any blood shed.” The participants quickly separated from each other and then the project engineer, evidently satisfied that the court order had repelled the army’s attack, directed his Puyallup employees to go back to work. Meanwhile, the captain ordered a retreat from Cook’s property. As the company left the field, the Puyallup, in a flash of bravado, warned the soldiers that rolling timbers would likely greet them the next time they came calling.⁴

This episode of what the local press labeled as the “Indian War” of 1893 was a consequence of local inhabitants who were attempting to resolve questions over Indian reservation land. One set of interests included residents of the rapidly expanding city of Tacoma. By 1893, its borders had grown to the point where Puget Sound and the Puyallup Indian Reservation were blocking its physical and economic expansion on three sides. Tacoma’s inhabitants could do little about the Sound, but after the late 1880s, many of them demanded that the federal government disband the reservation.

Puyallup tribal members made up a second faction and their goals were more complex than those of their American neighbors. For a period after 1854, Puyallup tribal members had wanted to prevent a non-Native takeover of the reservation. During the early 1870s, a group of Puyallup successfully lobbied for allotments, which they believed would offer them a degree of

⁴ “War Goes Merrily On,” 4.

protection from the Americans. However, over the next ten years the Natives continued to fear for the security of their lands and therefore pushed for patents, which would give the Indians limited title to their land. Most of the Puyallup welcomed this improved level of ownership because they believed it guaranteed that Americans or their government would have to respect the Indians' titled ownership of their lands. This meant that the Puyallup could keep their land if they wanted to because they could rely upon the courts and even the U.S. Constitution to protect their interests. Some of these Indians likely believed that the American legal system would be a more dependable tool to protect their interests than the federal government. Unfortunately, the patents did little to thwart non-Native threats to the reservation.

The Puyallup's continued fear of losing their lands was one of several concerns they had between 1883 and 1893. A number of the Indians farmed their plots, but it was difficult work and most had poor returns on their investments. Meanwhile, some of the allottees possessed land that was too wet, rocky, or sloped to be much good for agriculture. Indians who owned such claims, along with those Natives who did not want to farm, subsisted by relying upon pre-treaty hunting and gathering practices or working for local non-Natives. They found the former option difficult because local resources were dwindling, as was the amount of land that they could access for such endeavors. Wage labor was equally problematic for the Puyallup due to the inconsistency of available employment and the poor pay that often came with it.

The Puyallup's trepidations about losing their reservation, combined with many tribal members' dire financial situation, compelled a handful of the Indians, who were generally the most progressive individuals in the Indian community to develop a strategy that they hoped would address both of these problems. Peter Stanup was one of the leaders of this group, whom I will refer to as *land sales activists*. Its members had attended government-run reservation

schools, established successful farms, and conducted numerous business transactions with local non-Natives. In many ways, they had integrated into American society as the government had hoped they would. They now wanted the same rights and privileges that their neighbors enjoyed.

The activists wanted to obtain fee simple titles and thus alienation rights to their land—an outcome they believed that Isaac Stevens had put in the Medicine Creek Treaty. These individuals predicted that the policy would help the Indians by allowing reservation residents to take direct advantage of their property's skyrocketing value by selling it or leasing it for extended periods of time. In essence, it would give the Indian allottees more leeway in shaping their post-treaty conditions.

The debate over fee simple reservation land title and non-Native access to Puyallup Reservation land was not an Indian versus non-Indian issue, for some of the Puyallup allied themselves with local non-Native businessmen to help carry out their crusade. These Americans were not interested in helping the Puyallup become their cultural and legal equals, but they did believe that they shared the mantle of victimhood with the Indians. They argued that the government's decision to maintain the reservation was denying Americans living along Commencement Bay their right to economic prosperity. Hence, their support for Indian land rights was a function of their self-pity and greed rather than any empathy they had for the aboriginals. Meanwhile, tribal members did not all agree on how far the government should step back from its oversight of the reserve.

The May 15 meeting on Cook's land was the result of Stanup and Ross putting a plan into action that they hoped would push the government out of the business of controlling reservation land. We can see this event did not follow the conventional script of Indians defending their lands from a non-Native takeover. The Puyallup who supported Stanup's plan

were not trying to keep their reservation intact and the land sales activists within the group did not believe that the government was pushing the Puyallup to change their culture too fast. They instead argued that authorities were denying them the chance to reap the benefits of recent cultural and economic transformations that they had made.

Eells represented a third perspective in the “Indian War” of 1893, which adds to the complexity of this tale. The agent’s goal was to modernize the Indians as fast as possible so he could relieve the government of the cost and the responsibility of caring for them. Yet, as Eells stood on Cook’s land, he was enforcing a policy of keeping the reservation community intact rather than breaking it apart. He understood that the reserve was hindering Tacoma’s physical and economic expansion, but he also had sympathy for his wards and he hoped to transform them in a manner that would integrate them into American society as painlessly as possible. He acknowledged that many Puyallup had adopted Euro-American behaviors, especially economic ones, which he claimed made them more civilized than most of the other Natives in the region. He insisted, however, that the Puyallup were still unprepared to have total independence from government oversight. Eells was critical of the Puyallup who used their wealth to engage in pre-treaty customs. He also disparaged the numerous Indians who remained economically destitute. As far as he was concerned, all of these Indians remained unassimilated, and were thus vulnerable to the ambitions of devious Americans and the perpetual victims of what he believed were the aboriginals’ own inherent moral and intellectual shortcomings. Eells therefore claimed that he had much more work to do in his role as reservation agent. He felt that the preservation of the reserve—including retaining control over what the Indians could do with their land—was vital to his efforts.

The Puyallup, the tribal land sales activists, their non-Native colleagues, and Agent Eells lobbied government officials during the early 1890s to produce a reservation policy that would address their specific aims. Lawmakers responded by passing the Puyallup Act of 1893, which gave reservation allottees the right to sell their property to non-Puyallup, albeit with restrictions that reaffirmed a belief that the Puyallup were still an inferior race. Officials hoped that the act would provide all three interest groups with a degree of satisfaction. The confrontation on Cook's allotment indicated that the law failed to do this.

As the Puyallup Act elicited a series of responses from the aforementioned factions, it also revealed the existence of groups that sought specific goals that were informed by their self-perceptions. The historian Alexandra Harmon reminds us that individual and group identities are partly the result of negotiations between culturally distinct and often economically disparate populations that are in contact and in competition with each other. The individuals who participate in these rivalries interpret events and relationships through their dissimilar cultural lenses. She adds that an individual's association with others, whether cordial or not, combined with that person's perception of self, compels him or her to take on multiple identities and assorted allegiances.⁵

Harmon's framework can help us understand the May 15 standoff as one of numerous sparks that emerged as competing individuals and groups, with disparate agendas and identities, collided with each other along Commencement Bay. Between 1883 and 1893, this web of agendas and identities turned conventional allies into combatants and traditional antagonists into

⁵ Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities Around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 2-6.

partners. These circumstances also meant that there was more than one possible invader on Cook's property that afternoon.

THE PUYALLUP, THE SHEPHERD, AND THE CITY

The Puyallup who stood on John Cook's property on that May day had, among other things, a financial interest in the outcome of the confrontation. Reservation agent Edwin Eells was one of several obstacles that stood between them and their dreams. Eells was in this position because ten years earlier he had eagerly accepted the responsibility of working with the Puyallup. In many ways he was more qualified than most to carry out this task. Unfortunately, the evangelical manner in which he approached this undertaking blinded him to shortcomings in his and the government's methods.

While many of the government employees who worked with Indians during the late nineteenth century were poorly equipped to do so, Eells represented a set of "...Christian-minded reformers who guided Indian policy..." during this time.⁶ He served as Indian agent for twenty-four years, making him one of the longest-tenured individuals in the history of the Indian Office. The historical record indicates that he was an honest, religiously minded, and hardworking individual who fit the mold of what the proponents of President Grant's Peace Policy wanted.⁷

⁶ George P. Castile, "Edwin Eells, U.S. Indian Agent, 1871-1895," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 7 (April 1981): 61.

⁷ At this time, a number of Protestant reformers convinced Grant that he could solve the Indian "problem" by assigning qualified personnel influenced by religion to work on the reservations. The President responded by placing church members in roles as administrators and field workers. See: Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 479-483.

Eells had a personal as well as a professional stake in transforming Native Americans. An analysis of his early life suggests that he was destined to be an Indian agent. He came into the world in 1841, on the Tshimakain Indian Mission in central Oregon. His father was a minister and a friend of the missionary Marcus Whitman. Meanwhile, Edwin's brother, Myron, made his mark observing and recording Native culture. Edwin Eells became an Indian agent in 1871 when the government hired him to head the Skokomish Indian Reservation, which sat just northwest of Olympia. His Republican political bent and his family's background working with Indians helped him obtain the position.

During his first eleven years with the Indian office, Eells worked to prepare the Skokomish to enter American society. In an effort to familiarize them with the non-Native economy, he got them involved with logging. Meanwhile, he assigned the reservation carpenter to help the Indians build small 14 x 22 foot homes. He believed that these and other policies would convince the Natives to lead a less migratory lifestyle.⁸

Eells's personal reflections on his work with the aboriginals reveal his contradictory views about them. On the one hand, he genuinely wanted post-treaty life for the Indians to be as painless for them as possible. On the other, his racial biases against his wards gave him the assurance that he knew what was best for them. The agent likewise believed that there was a clear dividing line between the abilities of Americans and Indians and he assumed he was carrying out the proverbial white man's burden of protecting what he believed were simple-minded savages. He consequently viewed himself as a shepherd whose task was to steer his charges toward what he claimed to be cultural enlightenment.⁹ This perspective blinded him

⁸ Edwin Eells, Autobiography, MS 76, Box 1, Folders 20-22, WSHS.

⁹ Ibid.

from recognizing his biases and prevented him from acknowledging the sophistication and adaptive qualities of Indians.

In 1883, government officials transferred Eells to the Puyallup Agency, partly because they were looking for “good white employes [*sic*] to encourage, direct, and hold [the Indians] up to their work.”¹⁰ Authorities believed that this minister’s son had the requisite skills and experience to succeed at this position. Eells’s new assignment provided him with new and unusual opportunities and challenges because, unlike the Skokomish, the Puyallup reserve sat next to a growing non-Native urban center.

Tacoma’s juxtaposition to the Puyallup Reservation had ultimately lured all of the men to stand on Cook’s land in 1893, but not everyone agreed on the impact that the town had on the Indians. Stanup claimed that the city provided the Puyallup with the opportunity to transition from pre-reservation to post-reservation life. Eells, while partially agreeing with this point, likewise felt that the city was contributing to the Indians’ degeneracy.

One of the ironies of Eells’s relationship with his wards was that he wanted them to modernize, though he believed that this would probably not occur for several generations; he felt that Indians lacked the innate ability to navigate the non-Native world. He held tight to this view even as some Indians achieved a level of success in that realm. The historian Paige Raibmon has argued that such perspectives were common among non-Natives who believed that Natives could only think and act in certain predetermined ways. It was the non-Indians’ understanding of an

¹⁰ R.H. Milroy, US Indian Agent, Puyallup Agency, “Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” August 28, 1879, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/759/rec/1>. The government initially put Eells in charge of a consolidation of Indian agencies in October 1882. This group consisted of the Tulalip, Lummi, Muckleshoot, Swinomish, Port Madison, Nisqually, Squaxon, Chehalis, and Puyallup Tribes. However, the following year the government broke up this arrangement and assigned Eells specifically to the Puyallup Agency.

“Authentic Indian.” Eells and many of his non-Native contemporaries assumed that aboriginals had certain inherent and permanent flaws, and these assumptions guided how they understood and interacted with them. This non-Native construction of a supposedly authentic Indian helped many Americans organize their racially ordered world where Natives and non-Natives performed specific social roles. This view of the world assumed that without outside help, the Indians’ culture would remain static. This perspective also supposed that any Native who was able to shake this identity was no longer an Indian.¹¹ Eells and others carried out an Indian reform policy that reflected this perspective in numerous ways.

Eells’ perspective on indigenous people caused him to fall victim to his racialized view of the world and blinded him to its paradoxes. For example, South Sound Indians who used Tacoma to fulfill their pre-treaty customs brought the agent grief and caused him to forget that their connections to the city were satisfying some of the government’s expectations that the Indians modernize. Eells instinctually reverted to this view despite his knowledge that between 1883 and 1893, more and more Puyallup were using their proximity to the city to embrace the American market economy. Puyallup farmers were especially active in this process. During that decade, Puyallup farmers expanded their cultivated fields from 570 acres to 2,159 acres and sold increasing amounts of wheat, corn, oats, barley, beans, and hay to off-reservation customers.¹²

¹¹ Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 1-3. Raibmon notes that the concept of “authenticity,” as whites applied it to Indians during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was an unstable “yardstick against which to measure ‘the real thing.’ It is a powerful and shifting set of ideas that worked in a variety of ways toward a variety of ends.”

¹² *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1884, Vol II.* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884), 316-317; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1885* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1885), 390-391; *Report of the Secretary of the Interior, Vol I, 1886* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1886), 666-667; *Report of the Secretary of the Interior for 1887* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1887), 444-445; *Report of the*

Growing numbers of the Puyallup meanwhile used the non-Native marketplace to earn money in ways other than farming. Some participated in wage labor by harvesting hops, oysters, and sea mammals, fishing, or by working in logging camps, canneries, mills, or on the local docks. A few pursued agricultural and non-agricultural opportunities simultaneously. At one point, Jerry Meeker was not only working on his allotment and hiring himself out to non-Natives as a carpenter, he likewise took on the added responsibility of being a field supervisor during the hops harvest.¹³

Eells also witnessed many Puyallup acting in ways that he believed American consumers behaved. By 1886, virtually all of the Puyallup were wearing “white people’s clothes,” and using “such household utensils and furniture and farming implements as white people do.”¹⁴ The Natives’ economic activities also seemingly enabled them to “make enough money to contribute

Secretary of the Interior for 1888, Vol II (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888), 442-443; *Report of the Secretary of the Interior... 1889-1890, Vol II* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1890), 526-527; *Report of the Secretary of the Interior... 1890-1891* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 478-479; *Executive Documents of the House of Representatives... 1891-1892* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1892), 788-789; *Executive Documents of the House of Representatives... 1892-1893* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893), 814-815; *Executive Documents of the House of Representatives, 1893-1894* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), 720-721.

¹³ *Report of the Secretary... 1888*, 227; “An Encouraging Example of Progress,” *Report of the Superintendent of Indian Schools*, 1893, UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/1059/rec/2>; “Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, Transmitting, In Response to Senate Resolution of August 17, 1888, Report of Lands of Puyallup Indian Reservation Patented to Members of the Indian Tribe, September 29, 1888,” in: *The Executive Documents of the Senate of the United States for the First Session of the Fiftieth Congress*. Ex. Doc. No. 274 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), 1888; Jerry Meeker, Interview by Alfred Smith, 1948, Alfred J. Smith Papers, Special Collections, Accession # 4515-001, University of Washington Archives.

¹⁴ *Report of the Secretary... 1886*, 462.

to their income and allow themselves the opportunity at independence.”¹⁵ At one point, these actions led Eells to state that the Puyallup’s “proximity to enterprising and wide-awake white men” had a “...beneficial influence on them [and] further hastened their march toward civilization,” which put them “...far in advance of any other Indians on Puget Sound or in the Territory.”¹⁶

The South Sound Indians’ exposure to a large population of Americans led them to behave in other ways that suggested a certain degree of integration into the non-Indian world. This included celebrating American holidays. During Thanksgiving in 1890, a large group of Puyallup assembled at the reservation’s Presbyterian Church and, after listening to a sermon in both Chinook and English, enjoyed “...a bountiful repast, which included forty fat chickens.” One-and-a-half years later a *Daily Ledger* reporter who covered an 1892 July 4th celebration hosted by the Puyallup believed the Indians were celebrating the occasion in the “white man’s fashion,” as the event included speeches, a large picnic, and firecrackers.¹⁷

The Puyallup’s proximity to Tacoma undoubtedly fostered their willingness to embrace many habits common to the area’s non-Natives. However, Eells’s stood on John Cook’s property because he remained unconvinced that the Puyallup were culturally or intellectually equal to their American neighbors. He believed his assumptions remained accurate every time he witnessed tribal members practicing pre-treaty customs. A case in point occurred during the aforementioned July 4 event. The Puyallup sponsors of this gathering drew 500-700 Native attendees from around the region. Many of the Indians came to celebrate their past and

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ *Report of the Commissioner...1885*, 193.

¹⁷ “No Outbreak There,” *Daily Ledger*, November 28, 1890, 2; “Indians Big Picnic,” *Daily Ledger*, July 5, 1892, 3.

reinvigorate tribal identity by participating in traditional canoe and horse races that pitted members of different communities against each other. The celebration also allowed tribal member John Heiten to conduct a potlatch to honor two of his children who had died seventeen years earlier. He distributed “toys and trinkets” to the children in attendance as a way of marking the occasion and enhancing his prestige within the tribe.¹⁸

The Puyallup’s propensity to continue traditional practices was not a product of their inability to understand non-Native culture, but rather their way of guarding the sanctity of their Indian community. Eells tolerated these activities, but only when he felt that they did not threaten his efforts to transform them. The agent was consequently troubled when the Puyallup placed wagers on the aforementioned contests, partook in pre-contact-style marriage ceremonies, sought help from Indian shamans, or used their cash to sponsor potlatches.¹⁹

Eells also criticized Puyallup who were seemingly unable to use the marketplace in a manner that he felt was appropriate. He could not, or would not, contemplate the reasons behind these Indians’ actions, which were often due to their inability to find consistent work that paid a living wage. Ineffective government support programs and the Puyallup’s continually shrinking access to pre-treaty hunting and gathering locations compounded their poverty. These dire economic conditions made a number of tribal members susceptible to an assortment of vices that are part of any city’s fabric. The agent was disheartened when the Puyallup invested their money in schemes cooked up by “covetous and avaricious” non-Natives who were “unprincipled and unscrupulous” in their dealings with the Natives.²⁰ In addition to being swindled out of their

¹⁸ “Indians Big Picnic,” 3.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ *Report of the Secretary... 1888*, 227.

earnings, numerous Natives also embraced "...the most radical ideas of liberty."²¹ Eells accused many of the tribe's members of "mistaking liberty for license...to...exercise the first rights of an American citizen, that of getting drunk."²²

Determining whether Tacoma had a positive or negative impact upon the Puyallup was not easy to do. Nevertheless, one effect that Eells and the Indians did agree upon was the city's growing physical pressure upon the reserve's boundaries. Recall that when the agent took over the Puyallup Reservation in 1883, Puyallup allottees were once again threatening to boycott the government's agricultural programs, as they had done in 1872, because they feared that they were going to lose their investments of time, sweat, and money. The Indian Office responded to the protestors by agreeing to issue patents. Eells conducted the reservation census I mentioned in the previous chapter in order to determine whether each Puyallup allottee had developed his or her allotment enough to warrant receiving a patent. He likewise used this investigation to determine the accuracy of charges emanating out of Tacoma that there were not enough Puyallup Indians to "have [the land] tied up in Indian ownership." Most of these allegations came from administrators of the Tacoma Land Company, who would benefit immensely if the reservation disappeared.²³

Eells's 1883 count showed government policymakers that a significant number of Indians had improved their land enough to warrant patents and that there were enough Puyallup present

²¹ "An Encouraging Example of Progress," *Report of the Superintendent of Indian Schools*, 1893 (?), UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/1059/rec/2>.

²² Eells autobiography.

²³ *Ibid.* Eells subsequent count contained a tally of the reservation's inhabitants and their possessions, including the clocks that I discussed in the previous chapter.

upon the reservation to justify its continued existence. Therefore, in September of 1883, the Indian Office authorized the issuance of patents. While this decision gave allottees legal title to their land, it only permitted the Indians to lease portions of their land for up to two years and it prohibited the Indians from selling any of their property until the Washington Territory became a state and the new legislature passed a law that allowed sales to occur.²⁴ These restrictions were of little concern to the Puyallup in 1883 because at that time more tribal members wanted to keep their land than sell it.

Eells strongly supported the Indian Office's decision to issue patents because the policy did not interrupt his efforts to turn the Indians into farmers who lived in nuclear family units and modernize at a pace that would supposedly not overwhelm them.²⁵ He also correctly assumed that granting the Indians titles would draw more of them to the reservation and keep them where he believed that he could best control their behaviors. Prior to this time, Eells had frequently complained that he could not transform Puyallup who were away from his gaze because they "...drink, gamble, fight, practice all their heathenish customs...and the agent is powerless to prevent it."²⁶ That said, Eells also knew that as long as the government limited the Puyallup's land rights to what patents allowed, he would still have a job.

²⁴ Article Six, Treaty with the Omaha, March 16, 1854, accessed December 29, 2006, <http://www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Treaties/TreatyWithTheOmaha1854.html>. When Isaac Stevens wrote the Sixth Article of the Medicine Creek Treaty, he specifically referred to Article Six of the 1854 Treaty with the Omaha with regard to patents. That treaty stated, "...the President may, at any time, in his discretion, after such person or family has made a location on the land assigned for a permanent home, issue a patent to such a person or family for such assigned land...."

²⁵ Castile, 62-63.

²⁶ *Report of the Secretary...1886*, 463.

Unfortunately, the patents did not become the panacea the Indians or Eells wanted them to be. To begin with, a significant number of Indians did not qualify for a title. The Indian Commissioner only allowed Eells to award titles to permanent reservation residents who had constructed a “box-style” home on their land and were supporting themselves through agriculture.²⁷ This decision was indicative of a government policy informed by Indian reformers who defined the process of civilizing the Indian as a scripted procedure that expected subjects to meet specific criteria. Government bureaucrats, including Eells, believed that the Indians who chose non-agricultural methods to subsist were skipping important steps in this progression.

Another problem was that the government’s issuance of patents to the Puyallup, like its assignment of allotments, was fraught with unanticipated difficulties, which slowed the pace at which administrators carried out their work. It took Eells three years to issue the first set of patents because he had difficulty determining who had actually settled upon an allotment and improved it. Prior to assigning the patents, he had to inventory a human population that was often on the move. In addition, Puyallup who had earlier renounced their tribal affiliation and become citizens of the Territory now wanted to reenter the community to claim a patent. These individuals forced Eells to process applications to rejoin the tribe before he could do anything else with them.²⁸

During his patent survey, Eells had to determine which of three distinct affiliations each individual or family had with their land. One category was for individuals or families who had

²⁷ Hiram Price, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 13, 1883 letter to Edwin Eells, U.S. Indian Agent, Puyallup Reservation, Folder: “Letters Received from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” Box 1, Series 25, 1882-1894, 1909-1918, RG 75, NA-PAR.

²⁸ Petition to Rejoin the Puyallup Tribe (Joseph Dean), March 7, 1885, MS 76, Box 2, Folder 29. WSHS.

improved their allotment, but lived on it only when they were not elsewhere earning a living. Another group consisted of the aforementioned tribal members who did not improve their allotment. There were likely numerous reasons for this, which may have included a fear they would not get a title to it despite their efforts, the possession of poor farm land, or the allottees' lack of interest in farming. Allottees, who had made various non-agricultural-related improvements on their land, then logged, and sold their property's timber made up a third category.²⁹

Indian Commissioner Hiram Price, like Eells, had a vision of what a civilized Indian looked like, so he did not give the agent much leeway when it came determining which of the three groups qualified for patents. He told Eells that he should give patents to members of the first group, but not those in the second. According to the commissioner, the Indians in the third group who predominantly logged their land could not have a patent unless they were clearing the allotment to farm it. He also told Eells not to allow any Indian allottees to harvest more than three-quarters of their land's timber. Finally, Price directed his subordinate to repossess the allotments of any Puyallup who had not made the necessary improvements on their land.³⁰ The commissioner, with his hardheaded stance, failed to consider the various legitimate reasons why many of those Indians had failed to develop their property.

Categorizing each allottee in one of three groups was only the first of many bureaucratic puzzles the agent had to solve because there were numerous tribal members who did not fit cleanly into any of the three groups. In some cases, Eells discovered the existence of intra-

²⁹ Hiram Price, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 24, 1883, letter to Edwin Eells, U.S. Indian Agent, Puyallup Reservation, Folder: "Letters Received from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," Box 1, Series 25, 1882-1894, 1909-1918, RG 75, NA-PAR.

³⁰ Ibid.

reservation squatters. These Puyallup either did not have an allotment or possessed one that they could not develop without extraordinary amounts of sweat and capital. They therefore vacated their original land, moved on to an abandoned allotment, and then improved it. In these cases, Price told Eells to give the newest settlers possession of the land.³¹

Natives who divorced and then re-married also complicated Eells's job because the process intertwined families and produced a dense and often confusing web of interests in an allotment. In one case that Eells referred to as "peculiar," a Puyallup named Peter Satundre and his wife each had a forty-acre allotment. After Mrs. Satundre's death, Peter remarried another tribal woman who likewise had a forty-acre spread. Peter then died, leaving a widow and two sisters, but no children. Eells had to determine if the second wife qualified for a share of Peter's patent or if it went only to his sisters.³² Over time, the agent would discover that these types of cases were more common than he would have liked.

The reservation's location within a United States territory added to Eells's woes because some patent claimants who lived off the reservation insisted that territorial laws trumped the Medicine Creek Treaty whenever those civil laws worked to their benefit. Washington Territory laws concerning rightful heirs stipulated that the land went to the oldest son of a deceased property owner. This was contrary to federal allotment policy, which stipulated that immediate family survivors all qualified for a share of the property. To ensure that as many Puyallup as possible had access to land, Indian Commissioner Price told Eells to act as if the treaty trumped

³¹ Price, October 24, 1883 letter to Eells.

³² "List of Puyallup Indians Who Have Died, With Statement Concerning Their Lands, Heirs, etc. MS 76, Box 2, Folder 33, WSHS.

any other legislation. However, some Puyallup, and later most non-Natives, disagreed with this interpretation and bogged the agent down with numerous appeals to his decisions.³³

The federal inheritance policy used on reservations, known as the tenants-in-common system, brought Eells multitudes of anguish in other ways as well. When issuing patents, the agent had to ensure that family members had "...the possession and enjoyment of such permanent home and the improvements thereon." The Indian Office believed the policy would shield allottees from graft and/or the Indians' assumed inability to make wise choices about their land.

Despite the authorities' good intentions, the tenants-in-common system proved to be a millstone around the necks of reservation officials and Indians alike. It was difficult to administer, especially because tribal members had a relatively high death rate and a transient lifestyle. Whenever a Puyallup Indian died, Eells had to determine the identity of his or her beneficiaries and the percentage of each survivor's interest in the allotment. This required him to discover the whereabouts of heirs who had moved off the reservation due to marriage, jobs, or migration. The Puyallup's mobility often forced Eells to rely upon a network of unreliable informants, both Indian and non-Indian, in order to locate a person of interest. In one painstaking case, the agent followed a long, circuitous path before he found that the only survivor of a patentee was a second cousin living on the Tulalip Agency.³⁴

In some situations, accurately determining the rightful heirs to a patent was akin to solving a Rubik's Cube whose multi-colored squares had faded over time. For instance, in 1887,

³³ Hiram Price, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, April 12, 1886 letter to Edwin Eells, U.S. Indian Agent, Nisqually and Skokomish Agency, Folder: "Letters Received from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," Box 1, Series 25, 1882-1894, 1909-1918, RG 75, NA-PAR.

³⁴ Eells autobiography.

a Puyallup woman named Betsey Ushner married a non-Native man named Jacob, whom the tribe then adopted into their community. She died not long after the couple received a patent, leaving behind Jacob and a young daughter named Maria. However, the couple also had three other children no longer living at home. Their two daughters had married non-Natives and were not living on the reservation, while their son had qualified for his own allotment. After Betsey's death, Jacob attempted to claim one-third of her land as her primary heir by asserting that young Maria's share was one-fourth of the rest of the two-thirds inherited by the other three children. Eells, perhaps feeling that he could not solve this riddle, asked his superior to pass the case on to the probate courts since one of the claimants was non-Native. He reminded the Indian Commissioner that there were situations when territorial law, just like the Medicine Creek Treaty, dictated that all of the heirs obtained an interest in the land. The agent likely sighed with relief when Price approved his request.³⁵

Regardless of these problems, 566 tribal members obtained some degree of interest in 167 patents by 1886.³⁶ The fact that the patents drew many of the Puyallup back to their reserve gave Eells some comfort because he could then have more influence over tribal members' lives as well as track their whereabouts more easily. Nevertheless, more Indians on the reserve also meant that the agent would have to deal with Tacoma's physical and cultural influence upon them.

³⁵J.D.C. Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 7, 1887, letter to Edwin Eells, U.S. Indian Agent, Nisqually and Skokomish Agency, Folder: "Letters Received from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," Box 1, Series 25, 1882-1894, 1909-1918, RG 75, NA-PAR.

³⁶ "Report to the Secretary of the Interior... Vol II" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896), 32; "An Encouraging Example of Progress."

The government's decision to award patents to the Indians suggested, among other things, that the reservation was not going anywhere soon. This did not initially bother all of Tacoma's non-Natives, especially those who lived along the reservation's borders. They correctly assumed that once the Puyallup received patents to their lands they would return to developing them, which then increased the value of the surrounding non-Indian property.³⁷ This was good and bad news for the Puyallup. The rising value of their land was a direct result of many more Americans wanting it. Unfortunately, between 1883 and 1893, the Puyallup had no way to sell it.

Non-Native demand for the reservation lands intensified between 1883 and 1893, as more people flocked to the area, hoping to take advantage of its economic possibilities. In 1884, approximately 5,000 people inhabited the town. That same year, Henry Ward Beecher told a Brooklyn, New York, audience about a recently completed trip he had made to the West Coast and during the lecture, he referred to Washington Territory as the "Italy of America."³⁸ Rhetoric like this contributed to waves of immigration to Tacoma, and its population grew to 6,936 over the next year.³⁹ The numbers jumped much higher after the NPRR completed its more direct east-west line through Stampede Pass in 1887. By 1890, 36,006 people lived in the city, which

³⁷ "The Puyallup Reservation," *Daily Ledger*, February 7, 1886, 6; "The Puyallup Reservation," *Daily Ledger*, October 24, 1886, 8.

³⁸ Herbert Hunt, *Tacoma: Its History and Its Builders, A Half-Century of Activity* (J. Clarke Publishing, 1916), 312, 345.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 345; Caroline Gallacci, "Planning the City of Destiny: An Urban History of Tacoma to 1930," (Ph.D. diss, University of Washington, 1999), 197.

was an increase of 34,908 souls from the 1880 census. This was an upsurge of 3,179% during the decade.⁴⁰

After 1887, the new residents' need for space led to a huge land rush in and around Tacoma. An army of real estate agents, representing thirty-two companies, worked day and night, seven days a week platting, buying, selling, and speculating in land. According to Caroline Gallacci, who wrote a history of Tacoma's development, "The real estate movement that had begun in 1887 and had become tempestuous in 1888 had by the middle of 1889 become a fury." The wildcat nature of the land market was due to entrepreneurs creating and selling land plots as fast as people were buying and developing them. By 1891, demand for South Sound land outdistanced supply, so Tacoma residents voted to increase their city's boundaries, from nine and one-half square miles to twenty-nine square miles.⁴¹ This decision put the east end of the city even closer to the reservation.

As the physical space between Tacoma and the Puyallup Indian Reservation grew smaller, Indian land became more important to city business interests. In 1889, local dignitary W.H. Fife told a reporter that Tacoma needed the Natives' land because it could support the city's growing population, absorb an expanding hops industry, and allow more east-west transcontinental lines. He also envisioned the reservation's bottomlands as a suitable location for manufacturing concerns.⁴²

⁴⁰ Caroline Gallacci, *The City of Destiny and the South Sound: An Illustrated History of Tacoma and Pierce County*. Carlsbad (CA: Heritage Media Corporation, 2002), 49-50.

⁴¹ Ibid., 165-166; Hunt, 497; George Castile, "The Indian Connection: Judge James Wickersham and the Indian Shakers," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (October, 1990): 124.

⁴² "The Puyallup's Land," *Daily Ledger*, July 12, 1889, 5; According to one observer, Fife was one of the "richest most influential, and best known citizens" in the Tacoma area prior to 1893. Fife was born in Canada and obtained a modest fortune from placer mining in British Columbia.

For these and other reasons, Tacoma's residents used an assortment of strategies to carry out their version of Manifest Destiny on the eastern frontier of the city. Some area citizens continued to sneak on to the reservation and take what they wanted or squat on the land. In 1886, a group of trespassers constructed homes along the reservation shoreline, on what they insisted was the public space between the reservation and the water line. The Puyallup got Agent Eells to tear down the buildings early in 1887.⁴³

The Puyallup also endured an onslaught of philosophical and legal arguments from Americans trying to access reservation land. Some of the Indians undoubtedly recognized the irony of claims that the reservation was denying Tacoma residents their destiny. Puyallup allottees may have also smirked whenever Americans insisted that they, and not the reservation residents, were the victims of the government's unwillingness to give the Indians fee-simple land titles. Non-Indians who made such accusations pointed to several incidents to make their point. One particular case occurred in 1889, when the Indian Office ruled that the Puyallup Valley Railway Company (PVRC) could build a track through the Puyallup Reservation in order to benefit "the agricultural and industrial growth of the country surrounding this reservation." However, the PVRC first had to obtain the consent of the Puyallup tribe.⁴⁴ In February of 1889, tribal members voted against granting a right of way to the company. PVRC officials quickly

He came to Tacoma in the mid-1870s, established several businesses and accumulated property, the latter of which made him a millionaire. However, when the panic of 1893 hit Tacoma, Fife lost it all and died "practically...a...poor man." See: "W.H. Fife Dies in California," *Daily Ledger*, January 17, 1905, 11.

⁴³ JDC Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 14, 1887, letter to Edwin Eells, U.S. Indian Agent, Nisqually and Skokomish Agency, Found in: Folder: "Letters Received From the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," Box 1, Series 25, 1882-1894, 1909-1918, RG 75, NA-PAR.

⁴⁴ "Puyallup Valley Railway Company, Report to accompany bill H.R. 10113," May 23, 1888," in: *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives for the First Session of the Fiftieth Congress, 1887-1888* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), 1888.

claimed that the balloting was flawed because many of the Puyallup were away from the reservation and did not cast a vote. They also charged Agent Eells with unfairly pressuring the Indians to veto the project.⁴⁵ The tribe conducted a second ballot on the issue that December. However, before the election, PVCR representatives took a more proactive role in obtaining support by offering bribes as high as \$10 to any Indians who supported the company's interests at the ballot box. PVRC administrator George Dougherty also pledged to give Indians jobs building the line if the project passed. Eells and Tribal Chief Tommy Lane meanwhile conducted their own campaign against the company. Despite the PVCR's enticements, the Puyallup again vetoed the project.⁴⁶

The Puyallup's nullification of this attempt to gain access to reservation land illustrates the bargaining power that the tribe had with non-Natives. Nevertheless, the businessmen who hoped that the tribe would approve the railway believed the Indians' position on this issue was hampering regional economic growth. Elwood Evans, a Tacoma lawyer who earlier in his life had served as Washington territorial governor and state house speaker, made this point during a May 17, 1892 address to the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce.⁴⁷ Evans had been critical of the government's harsh treatment of the Indians during the 1855-1856 Indian War, but now he told the city's business community that the twenty-eight-square-mile reservation was an "incubus upon the region" because it was "delaying your advancement and prosperity, a non-contributor to your wealth, [and] a setback to your material interests." Evans added, "This is inexcusable and

⁴⁵ "Puyallup Put Out," *Daily Ledger*, March 24 1889, 6-7; "Bribery be Blowed," *Daily Ledger*, March 25, 1889, 3.

⁴⁶ "Right of Way Denied," *Daily Ledger*, December 3, 1889, 4; *National Lawyers Guild. Law Student Indian Summer Project* (Seattle, Washington, 1973), 57-58, 74-75.

⁴⁷ "Called to Meet His Maker," *Daily Ledger*, January 29, 1898, 5.

therefore the more oppressive. There is no reason to justify the treatment to which we have been and are subjected.”⁴⁸

Other Tacoma residents made a similar case to Congress. The Tacoma city government and the Pierce County Commission each sent a memorial to Washington, D.C. lawmakers, requesting that they open up the Puyallup reservation to non-Indian access. They, like Evans, claimed that the reservation was preventing the non-Puyallup inhabitants of the South Sound from prospering because it blocked the construction of new roads that area merchants needed in order to conduct business with outlying towns. That spring the Chamber of Commerce sent one of its members, George Delameter, to the Capitol, to make these points directly to congressional representatives.⁴⁹

The Puyallup, of course, disagreed with local non-Natives over who were the real victims in the reservation land issue. All the while, the Indians also endured continued racial attacks. One of the tribe’s primary critics in this matter was James Wickersham, a local lawyer and magistrate who earned a small fortune during the land boom. He made the ironic claim that the reservation’s inhabitants were not racially pure enough (i.e. “Indian” enough) to warrant living on their reservation.⁵⁰ Wickersham also used other tactics and arguments to try to break up the Puyallup Reservation. In 1886, he represented a group of squatters and Donation Land Law

⁴⁸ “Incubus Upon Tacoma,” *Daily Ledger*, May 18, 1892, 4; Elwood Evans, “Address Delivered Before the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce,” May 17, 1892, Denver Public Library Archives.

⁴⁹ *National Lawyers Guild*, 13; “Memorial from the Mayor and City of Tacoma...,” March 15, 1892, 52nd Congress, Session 1, Serial Set Vol. No. 2904, Readex; “Indian Reservation,” *Daily Ledger*, January 30, 1892, 3.

⁵⁰ George Castile, “The Indian Connection: Judge James Wickersham and the Indian Shakers,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (October, 1990): 123; Murray Morgan, *Puget’s Sound: A Narrative of Early Tacoma and the Southern Sound* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), 318.

claimants who believed that the government had illegally taken their lands for the new reservation. In 1888, he accused Edwin Eells of recruiting non-Puyallup to come live at the reservation in order to ensure it was adequately populated. This, he insisted, made the reservation's inhabitants illegitimate residents. Wickersham ultimately went to Washington, D.C. to plead his case to a congressional commission.⁵¹

After federal investigators exonerated Eells of Wickersham's charge, the judge supported, and very likely wrote, a series of newspaper articles that ran in Tacoma's *Daily Ledger* from 1888 to 1892. These essays continued to claim that the Puyallup were a "badly mixed race." In one piece from March of 1888, the author argued that only eighty of the 170 patents that the government had awarded to the Indians went to full-blooded Puyallup.⁵² An 1892 article suggested that during the early days of American settlement in the Puget Sound area, soldiers and Indians interbred and created an "offspring of Americans of high and low degree." The writer wondered if the children of these unions deserved to possess reservation land.⁵³ The opus on the issue was an 1892 pamphlet that Wickersham published and distributed to Congress. The document reiterated the information contained in the previously printed newspaper articles.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Castile, "The Indian Connection," 125; "The Puyallup Agency," *Daily Ledger*, April 24, 1888, 8.

⁵² "Some Curious Facts," *Daily Ledger*, March 11, 1888, 10. Wickersham insisted that assorted numbers of Nisqually, Seattle, Duamish, Cowlitz, Muckleshoots, Skokomish, Chehalish, British Columbian half-breeds, Red River Indians of Manitoba, French-Canadian half-breeds, Skagit, Clallum, Sandwich Islanders, and "one full-blooded Mexican" possessed the rest of the land.

⁵³ "The Half-Breeds' Land," *Daily Ledger*, January 2, 1892, 6.

⁵⁴ Wickersham entitled this document, *A Monograph on the Puyallup Indians of the State of Washington. Their History, Nativity, Lands, and Naturalization: A Plea for the Puyallups*. He authored the essay under the pseudonym A. Boston Tillicum, which means "An American Friend" in the Chinook Jargon.

While Wickersham insisted that the reservation residents lacked the racial purity to warrant possessing allotments and patents, other Americans continued to argue that the Puyallup were too pure and therefore would never be responsible or intelligent enough to own such valuable property. These adherents of Indian racism shared Edwin Eells's philosophy that the Puyallup were, and likely would always be, inferior to Americans. However, while Eells used this argument to keep the Indians under his watch, these non-Natives used this logic to argue that this allegedly unworthy class of people occupied valuable land that superior Americans could put to better use.⁵⁵

The authors of another series of *Daily Ledger* articles echoed this perspective when they portrayed the Puyallup as a pathetic, primitive, and exotic people. For instance, one reporter described the remains of a Puyallup murder victim named Daniel Webster as he would those of an animal. He noted that when officials found Webster's body the victim's tongue lay "...out of the mouth several inches and hung down over his jaw."⁵⁶ The author of an 1892 article mockingly portrayed a Puyallup subject whom police arrested for drunkenness. He wrote that the Indian, whom he identified as General Spot, "left his camp yesterday and started in to pay the palefaces a visit. The pipe of peace, a dirty old corncob, which would kill at a dozen paces, ornamented one of the corners of the terrible savage gash beneath his nose." Spot supposedly wandered into a saloon and then "shoved glass after glass of firewater in the terrible gash referred to." By sundown, "the noble [*sic*] red man began to be gifted with double sight." At this point, a police officer saw him and called for a patrol wagon. Then, "...there was a scuffle;

⁵⁵ Gallacci, "Planning the City of Destiny," 286; Gallacci, *The City of Destiny*, 49-50.

⁵⁶ "Was Choked to Death," *Daily Ledger*, January 29, 1891, 5.

the red man went in the wagon. Next came the bastille on South Twelfth street [*sic*], and the jailer there did the rest.”⁵⁷

Whether Tacoma non-Natives subscribed to Wickersham’s racial formulas or held the more common belief that Native Americans were blatantly inferior to Americans, most all agreed that the Puyallup were upending what they saw as the natural order because the Indians were blocking the city’s expansion. The author of an 1890 *Daily Ledger* commentary made this case by observing that American cultural and military superiority had made them the masters of the “red men,” and “the principle of the greatest good to the largest number demanded that America be given up to the dominant race,” a position that “must be conceded as right and just.”⁵⁸ Elwood Evans reiterated that theme two years later when he told his Tacoma Chamber of Commerce audience, “God’s first great commandment ‘to replenish the earth and subdue it’ enjoins the appropriation of these [Puyallup] lands for American homes.”⁵⁹

The number of non-Natives who pined to break up the Puyallup Reservation grew exponentially over time. Of this group, Frank Ross was undoubtedly the most aggressive in trying to get possession of that land. His zeal toward that end ultimately caused him to play a leading role in the 1893 incident on John Cook’s land. Like Eells, Ross identified himself as a patron to a needy population, but he had little concern for the Indians. Ross had been a key player in Tacoma’s early development. In 1916, a local writer said of him, “Probably no resident of Tacoma has done more to further the growth and improvement of Tacoma than Colonel Frank

⁵⁷ “On the Warpath,” *Daily Ledger*, May 16, 1892, 5.

⁵⁸ “Civilizing Poor Lo,” *Daily Ledger*, July 27, 1890, 10.

⁵⁹ Evans.

C. Ross, whose efforts have [added] so much to the beauty of the place.”⁶⁰ Yet, Ross also had a dark side; he occasionally accumulated wealth using less-than-scrupulous business tactics, and he was not shy about defying politically and financially powerful men while doing so.

Ross’s decision to ally himself with certain Puyallup, much like Eells’s choice to protect them, was a product of his past. Ross came to Tacoma in 1879, at the age of twenty-one, when the city was nothing more than a large village. The newcomer saw opportunity in the modest settlement and ultimately made it his lifelong home. He initially earned money by working odd jobs. Then he and his brother, Charles, started a dry goods business and participated in the city’s land rush. The pair quickly earned healthy returns on their real estate investments. In one of their many lucrative deals, they bought a parcel of land for \$750 and then sold it for \$10,000 several years later. When Ross’s brother died in a train accident in 1883, Frank shifted most of his attention to the real estate market.⁶¹

It was not long before Ross joined other Tacoma investors in calling for the dissolution of reservation. He was aggressive in his attempts to gain access to the land, in part because he wanted to get it before his competitors did. This policy sometimes put him directly at odds with the NPRR, a consequence that did not faze him. Despite the fact that Tacoma was a railroad town, Ross and many other city residents resented the company’s stranglehold over the local economy and occasionally they challenged the business’s economic hegemony over the city. Ross did this in 1885, when he suspected that NPRR executives were lobbying President Grover Cleveland to sell them all of the reservation’s land in one block. The Tacoma entrepreneur wrote

⁶⁰ Hunt, 307.

⁶¹ Ibid., 307-308; Caroline Kellogg, “Frank Ross, a Developer with Vision,” *Tacoma News Tribune*, January 13, 1980, found at Tacoma Public Library, Electronic Files: “Northwest People.”

a letter to the chief executive requesting that the government place a moratorium on any land sales or the awarding of any more patents to the Indians until he, Ross, could determine the approximate value of the land. Ross then proposed that the government, equipped with this new understanding of the reservation's value, break it into sections and sell them to the highest bidders instead of to a single conglomerate. Ross reasoned that this process would earn the government and the Indians more money while also making "...many many happy homes." In an attempt to bolster his argument, Ross added that the Indians could use their money to purchase basic needs. "With these proceedings [the Indians] would be fully satisfied, otherwise they would not." Nothing came of this request.⁶²

The government's decision to pass on Ross's offer did not derail him, for he responded to this setback by developing new and bolder plans to obtain his goal. One of his strategies involved feigning concern for the Indians' well-being. After Ross realized that the President would not work with him, he concluded that the NPRR already had its hooks deeply into the politicians in Washington, D.C., and so he decided to deal directly with company officials and investors. Ross informed Tacoma benefactor and NPRR investor Charles Wright that he knew of his syndicate's efforts to purchase Puyallup Reservation lands from the government for a sum of \$45,000. He then threatened to expose their alleged deal to the public unless he could participate in it as well. He added that he would support reservation land sales, in lieu of Indian

⁶² Frank Ross, Letter to President Grover Cleveland and General William Sparks, November 10, 1885, found in: Frank Ross Papers, MS 101.1, Box 1, Folder 1 WSHS. Commissioner of Indian Affairs J.C. Atkins ultimately responded to Ross's letter. He stated that the government intended to award the Indians patents and not sell the land to whites. "The fact that the whites have...built a town in the vicinity, thereby enhancing the value of the lands belonging to the Indians, is not good reason, in my opinion, for depriving them of their property." See: J.C. Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, letter to Frank Ross, December 10, 1885, found in Frank Ross Papers, MS 101.1, Box 1, Folder 1 WSHS.

land patents, if the government conducted the transactions on the open market. He predicted this would raise in excess of \$3,000,000. He insincerely suggested that to do otherwise would deprive the Indians of “a handsome sum.”⁶³

In his effort to ensure that Wright did not ignore him as the president did, Ross threatened to bring the issue to the attention of Illinois Senator John Logan, who the Tacoma businessman described as “a true friend to the Indians, who are struggling to break away from the moral darkness of their ancestors, into the light of civilization.” Ross also mentioned that one of his uncles was an influential judge. He promised that he would constantly update these two men on the syndicate’s actions, and they would in turn “use their influence in favor of the red men’s interest if necessary.” Ross then revealed his true intent by stating that if syndicate members were willing to include him in their deal, he would “...postpone writing Gen. Logan & others.”⁶⁴

THE PUYALLUP’S NEED FOR CAPITAL

Eells and Ross each had an agenda and a self-image that was a response to the city’s relationship with the Puyallup. The city also shaped the behaviors, needs, and self-perceptions of the Indians, including the ones who stood across from the soldiers on John Cook’s property. Between 1883 and 1893, more and more Puyallup participated in a growing array of economic opportunities. For example, in 1890, tribal members Chehalis Jim and Charley Sheadshut earned money by fishing and clamming, Jimmy Homalgood worked for other Indians as a farmhand, Jimmy Williams labored at a local sawmill, and William Wilton was a hire of the reservation’s boarding school. Occasionally there were individuals who had what we today might consider a

⁶³ Frank Ross, letter to Charles Wright, January 28, 1886, found in: Frank Ross Papers, MS 101.1, Box 1, Folder 7, WSHS.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

white-collar occupation. David Brewer worked for the government, and Jerry Meeker was once an industrial arts teacher at the school. These experiences gave some of these Indians the self-confidence to succeed in a vibrant and expanding local market economy. The economic exchanges also reinforced the Puyallup's desire and ability to earn a favorable return on the services or resources they provided to their customers.⁶⁵

Despite these success stories, most reservation residents were unable to find steady employment. Many of the paupers lacked a proper education or they were victims of a racist economic system. This situation forced a majority of Indians to rely upon their allotments to make a living. This was problematic as well, for the records show that prior to 1893, most of the Puyallup who chose to work their land continued to suffer from economic destitution. An 1890 reservation survey conducted by Eells provided illuminating evidence regarding the Puyallup's fiscal situation. The agent undertook this count to update the state of Indian allotments after the government had issued patents to the residents. A byproduct of the investigation was information on how tribal members were attempting to support themselves and how successful they were at their endeavors. The overall picture that emerged was bleak.

Recall that the government had issued patents to the Puyallup to compel them to work their land. In some cases, this incentive worked well. Inhabitants of eighty-one of the patents used their land for farming, which was their primary source of income. The city's population growth and the increased presence of the railroad and shipping industries meant that the Indians could take advantage of their rich soil and produce abundant amounts of food to sell, locally and beyond. Unfortunately, most of the Puyallup did not realize this promise.

⁶⁵ 1890 Puyallup Reservation Survey.

One problem faced by some Puyallup was their inability to convert their properties into farms that could produce enough food to feed their families *and* sell to others. By 1890, there were a handful of success stories. John Chenowith owned a 61.29-acre allotment and farmed forty acres of it, which suggests he had made his homestead a paying proposition. Five other Indian farmers may have enjoyed similar success as they were tilling thirty or more acres. Ten other Puyallup plowed and sowed somewhere between twenty and twenty-nine acres while eight Indians farmed between ten and nineteen acres. These second two groups would have likely been able to harvest sufficient food for their families but would have had a tougher time producing enough to purchase more than essentials. This is especially true when one considers the general risk of farming, an endeavor where success is dependent upon sufficient rainfall, proper temperatures, consistent beginnings and endings to seasons, and predictable market demands.⁶⁶

Successful farmers also require adequate amounts of capital for equipment, buildings, and a means of supporting themselves while they convert woodlands and prairies into arable plots. The Indians' general lack of startup cash undoubtedly contributed to the fact that some eighty percent of the farmers who tilled their allotments worked nine or less acres of their land.⁶⁷ Residents of these sites would have had to financially support themselves by relying on either hunting or gathering practices or employment from other Indian farmers or non-Natives. This predicament would have put many of these people in a vicious cycle of poverty, for their pay would have most likely been low if they worked off the reserve, and every hour they spent

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

working for someone else or hunting and gathering was one less hour they could use toward improving their land.

Eighteen of the farmers who had patents were female who likely experienced harsher financial difficulties than did their male counterparts. Some of these women were elderly widows who were too feeble to do much work. One lady, the wife of a Puyallup named Lame Bob, was only able to farm two acres of her 150-plus-acre spread.⁶⁸ Most of the other women cultivated less than ten acres, though two of them farmed twenty acres. All of these women depended upon the help of relatives, often sons or sons-in-law, to help them produce crops, which was often problematic.⁶⁹ One woman, the mother of Bruce Sasticum, lived on land that the government had allotted to her son. Bruce was seldom home and, according to Eells, was “drunken and worthless,” leaving his poor mother in the house without the means to keep the place in order, much less support her. Eells believed that the land “should be given to some good man.”⁷⁰

Thirteen elderly Puyallup men who lived on their allotments were in the same financial predicament as many of these women. Most of these individuals were too aged to do any farming or work for someone else, so they merely lived out their remaining days on the land and scratched out an existence as best as they could. Old Peasup and his second wife together owned two allotments, but they managed to cultivate just two acres and make minor repairs on the home in which they lived. Over half of the very old people did nothing with their land at all.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Ibid., see Patent 133.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., see patent 34.

⁷¹ Ibid., see Patents 39 and 145.

Finally, at least thirteen allotments were physically unsuitable for farming, which forced residents to choose other ways to support themselves. Sam Squatahan and Joe Doucette occupied land that was a timber claim. This gave them a short-term financial option but once the timber was gone, they were stuck with property that had limited use. Other allottees possessed swampy land, which required the construction of ditches before they could use it. Two brothers, Nugent and Augustus Kautz each owned an allotment that held too much water. This condition saddled them with the task of building canals to drain the sites, but they were only able to make the alterations over time due to cost and the tedious nature of the project. The pair consequently worked their mother's land until they had sufficiently prepared their allotments. Then there was an allottee named Joe Young, who owned 160 acres of land next to tide flats; the allotment was so swampy it required a major capital investment to install a dyke. He therefore only farmed two acres of it.⁷²

Some Puyallup attempted to address their fiscal problems by leasing their land, which the Medicine Creek Treaty allowed, albeit for a term that did not exceed two years. The combination of a lease time restriction and the fact that few non-Native farmers lived near the Puyallup's fields could have limited the number of possible transactions. However, this was not the case after 1887, because that is when Ross and other businessmen started renting land from the Puyallup, though they had no intention to farm it. Most of these contracts stipulated that non-Indians would rent part of an allotment for two years, with the understanding that if the government gave the Puyallup fee-simple ownership of their lands before the lease ended than the agreement would convert to a sale. Until that time, the lessees would make annual payments to the Indian patentees, which became down payments if the government legalized sales. By

⁷² Ibid.

1890, these types of lease contracts covered over one-half of the reservation's allotted lands. While these agreements provided many Puyallup with money, it only trickled in and the contracts did not provide the Puyallup with the true value of their land since they could not sell it on the open market. Eells later unsuccessfully asked the government to negate the contracts.⁷³

THE PUYALLUP'S CAMPAIGN FOR LAND SALES RIGHTS

Almost every family on the reservation was in dire need of money. Over time, their reservation's proximity to Tacoma, and the subsequent rise in value of the reserve's land motivated a number of tribal members to support some measure of government policy that would allow Indians to sell a portion, if not all, of their allotments. Puyallup supporters of reservation land sales ultimately joined with local non-Natives in employing American legal and political systems to push for these rights.

The tribe's 1889 vote that denied the PVRC the chance to construct a line across their lands was one example of how the Puyallup could accommodate situations to their advantage. Yet, despite the successful outcome of the case, the Indians found that obtaining complete control of their property was trickier than preventing a non-Native company from building infrastructure upon it. As the Puyallup worked their way through the web of bureaucratic red tape and competing interests of American society, they confronted the nebulous and occasionally contradictory nature of the American legal system. For example, as I stated earlier, a phrase in Article Six of the Medicine Creek Treaty read that the Natives had the right to dispose of their allotments as soon as "...a State constitution, embracing such lands within its boundaries shall

⁷³ "Message from the President of the United States, Transmitting the Report of the Puyallup Indian Commission and Accompanying Papers, submitted February 11, 1892," in *Executive Documents of the Senate of the United States for the First Session of the Fifty-Second Congress*. Ex. Doc. No. 43 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1892), 55.

have been formed, and the legislature of the State shall remove the restrictions.”⁷⁴ After 1889, when Washington achieved statehood, many Puyallup and numerous South Sound non-Natives believed this particular statement gave leaders in Olympia the final word on the Indian land alienation issue. Yet, federal and state officials interpreted the phrase’s meaning a different way, which placed the Puyallup in the middle of a confrontation between Washington State and Washington, D.C. lawmakers.

Another legal controversy concerning the status of Puyallup allotments arose after 1887, when Congress passed the General Allotment Act, also known as the Dawes Act. This law mirrored the Omaha and Medicine Creek Treaties’ allotment and patent process in many ways. One important difference was that the Dawes Act denied the Indians total control over their lands for a period of twenty-five years after allotment had occurred.⁷⁵ Some officials believed that the new law applied to the Medicine Creek Indians, which meant the government could not give them fee simple rights to their land until at least 1898. This was unacceptable in the minds of the Indian land sales activists, so after 1889 they sought help from state and local like-minded non-Natives to challenge this interpretation.

Despite these potential legal pitfalls, between 1883 and 1893, the Puyallup land sales activists found numerous local Americans who were willing to argue for Puyallup land rights. In 1890, one supposedly sympathetic observer claimed that the Puyallup were dying off faster than they were reproducing and “...unless the government allows them to sell their reservation lands

⁷⁴ Article Six, Treaty with the Omaha.

⁷⁵ Dawes Severalty Act, 1887, accessed April 10, 2010, <http://www.law.du.edu/russell/lh/alh/docs/dawesact.html>.

soon, they will become extinct and never realize a cent off their valuable lands.”⁷⁶ Later, during an 1892 address to the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce, Elwood Evans explained that the Indians, like all Americans, had rights that the government needed to respect and protect. He added, “Justice to the Indian demands this,” and Congress’s unwillingness to allow the Puyallup to sell their land is “...an unlawful interference with the vested rights of every Indian allottee.”⁷⁷

While one can question the sincerity of such statements, they represented the general mindset of the newly formed Washington State legislature. This body’s decision to remove the restrictions upon reservation land sales after Washington achieved statehood encouraged Puyallup land sales activists and non-Indian business interests. The fact that the state’s first lawmakers were simultaneously busy introducing and debating legislation, creating budgets, establishing courts, appointing judges, instituting departments, and selecting the bureaucrats to run them showed how important the Puyallup Reservation issue was to policymakers at that time.

Senator Henry Drum of Pierce County initiated floor debates on the issue by submitting a memorial from the Puyallup Tribe to the state senate on January 13, 1890. The politicians who spoke revealed their reliance upon the by now familiar notions of race, rights, paternalism, and victimization to make their points. Drum pointed out that Tacoma desperately needed access to the reservation’s land and the Puyallup River in order to expand and he claimed that nearly all of the Puyallup adult males wanted fee simple land rights. When Drum finished his presentation, Senator John Whalley of Seattle took the floor and revealed that not all of the legislators were of one mind on this issue. Whalley stated that he opposed Drum’s proposal because the people he

⁷⁶ “No Outbreak There,” 2.

⁷⁷ Evans.

had talked to, which he claimed included numerous Puyallup tribal members and Agent Eells, were against the plan. He added that he feared that if the government removed its guardianship over the Indians the Americans would quickly defraud them.

The record suggests that Whalley had few legislative allies in his opposition to the memorial. One of the next speakers was Pierce County Senator N.H. Owings, who accused Eells and Whalley of ignoring the “higher law” of survival of the fittest. “If the Indian could not stand against the civilization of the white race then they must melt away, and the sooner they melted the better.” Owings then asked Whalley if he had any evidence to support his fraud claims. Whalley could not produce any, which suggests that his challenge to the memorial was due more to his concern for protecting the interests of Seattle than those of the Puyallup; Tacoma’s growth supposedly would come at Seattle’s expense. When the debate ended, the senators voted to support the memorial, which illustrated the amount of political power Tacoma had over Seattle at that time.⁷⁸

Two months later, on March 22, the Washington State Legislature exercised its right, as its members believed was spelled out by Article Six of the Medicine Creek Treaty, to remove all ownership restrictions on Puyallup Reservation patentees.⁷⁹ Puyallup land sales activists assumed that they had cleared an important hurdle. They soon found that they still had to prove to federal officials that tribal members had become modernized enough to handle these rights

⁷⁸ “Bonded Indian Lands,” *Daily Ledger*, January 14, 1890, 3; “Another Step Taken,” *Daily Ledger*, January 18, 1890, 6.

⁷⁹ The act stated, in part, “The said Indians...shall have power to lease, encumber, grant and alien...[their reservation lands]...as any other person may do under the laws of the United States and of this state, and all restrictions in reference thereto are hereby removed.” See: Puyallup Indians-Right of Alienation. RCW 64.10.010-RCW 64.20.030, accessed April 10, 2010, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=6420.010>.

and this proved to be no easy task. Nationally, many Indian reformers and policymakers were adamantly against scaling back government oversight of the Puyallup. Their opposition was partially due to their interpretation of evidence they found in agency field reports and their personal racial biases. It was also likely that there were government bureaucrats who weighed in on the topic because they believed that they would have to find a new line of work if they began giving the Indians their independence. The issue of federal versus state power likewise played a role in their positions. In any case, this issue was ultimately about competing perceptions of power and identity, and the Puyallup land sales activists aggressively inserted themselves into the debate to protect their understanding of their treaty rights. Their problem was that they had the least amount of influence in a contest where they had the most to win or to lose.

Puyallup land sales activists, anticipating the future state legislature's support for their cause, had begun lobbying Congress in August of 1889 by sending a petition to the Capitol that requested lawmakers give reservation residents "full and unrestricted control" of their lands. The Indians acknowledged officials' concerns about the possibility that some Natives would not have any property to sell. Puyallup spokesmen tried to stem those fears by pledging that all tribal members would have at least a portion of an allotment in their possession before sales commenced. The document also reminded congressmen that taxes from land sales would benefit all local South Sound inhabitants.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ "The Memorial Sent," *Daily Ledger*, August 1, 1889, 5. Just prior to the creation of this petition, a small contingent of U.S. Senators touring the West met with five representatives of the Puyallup tribe, including Stanup, who acted as interpreter. These Puyallup clearly made the case that they had become an independent tribe whose members no longer relied upon government annuities, save for the maintenance of their school. One senator, after listening to the Indians' statements, expressed concern that many of the Puyallup, with extra money in their pockets, would succumb to alcohol and ultimately become reliant upon others for assistance. Stanup acknowledged that this could be a problem for some, but he estimated it would plague no more than ten-percent of the tribe. See: "The First Steps Taken," *Daily Ledger*, July 30, 1889, 5.

The land sales activists continued their crusade for land rights in 1891 when three government representatives, called the Puyallup Indian Commission (PIC) visited their reservation. In May of 1890, Congress had appointed Judge C.D. Drake (chair), Judge George Kinkead, and B.F. Harness to the PIC, and their task was to create a set of recommendations that would lead to a long-term plan to dissolve the reservation. The trio was to determine the reservation's official boundaries, estimate the worth of its land, record which Indians had title to what allotments assess the legal status of leases that some of the Puyallup had signed, and draft land sales policy recommendations for the Indian Office to consider.⁸¹ Tribal proponents of fee-simple land title understood the significance of the PIC, so they assigned some of their most articulate and economically successful members to speak directly with the commissioners.

When the commission members stepped off the train in Tacoma on January 15, 1891, Judge Drake seemingly offered land sales proponents a ray of hope by announcing that he and his colleagues were predisposed to recommending a reservation policy that included alienation rights.⁸² However, when the Puyallup first officially met the commissioners on January 19, 1891, it became clear that the visitors were inclined to recommend a plan that would fall short of the Indian land sales activists' hopes. One of the officials told the Native audience that he intended to propose a strategy that provided opportunities to "young men, who have interests which are identified with this nation," but also protected those tribal members who were born in an era "when...[white] people...were unknown to them."⁸³

⁸¹ "Local Indian Lands," *Daily Ledger*, May 2, 1890, 6.

⁸² "Puyallup Commission," *Daily Ledger*, January 16, 1891, 5.

⁸³ "Sons of the Forest," *Daily Ledger*, January 20, 1891, 5.

The commissioners completed their inquiry after several weeks. Upon finishing, called a final tribal meeting. Interestingly, only eighty male and twenty female Puyallup attended, which suggests that the tribal members may have had an inkling of what the commissioners might tell them. Land alienation supporters had selected three men to represent them in front of the PIC. Each individual emphasized that the Puyallup were no longer the wild Indians some government policymakers made him or her out to be. Chief Dick Sennawah spoke first. He told the commissioners that the only thing he wanted from the government was his land, which he claimed he had developed as the government asked him to do. He added that before he died he wanted to “live on [it]...and have just the same rights as the white settlers do and to do what I please with it...” Tommy Lane followed Sennawah and emphasized that he and other Puyallup farmers had become astute businessmen who used most of their earnings from crop sales to expand and improve their farms. He then lamented, “...Now as I have been spending a good many dollars on my farm and improved it, I found out lately that the way my patent is drawn up I can't be the owner of that land.”⁸⁴

The third and final speaker was Atwin Jackson, the same man who would address Secretary of Interior James Noble nearly two years later.⁸⁵ By this time, he owned 117 acres of valuable land on the southwest corner of the reservation, near the city of Tacoma. By 1890, he had built a home upon his property, fenced thirty acres of it, and put twenty-eight to the plow.⁸⁶ Jackson saw land as a commodity just like his crops and he understood that selling some of it could make his life easier.

⁸⁴ The Report of the Puyallup Indian Commission, 33.

⁸⁵ “The ‘Little Father’,” *Daily Ledger*, August 24, 1892, 5.

⁸⁶ 1890 survey.

Jackson used the minute or two in which he spoke to argue that the Puyallup were a culturally transformed people. He told the commissioners that he and his friends had been around Americans virtually all of their lives and that they now practiced what he called “white ways,” including carrying on business, paying taxes, and voting. He asserted that he and many other tribal members had done what the United States had asked of them but now certain officials were holding the Puyallup back; it was time for the government to do what the Puyallup wanted. He demanded that the commissioners take “...that restriction off my patent; that helps me. This is a free country...and I belong to [it]; and [Washington] is a state now...Help me, lift me up like civilized people, and I will thank you for it as long as I live.” Jackson then told the commissioners that he had nothing more to say, and at that point, many of the Indians in attendance gave shouts of support.⁸⁷

As the investigators gathered information from around the reservation, they also took counsel from Eells. He gave the PIC members three reasons why the government should delay removing its oversight of the Puyallup. One was bureaucratic and surely based on the agent’s memory of how difficult it had been for him to issue patents. He explained that determining which Indians owned what land would be extremely difficult because nearly one-quarter of the original allottees had died, so tracking down the rightful heirs would be hard. Another reason was cultural. Eells explained that a number of Puyallup were still marrying according to “the customs of the tribe,” which would make his first problem even more time-consuming. Finally, the agent insisted that the Puyallup remained unprepared to accept the responsibility of land ownership. The agent accused them of being “...improvident [and] easily imposed upon,” and he insisted that some Indians, “...if left unprotected would in a very short time be out of house

⁸⁷ The Report of the Puyallup Indian Commission, 33.

and home without money and without friends.” He added that while the land was important to Tacoma he did not think that denying local residents access to all of the reservation would make or break the city’s fortunes. On the other hand, he believed that the Puyallup’s retention of at least a portion of their allotments was vital to their current and future well-being.⁸⁸

The agent understood that the government would eventually need to lift its restrictions. However, he hoped that would not occur for at least fifteen years, which he calculated was when Puyallup children who were currently attending government-run schools would be old enough to take control of the allotments. He assumed that their education would make them “sufficiently matured to be competent to protect their own interests, if they ever will be.” Eells’s insistence that the Puyallup were, at that time, unable to handle large sums of money led him to add that if the government allowed the Indians to sell their land, it should collect sales proceeds and place them in an escrow account that paid four percent interest annually. He advised that it should then distribute the money to the Native landowners in installments, extending from ten to twenty years.⁸⁹

Eells believed that his experience overseeing the Puyallup had made him an expert on their character and behavior. He therefore felt justified in representing himself as the Puyallup’s patron who would protect his “children” from potential outside predators and, from what he thought to be, the Indians’ own ignorance. Some of the agent’s concerns were valid. By 1891, he had invested nearly two decades of his life trying to transform the Indians, but many tribal members remained ill prepared to live without the safety net that restricted land ownership allotments provided. Time would show that land sales would cause some Indians to become

⁸⁸ Ibid., 42; Edwin Eells, letter to C.D. Drake, Chair of the Puyallup Commission, Found in: Edwin Eells Papers, MS 76, Box 2, Folder 30, WSHS.

⁸⁹ The Report of the Puyallup Indian Commission, 33.

penniless and dependent. However, one could make similar claims about many of the non-Natives who lived in the area, for the Puyallup did not have a monopoly on ignorance or an inherent propensity for making poor choices. Nevertheless, many tribal members and their American neighbors saw Eells as a villain, and in some ways he was. His policy ignored the real possibility that some Puyallup, albeit a limited number, were prepared to operate and likely thrive in the marketplace without government supervision and protection, and some of those tribal members possessed valuable pieces of real estate. Eells's inflexibility angered many of the tribe's land sales activists who believed that while some Puyallup had shortcomings, the government was wrong to lump everyone in the Indian community together over the issue of land alienation.

SECOND-CLASS LAND OWNERS

The PIC commissioners submitted their report to Congress after they returned to Washington, D.C. The document contained detailed information about the Puyallup, the state of their reservation, and its impact upon Tacoma. The commissioners understood that the city needed room to grow but they acknowledged Eells's concerns about the Puyallup's well-being, and they rejected the Puyallup land sales activists' argument that the Indians should have complete control over their allotments.

The report's authors displayed some empathy for the Puyallup whom they found to be an advanced society of Indians. They noted that many of them spoke English, lived in "dwelling houses," wore "citizen's dress," and pursued "civilized" occupations. At one point, they

commented that the Puyallup's supposed affinity for whiskey was "perhaps no more than an equal number of white men would exhibit if placed in their condition and circumstances."⁹⁰

The commissioners then showed their appreciation for the concerns of Tacoma's non-Native residents. They reported that allotments took up approximately 17,463 of the 18,060 reservation acres, but the residents were only cultivating a small portion of the land. The investigators saw this as a waste of resources, especially when in their minds it was unlikely that the Puyallup would expand their tilled acreage due to the amount of money and labor they would need. In any case, as long as the reservation existed Tacoma could not expand or link up to small villages within the Puyallup Valley.⁹¹

Eells had evidently been effective in swaying the commissioners' perspective on the Puyallup for they also denigrated aspects of the Indians' character and consumer habits. They claimed that the Puyallup were "...not a thrifty people, do not well know the value of money, and spend it quickly and recklessly on present enjoyments, and sometimes worse...and do not provide for the future." The PIC members predicted that once the Puyallup had the chance to sell their land, it would not be long before "...many of them would become landless and go back to a wandering and, perhaps vagrant life...."⁹²

Two issues that Judge Drake and his colleagues failed to address were the level of poverty many tribal members were enduring and the reasons behind their destitution. The commissioners, like many other non-Native commentators of their time, assumed that the Indians' problems were the residue of their pre-treaty way of life. Consequently, the PIC

⁹⁰ Ibid., 18.

⁹¹ Ibid., 17-18.

⁹² Ibid., 15-16.

departed the reservation convinced that they needed to make recommendations that gave the city room to grow while still providing the government with the time it needed to civilize the Puyallup.

Drake, Kinkead, and Harness thus recommended that Congress allow the Puyallup to sell some of their land. They added that the Indian office should collect the proceeds and dole it out to allottees over time. The commissioners' doubt that the Natives could spend their money wisely immediately outraged Puyallup land sales activists. The local non-Indian residents who wanted to buy their property were no happier, for the sales restrictions would reduce the amount of property they could legally obtain.

Indian land sales activists and interested non-Natives immediately lobbied Congressional lawmakers before they could pass a law based upon the PIC document. On March 3, 1892, Peter Stanup stood before the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce and announced that the Puyallup were going to become more aggressive in obtaining their rightful place alongside their American neighbors. Using language that many members of his audience would have approved of, the Indian declared, "Gentlemen, the time has come for the Puyallups to be let loose, that they may feel unrestrained, as their Creator has intended them." He then told the audience that he was going to Washington, D.C., to tell lawmakers directly that the Puyallup "...want the unconditional removal of...restrictions, so that we can sell our property as we see fit..."⁹³

The local businessmen who supported Stanup's trip, especially Frank Ross, believed that the Puyallup leader was the best man, Indian or non-Indian, to make their case to their representatives. They felt that his level of acculturation, intellect, and savoir-faire would prove to lawmakers that the Puyallup were prepared to handle land sales on their own. Stanup did not

⁹³ "The Reservation," *Daily Ledger*, March 4, 1892, 5.

let them down in this regard. During his stay in the capital, Stanup reportedly came across as “...the society man of them all.” He met everyone with a “ready smile” and proved himself to be “vivacious and versatile.”⁹⁴ Nevertheless, his non-Native supporters in Tacoma were hesitant to believe that any Indian, even one with Stanup’s abilities, could successfully navigate the halls of federal power on his own. They therefore inundated their envoy with a series of correspondences while he was away, constantly reminding him to stay true to their cause and to be suspicious of anyone attempting to befriend him. On several occasions, Ross and a local judge named Frank Allyn, who was likely a potential investor, sent the Puyallup letters urging their Indian emissary to remain uncompromising when it came to demanding total Indian land rights. In a March 11 letter, Ross wrote, “We...stand pat for the removal of All restrictions, in accordance with the bill passed by our state legislature. You must stand with us. We will then be on the straight road.”⁹⁵ Ross also worried that his access to tribal lands would be impeded by outsiders persuading Stanup to ally with them, so he advised his friend to be “...very careful how you talk with the presidents of the U.P., N.P. or Great Northern R.R., and if they want to talk business with you, refer them to me.”⁹⁶

Despite the organizers’ optimism about the trip’s potential, Stanup’s presence at the Capitol had little apparent effect on lawmakers. Most of his contact with them occurred at social gatherings he attended. He also discovered that as he made political connections in the city, he was constantly combating “...Mr. Eells’s ill reports of my character, which preceded me here,

⁹⁴ “Peter Stanup at Washington,” *Daily Ledger*, April 13, 1892, 3.

⁹⁵ Frank Ross, letter to Peter Stanup, March 11, 1892, Frank Ross Papers, MS 101.1, Box 1 Folder 7. WSHS.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

and...[his references to us as]...being scoundrels and drunkards.”⁹⁷ Stanup also met Natives from other tribes in the capital and they told him that the government had generally reneged on its promises to assist Indian groups under its care.⁹⁸ The Puyallup representative subsequently returned to Tacoma less hopeful than when he left.

Some of the Puyallup, upon hearing of Stanup’s difficulties, thought a compromise deal might be the best they could expect. A few tribal members admitted that they were so desperate for money they would take any deal that did not include the 1887 Dawes Act’s twenty-five year moratorium on total alienation. Tribal chief justice Joseph Swyell would reiterate this willingness to compromise to Secretary of Interior John Noble during his 1892 visit to the reserve. Unlike the tribal land sales activists, Swyell’s motivation to compromise was in part due to his belief that many Puyallup lacked the confidence, if not the ability, to own their land outright.⁹⁹ Regardless, the situation frustrated numerous Puyallup. According to one tribal member who was disgruntled with the restrictions being offered by Congress, “If Mr. Dawes [were] here we [would] duck [sic] him in the river.”¹⁰⁰

Congress directed its attention to the Puyallup Reservation issue early in 1892. Soon after the PIC had issued its report, Washington Senator John B. Allen and Washington Representative John L. Wilson introduced bills that reflected the PIC’s recommendations and the needs of their supposedly victimized non-Native constituents. Their proposals allowed the Puyallup to sell land, save for a center portion of the reserve that the PIC had identified with “heavy black lines.” The bills also required each Puyallup allottee to keep at least twenty acres

⁹⁷ “Stanup in Washington, D.C.” *Daily Ledger*, April 19, 1892, 5.

⁹⁸ “Peter Stanup Talks,” *Daily Ledger*, May 29, 1892, 3.

⁹⁹ “*Visits the Indians*,” 3.

¹⁰⁰ “The Puyallup’s Confer,” *Daily Ledger*, July 1, 1892, 3.

of his or her property within this boundary, though they could sell any other lands they had without restrictions. Wilson's bill allowed the Puyallup to sell as much land as they wanted to other Puyallup who wanted to purchase it for a home. They could also grant rights of way through any of their lands, to "individuals, companies and corporations, for railroad, telegraphy, water works, pipe lines, and such other purposes as may hereafter be required for the public welfare."¹⁰¹

On April 4, Senator Henry Dawes weighed in on the issue by introducing a plan that was more restrictive than the earlier submissions. He called for a three-man commission, working under the Secretary of the Interior, which would set prices, conduct public auctions, collect payments from the buyers and then distribute the sales earnings out to the Indians in annual portions. Dawes also stipulated that for the first twenty-five years the Indians could only sell land that they had not yet developed.¹⁰²

The Puyallup immediately criticized the Dawes bill and land sales activists asked the Indian Office for permission to send their own representatives to any future congressional negotiations on this issue.¹⁰³ Dawes and Wilson submitted another set of bills in May that contained more restrictions than Wilson originally asked for, but less than Dawes had first

¹⁰¹ S. 2306, February 23, 1892, Senate Bills, 52nd Congress, Session 1, Vol. 7, 2056-2499, Reel 7, UW Microfilm; H.R. 7405, March 21, 1892, 52nd Congress, Session 1, Vol. 16, 7366-7610, Reel 16, UW Microfilm. Wilson likely inserted this verbiage into his bill to ensure the legality of a bill that he submitted ten days later that asked Congress to approve a deal made between the Puyallup, previous reservation agent R.H. Milroy, and J.W. Sprague, the Superintendent of the Pacific Division of the Northern Pacific Railroad. H.R. 7762, March 31, 1892, 52nd Congress, Session 1, Vol. 17, 7611-7843, Reel 17, UW Microfilm.

¹⁰² S. 2822, April 4, 1892, 52nd Congress, Session 1, Vol. 8, 2500-2836, Reel 8, UW Microfilm.

¹⁰³ "The Indians Protest," *Daily Ledger*, April 16, 1892, 4.

wanted. Each proposal allowed the Indians easier access to their land sales proceeds, but Dawes still wanted the Puyallup to wait twenty-five years before they could sell all of their land.¹⁰⁴

Full congressional action on the bill did not occur until late January of 1893, when Representative Wilson attached an amendment to the Indian Appropriations Act of 1893 that represented a compromise of the proposals made by Indian and non-Native pro-alienation factions, the PIC, and Senator Dawes. Wilson knew his bill fell short of his constituents' desires, both non-Native and Native, but he and most observers understood that Secretary of the Interior Noble, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morgan, "...and influential men of both the Indian committee and congress" would not support a bill without these restraints.¹⁰⁵

By late February, Wilson's amendment had survived House and Senate scrutiny.¹⁰⁶ The President signed the Indian Appropriations Act into law on March 4, 1893 and Wilson's legislation became the Puyallup Act of 1893. The particulars of the Puyallup Act of 1893 were as follows: The President would create a three-man commission, known as the Puyallup Land Commission (PLC), whose job was to oversee the entire land sales process. The commissioners' first task was to arrange the sale of a majority of the reservation's 18,060 acres. This entailed determining the rightful owners of the reservation's 17,463 acres of allotted lands. The law required the PLC members to appoint guardians for any owners who were minors.

As soon as the commissioners had identified the actual owners of a patented allotment, the Puyallup Act instructed them to determine which sections of the allotment the patentees had

¹⁰⁴ S. 3056, May 3, 1892, 52nd Congress, Session I, Vol. 9, 2837-3162, Reel 9, UW Microfilm; H.R.8880, May 20, 1892, Bills, 52nd Congress, Session 1, Vol. 20, 8716-9069, Reel 20, UW Microfilm.

¹⁰⁵ "The Puyallup Bill," *Daily Ledger*, February 1, 1893, 1.

¹⁰⁶ "The Puyallup Bill," *Daily Ledger*, February 25, 1893, 1.

to retain for their homes and which lands they could sell. This was in contrast to the PIC's 1892 recommendation that the government force the allottees to retain any portions of their allotments that sat in the central third of the reservation. This designation was impractical because not all of the Indians had allotments located within that area. The Puyallup had to keep any of the lands that the PLC designated as home sites for a minimum of ten years, which was the life of the act. The law then directed the PLC to appraise any land that it had designated for sale. Once the Secretary of the Interior had approved these designations and appraisals, the PLC could, with the permission of the Indian allottees, put the land up for sale at a public auction. The law prohibited the PLC from selling any Indian property for below the appraised price.

The Puyallup Act also assigned the Indian Office to collect the money from each sale and then distribute it to the Indians. After a sale had been consummated, the purchasers were required to put at least one-third of the price down and pay the remainder out over a five-year span at five percent interest. The PLC was to collect these payments and forward them to the United States Treasury, which then placed the money in an escrow account where it received four percent interest. The law directed the government to pay the Indian sellers their proceeds in ten annual installments. Each payment could not exceed ten percent of the final price.¹⁰⁷ Finally, the act instructed the Indian Office to charge the allottees a ten percent transaction fee anytime it handled money, whether it was collecting it from the buyers and placing it in the

¹⁰⁷ Congress changed the payment span to five years and the payout ceiling to twenty percent in 1894.

escrow accounts, or removing it from the escrow accounts and distributing it to the Indian land sellers.¹⁰⁸ This administrative fee reduced the patentees' net profit by 19 percent.¹⁰⁹

The legislation also dealt with the reservation's 597 acres of un-allotted lands, known as the agency tract. The law directed the PLC to survey, appraise, and, if it had the majority of the tribe's consent, sell this land. The act excluded from sale the lands that the Indian agency had assigned to the reservation cemetery or the Puyallup Indian School. The PLC was to forward the proceeds from agency tract sales to the U.S. Treasury, where they would also sit in an escrow account. The law required the Puyallup to use this money for their Indian school fund. The Puyallup were responsible for paying the agency tract's survey costs as well as the transaction fees.¹¹⁰

“GRIM-VISAGED WAR”

The Puyallup, Tacoma non-Natives, and reservation administrators reacted to the Puyallup Act in myriad ways. The law angered many Puyallup, because Congress had denied them the ability to lease or sell all of their land without government restrictions. Some Indians insisted that they would not sell any of their land unless they got immediate access to all of the cash from its sale. The law was an especially hard blow to Peter Stanup, for not only had he

¹⁰⁸ Wilson Amendment to the Indian Appropriations Act of 1893, 52nd Congress, Session II, Ch. 209, 1893, *Statutes at Large of the United States of America, From December 1891, to March 1893...* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893), 633-634.

¹⁰⁹ To show how the 19 percent penalty was accumulated, assume an acre of land sold for \$100. The PLC would collect it and the Indian office would deduct \$10 (10%) from the total. Then when it paid it out, it would subtract another 10 percent from the remaining total of \$90 (\$9.00), which left a total of \$81.

¹¹⁰ Wilson Amendment, 633-634.

failed in his attempt to deliver his people from what he viewed to be government oppression, he was also the owner of 300 acres of reservation land that he could not completely dispose of. Soon after Congress passed the law, he asked one listener, “Why should we be treated like small boys, as if we did not know how to dispose of our lands...?”¹¹¹ Still, there were Puyallup who supported the new law either because they valued its assorted protections or because it allowed them to make at least some money via land sales.

The Puyallup Act also divided Tacoma’s business interests. A few individuals resigned themselves to the law’s compromises because at least it still permitted them to purchase tracts of reservation property directly adjacent to the city as well as tidelands and well-timbered property. They also believed that the law was the lesser of other possible legislative evils. They knew that Senator Dawes and some of his congressional colleagues would have blocked a more liberal land bill.¹¹² Still, the law frustrated most aspiring non-Native land buyers because they now had to wait another decade before they could purchase certain portions of the Indians’ lands. Other non-Indians were concerned that the legislation would take hundreds of thousands of dollars out of the local economy by sending land sales proceeds directly to the U.S. Treasury.¹¹³ Finally, some men—Frank Ross being the most adamant of this group—opposed the law, fearing it would disrupt business arrangements they already had in place with the Puyallup.¹¹⁴

The Puyallup land sales activists and their non-Native colleagues who opposed the Puyallup Act quickly conceived a plot to change it. Ross, who we know was no stranger to

¹¹¹ “Doctors Don’t Agree,” *Daily Ledger*, March 5, 1893, 4.

¹¹² “Puyallup Bill Passed,” *Daily Ledger*, March 5, 1893, 5.

¹¹³ “Indians Won’t Sell,” *Daily Ledger*, December 4, 1893, 1.

¹¹⁴ “Doctors Don’t Agree,” 4.

defying authority, joined forces with Stanup, Jerry Meeker, and other Puyallup activists to overturn the Puyallup Act by challenging its legality in the courts.¹¹⁵ While the historical record does not indicate who initially came up with the idea for this scheme, suffice to say that all of the participants believed it would succeed. Throughout this endeavor, Ross assumed the role of public spokesperson and financier while Stanup acted as the tribe's primary proponent for Indian property rights and intermediary between the Indian land sales activists and their off-reservation allies. The May 15 "battle" in the 1893 Indian War was a scripted part of their strategy.

Ross and Stanup initiated their plan as President Cleveland was signing the Indian Appropriation Act into law. Both men had much to gain financially if their tactic played out as they intended. Stanup hoped that invalidating the law would allow him to sell some of his valuable property as well as collect fees by working as an intermediary who organized transactions between Puyallup allottees and non-Indian buyers. Ross, meanwhile, had been the most active participant in the aforementioned lease-to-own contracts. By 1892, he had paid over \$30,000 in lease money to Indian landowners, which gave him a significant stake in the reservation.

¹¹⁵ Stanup and Ross may have gotten the idea to use the courts to overturn the Puyallup Act from a group of non-Native "claimants for fortunes" who had built shacks on a portion of the Puyallup Indian School farm in the spring of 1891. Eells ordered the trespassers to remove the buildings and they refused, rightly insisting that the 18,060 acre Puyallup Reservation was not the one originally described in the Medicine Creek Treaty. They said that the President's decision to reassign the Puyallup to a new reserve after the 1855-56 Indian Wars was illegal, which made the school's property public land. Eells responded by taking five members of the Puyallup police force to the site to tear down the structures. A deputy sheriff greeted them with a restraining order. Fifteen soldiers out of Ft. Vancouver, WA later destroyed the buildings and evicted the reservation interlopers before the case went to court. See: "Will it Succeed?" *Daily Ledger*, April 8, 1891, 5; "Case is in Court," *Daily Ledger*, April 11, 1891, 5; "Indian School Farm," *Daily Ledger*, April 10, 1891, 3; "The Soldiers Arrive," *Daily Ledger*, June 3, 1891, 5.

Ross and Stanup's plot challenged the Puyallup Act by feigning the construction of a rail line across a portion of reservation land. Everyone in the area knew that the pair did not intend to build the project. According to one observer, the site's sloped terrain made it a particularly illogical choice for a railroad.¹¹⁶ Another onlooker suggested that a legitimate rail company would have hired a lobbyist to convince lawmakers to cede them legal access to reservation land before they went to the trouble and expense of clearing it.¹¹⁷ Regardless, Tacoma business interests gave the project their support since building a usable stretch of track was not the point of the endeavor.

Stanup recruited fellow tribal member John Cook to participate in the scheme, and the allottee proved to be a willing participant. His property was also tailor-made for the cause because it encompassed land that the Puyallup Act had designated as unalienable for ten years. The terms of the agreement were simple. Ross would lease a small section of Cook's land and establish a work camp on it for a period of six months. He would compensate Cook one dollar per month for this privilege. The project went from the drawing board to the field soon after Cook and Ross signed the contract.¹¹⁸

Ross and Stanup assigned Puyallup reservation agent Edwin Eells an unwitting but key role in this plan for they needed a government antagonist to challenge the legality of the alleged railroad project. To ensure that Eells fulfilled his part, Ross publicly hurled insults toward the agent and dared him to try and stop the venture. On April 11, the entrepreneur met with a group of supporters at a local saloon and boasted to all present that he was clearing land for a railroad

¹¹⁶ "Ross Refuses Again," *Daily Ledger*, April 13, 1893, 5.

¹¹⁷ "Will Ross Retreat?" *Daily Ledger*, May 13, 1893, 5.

¹¹⁸ *Eells, et al. vs. Ross*, No. 143, Circuit Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit of the United States for the District of Washington, Northern Division, October 10, 1894.

path across the reservation. He also carefully pointed out that he had obtained permission to do this from the allotment's owner, but not from the government. Ross then predicted that Eells would attempt to halt the construction by using what Ross claimed to be the false pretense that he was protecting the Indian landowners' interests. Ross, perhaps hoping to stoke the agent's ire, accused him of supporting the Puyallup Act so he could make his own money from the sale of reservation land.¹¹⁹

Eells was in the midst of a vacation trip to California when the faux railroad crew began clearing Cook's land. Soon after Ross's workers had felled the first tree, a member of Eells's staff telegraphed his boss news of the invasion. The agent reluctantly but dutifully cut his trip short.¹²⁰ Eells, like everyone else, was wise to what he later referred to as the "pretended attempt" to construct a rail line across patented Puyallup lands, but he was certain that Ross had tricked the Puyallup into joining his scheme. The agent therefore acted just as Ross and Stanup hoped that he would. He undertook the task of enforcing the Puyallup Act with added zeal after he heard that Ross and Stanup had disparaged his character, which the agent felt was beyond reproach.¹²¹

Eells investigated the situation soon after he returned from his aborted trip. On April 12, he assembled five Indian reservation policemen and proceeded to Cook's allotment, hoping to scatter the Indian workers. Eells found Ross with his crew and demanded that the "railroader" quit his project and leave the reservation. Ross listened to Eells, chuckled, and then said that he

¹¹⁹ "Ross Will Build His Road," *Daily Ledger*, April 12, 1893, 5.

¹²⁰ Eells autobiography; "Going Through the Reservation," *Daily Ledger*, April 7, 1893, 4; "Agent Eells Was Surprised," *Daily Ledger*, April 7, 1893, 5.

¹²¹ Eells, *Report to the Secretary...1893-1894*, 62-63.

would continue his work in spite of the demand. The agent then left the scene in order to obtain counsel from his superiors.¹²²

News of this encounter spread quickly throughout Tacoma, which revealed how significant the issue was to the city's non-Indian community. Tacoma's press, in its role as the voice and conscience of the city's land interests, framed this issue as being an Indian versus non-Indian conflict and employed the rhetoric of "war" in doing so. In this case, however, the writers were rooting for an Indian victory. One day after the first confrontation, a *Daily Ledger* reporter exclaimed, "It is expected that the first Indian warwhoop uttered since 1856 will break the moist atmosphere of Puget Sound when the soldiers arrive."¹²³ Then, over the next four weeks, the newspaper attacked the government for victimizing the Indians. It was especially critical of government policy after news surfaced that administrators were considering using troops to settle the matter. One observer accused officials of overreacting to "...the efforts of a few poor siwashes to clear a right of way for a railroad through their own property." Another commentator sardonically noted, "If the government should fail to prevent these Indians from being useful to themselves or those about them, our whole Indian policy might have to be changed."¹²⁴

By the third week of April, the Indian work crew had cleared a significant portion of land. It was at this point that the military became involved. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, prompted by the crew's unwillingness to leave Cook's land, ordered Major J.W. French, who was stationed at Fort Vancouver, Washington, to travel to Tacoma in order to reconnoiter

¹²² Ibid., 328-329.

¹²³ "Ross Refuses Again," 5; Eells autobiography.

¹²⁴ "New Indian War," *Daily Ledger*, May 12, 1893, 5.

the situation.¹²⁵ On April 29, the major and Eells rowed a small boat across Commencement Bay to assess the circumstances and to make another appeal to the Indians and Ross to leave Cook's land. Upon arriving at the work site, Eells and French found twenty-six laborers, of which twenty-four were Puyallup tribal members. Ross, however, was not present. The major approached the workers and ordered them to stop. One member of the group replied that they would only quit when Ross ordered them to do so. French and Eells then retreated, with the major convinced that the matter would end up in the courts, which was just what Ross and Stanup wanted.¹²⁶

French soon requested and received a company of federal troops, which arrived in Tacoma on May 12. Captain Carpenter, the leader of the newly arrived squad, anticipated that he and his men would be in the area for several months and he planned to establish a camp on the reservation and await specific orders. Meanwhile, the press ratcheted up the hyperbole in its coverage of the event. "The war is on! Grimvisaged war, with all its romances and realities, its lights and shadows is upon us." One observer, in his effort to support the Natives, described them as battle tested patriots. He mentioned George Washington Sykes, who had fought alongside Nisqually Chief Leschi in the 1855-1856 Indian War, and Charley Sianche, a.k.a., "Shot-mouthed Charley," whose name was the result of a bullet crashing through his mouth and destroying all of his front teeth during that conflict. According to the onlooker, these warriors had previously seen and felt the horrors of combat and would not flinch should their people call on them to pick up their weapons once again. He conversely depicted the soldiers as buffoons,

¹²⁵ "Hoke Smith's Commissioner," *Daily Ledger*, April 29, 1893, 5. The article's author erroneously identified French as a lieutenant.

¹²⁶ "Ross Was Not There," *Daily Ledger*, April 30, 1893, 5.

who, upon their arrival, seemed more concerned about securing a freshly baked slice of pie than suppressing the Indians.¹²⁷

The soldiers' arrival escalated the level of excitement in the city and the reserve. Many of Tacoma's residents, perhaps influenced by the press's coverage of the event, hoped the army's presence would produce a thrilling outcome. Giving in to their curiosity, a large contingent of non-Indians, most who believed that the government had no right to stop the project, boarded some 100 watercraft and set sail across Commencement Bay on May 14. One member of the flotilla hoped to witness "a real Indian war," while another member of the armada emphasized his support for the Indians by arming himself with what an observer described as "a big gun." He suggested that he would use it if there was trouble with the soldiers. The mob was ultimately disappointed, for by eleven in the morning it became evident that the troops would not enter the reservation for at least one more day. Thus, most of the crowd aimed the bows of their vessels back toward Tacoma and floated away, leaving the Indians "in peaceful possession of their property."¹²⁸

The troops finally converged on the worksite the next day and as soon as Eells and the soldiers stepped upon John Cook's property, they unwittingly sprang the trap laid by Ross and Stanup. The pro-land sales advocates could now take the issue before a judge. The day after the aforementioned scuffle, a King County sheriff served another set of injunction papers on Eells and the three top-ranking military officers who had led the Vancouver unit into Tacoma. Federal judge Cornelius Hanford of Seattle, a sympathizer of American access to the Puyallup

¹²⁷ "Will Ross Retreat?" *Daily Ledger*, May 13, 1893, 5.

¹²⁸ "Indians Keep at Work," *Daily Ledger*, May 14, 1893, 1, 5.

reservation, would hear the case.¹²⁹ Meanwhile, activity at the worksite slowed to a crawl for the project had served its purpose. On the afternoon of May 16, the Indian laborers pursued rapprochement with the soldiers by harvesting shellfish from the beach and then inviting the troopers to dinner. Captain Carpenter declined the offer for what he claimed were “prudential reasons.”¹³⁰

CONCLUSION

Indian wars in American history have generally followed a similar script. Americans moved into an area and encroached upon Indian space. When they could, the Indians tried to repel the invasion, using violence when necessary. In virtually every case, non-Natives conquered the Natives’ land, leaving the Indians destitute and relatively homeless.

The event that Tacoma newspapermen called the Indian War of 1893 was different. It was partly the result of a group of Puyallup attempting to shape the Medicine Creek Treaty and federal legislation to fit their needs. Between 1883 and 1893, one of their pressing desires was to be able to sell their land and have direct access to the proceeds. To do this, Peter Stanup and his fellow land sales activists portrayed themselves as a people who had become the Americans’ equals. They had participated in government reformation programs and they had found success in the American marketplace. These Indians understood the power of capital and they wanted more access to it. Most of the Puyallup had not changed in the same ways that these particular progressives had, but they had a dire need for money. They were not concerned about rights or their image so much as surviving and they believed that land sales would help them crawl out of

¹²⁹ “Ross Shows His Hand,” *Daily Ledger*, May 17, 1893, 1.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

their level of poverty. Consequently, a preponderance of the tribe believed that fee-simple title to their lands, even if that title was limited in its scope, would provide them with needed capital. Stanup and his colleagues, however, wanted to use more wealth to become more influential on and off the reserve.

The Puyallup reservation's proximity to Tacoma influenced the way the conflict unfolded. Ironically, the city provided the Indians with allies in their crusade, though these friends did not act out of sympathy for the tribe. Tacoma's non-Native entrepreneurs instead viewed themselves as victims of the government's policy to maintain the Puyallup Reservation. They claimed they were suffering because the Puyallup's reserve hemmed in Tacoma's growth at a time when it was attempting to compete with other Pacific Northwest cities for investments and inhabitants. Tacoma's American residents were particularly appalled by the idea that the presence of what they deemed to be a lesser "race" on their city's northern and eastern flanks was denying them their God-given destiny to go forth and be fruitful. Frank Ross and other like-minded American businessmen believed that a solution to this problem was to ally themselves with the Puyallup who were fighting to obtain the same property rights that most local non-Indians enjoyed.

The Puyallup did have an American antagonist in the form of Edwin Eells. However, he did not want the Indians' land, but instead saw himself as the only force that could help the Puyallup keep it. He believed that the Puyallup were a primitive people, despite their cultural advances. When he evaluated the Indians, he understood that Stanup, Meeker, and Sicade were better prepared than their fellow tribal members to participate, unsupervised, in the local economy. However, he also rightfully understood that most tribal members were not ready to deal with the relatively large sums of money that land sales would bring them. He figured that if

the government did not regulate land sales, most allottees would make poor choices with their proceeds or fall victim to fraud, and within a short time, be without their money and their land.

Eells's job was to protect the Puyallup while also preparing them for a future that was independent of government protection. As of 1893, he refused to accept the possibility that with the proper support—financial, educational, and experiential—many of the Puyallup could succeed among their American neighbors. Stanup, et al, had proven that to some degree. The agent's position on this issue consequently turned many of the people that he believed he was helping into certain enemies.

After Congress passed the Puyallup Act of 1893, Puyallup land sales activists and local non-Native business interests believed that lawmakers had failed them. The law's passage therefore precipitated the standoff on John Cook's allotment. The participants in this event entered the fray with a plan that they hoped would lead them to victory. However, this "battle," like most confrontations, produced circumstances that contestants failed to anticipate. Chapter Five will explain how the phenomenon of unintended consequences became one of several narratives in the Puyallup's lives after 1893.

CHAPTER 5: A BITTER PILL OF INDIAN REFORM: 1893-1909

BAD NEWS

In the early spring of 1909, representatives of the Puyallup Indian tribe brought suit before Federal Circuit Judge Cornelius Hanford, asking the court to invalidate Washington State's sale of a section of Commencement Bay tide-flats. A group of non-Native Tacoma entrepreneurs had purchased the property, but the Indian plaintiffs claimed that the Medicine Creek Treaty had given this land to the Puyallup in 1854. They insisted that Washington State thus had no right to sell the property and they now wanted Hanford to return possession of the valuable tidelands to the Puyallup tribe.¹

The resulting case, *United States et al v. Ashton et al.*, was one of numerous legal and economic reactions the Puyallup had to the Puyallup Act of 1893. This law allowed reservation residents to sell their land to non-Natives, with restrictions that would expire after ten years.² The law was Congress's response to three agendas: Americans who wanted to purchase Puyallup land, Puyallup who wanted to sell it, and the Indian Office, whose administrators claimed that they wanted to protect Puyallup land sellers from financial ruin. On the surface the resulting law was emblematic of how one might expect the legislative process to play out. Competing interests gather, make compromises, and then develop a policy that meets as many needs as possible. Unfortunately, the Puyallup Act of 1893 is also a case study on the shortcomings of compromise and the dangers that can befall a group that attempts to create policy from a position of weakness. In this case, the legislation had at least two very consequential flaws. Lawmakers failed to anticipate how difficult it would be to put the law into

¹ Circuit Court, W.D. Washington. *United States et al v. Ashton et al.* No. 1,397, April 19, 1909, accessed December 29, 2009, westlaw.com.

² Congress amended this waiting period to five years in 1894.

practice and they did not foresee how financially confining the act's regulations would be on the Indians. Between 1893 and 1909, almost all of the Puyallup landowners used the law to sell at least a portion of their property. A handful of these individuals profited handsomely. A few of these Indians consequently improved their standing within the tribe by sponsoring potlatches or showing their Indian neighbors what they believed was the strength of their personal power. Unfortunately, these results were the exception to the rule. Within a generation, non-Natives owned a majority of what had been the reservation and a large number of tribal members were landless and destitute. Many members of this dispossessed group became economic refugees who partook in a diaspora to other parts of the Puget Sound region in their attempts to scratch out an existence.

At the turn of the century, tribal leaders searched for ways to resurrect their landed community. Land had always been an important part of the Puyallup's identity, and the 1909 trial represented an effort by tribal representatives to regain a portion of their reserve. Judge Hanford had adjudicated Puyallup land issues before 1909 and the Indians had experienced mixed outcomes. For instance, in 1893, they had successfully asked him to recognize Puyallup tribal members as full-fledged citizens who deserved the right to alienate their land as they saw fit. However, in an 1894 suit the Indian plaintiffs were unable to convince the judge to block government supervised land sales on the reserve. Despite the different outcomes in these two cases, Hanford had been consistent in his claim that the Indians had citizenship rights.

When the Puyallup came before Hanford once more in the *Ashton* case, they were asking for something new, which was to be recognized as Native Americans with treaty rights rather than Americans with citizenship privileges. On April 19, 1909, the judge announced his disagreement with their claims by stating that the government no longer recognized the Puyallup

as a tribe and, therefore, the Medicine Creek Treaty no longer gave them claim to the lands in question.³ With this ruling, Hanford struck a serious blow to the plaintiffs' attempt to regain this portion of their reservation.

The Puyallup's dire situation prior to the Ashton case was not unique among Native Americans, for numerous Indians throughout the United States lived in similar conditions during this time. Many Americans, including numerous historians, from the nineteenth- to mid-twentieth century claimed that these Indians were poor because they had failed to adapt to American culture and lacked the skills or ambition to succeed in the market capitalist system.⁴ Such suppositions represent a point of view that may have described why *some* Natives, as well as *some* Puyallup, either would not or could not avoid poverty and dependency. But these explanations are descriptions of the symptoms rather than the cause of Native American impoverishment and dependency during this era. A close examination of the Puyallup tribe from 1894 through 1909 reveals that their hardships were also the result of other influences. These forces included institutional and ad hoc racism and a volatile American capitalist system. Even more specifically damaging to the Puyallup was a flawed reservation land sales policy, that ultimately deprived tribal members of much-needed capital they should have received. These three factors in some ways caused and in other ways exacerbated the Puyallup's desperate condition by restricting their ability to find solutions to their financial problems. Hanford's 1909 ruling thus represented a capstone to a sixteen-year period that witnessed the demise of the post-Medicine Creek Treaty Puyallup Reservation.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Alexandra Harmon, Colleen O'Neill, Paul C. Rosier, "Interwoven Economic Histories: American Indians in a Capitalist America," *The Journal of American History* 98 (December 2011): 698-722.

A CASUALTY OF THE “INDIAN WAR” OF 1893

The economically debilitating effects of the Puyallup Act were not immediately evident. Nevertheless, shortly after Congress passed the law, other significant events caused the Indians to suffer political and economic setbacks and limited their ability to use land sales to their advantage. The first of these was the sudden death of Peter Stanup, which deprived the tribe of an important leader and an effective emissary to local non-Native businessmen. The reactions of the Indians and non-Indians to Stanup’s demise tell us much about each group’s view of the Puyallup’s ability to embrace portions of American culture.

The circumstances surrounding Stanup’s death remain unclear to this day. He went missing the day after the soldiers and the Indians scuffled on John Cook’s prairie. Some of Peter’s friends claimed they saw him the evening of May 15, behaving erratically and perhaps intoxicated. They supposedly took him to his home on the reservation but his wife reported that she had not noticed him enter the house that night.⁵

Local police and tribal members searched for Stanup throughout the area. Peter’s father, Jonas, immediately suspected foul play and did not expect to see his son alive again. Frank Ross was especially concerned about his colleague’s whereabouts because he expected the tribal leader to be a key witness in an upcoming injunction hearing.⁶ After six days of searching, some of Stanup’s cousins found his body while probing the river bottom near his home. They immediately took the activist leader’s remains to his barn where community members cleaned

⁵ “The Doctors Disagree,” *Daily Ledger*, May 26, 1893, 5; “Was Stanup Killed?” *Daily Ledger*, May 24, 1893, 1.

⁶ “Peter Where Art Though?” *Daily Ledger*, May 19, 1893, 5.

and viewed the body. The Puyallup laid Peter to rest on May 24. His wife and two of his six children survived him.⁷

Indians and non-Natives jumped to an assortment of unsubstantiated conclusions about how Stanup died. Edwin Eells was among those who believed the death was a consequence of his supposed inability to handle the stresses of the modern world. Eells himself had pressured Stanup during the standoff on Cook's property. Prior to the confrontation, the agent and Major French had developed a two-pronged strategy to disperse the work crew. One was to confront the workers directly and the other was to have a junior officer named Lieutenant Goodwin "cultivate confidential relations" with the leading Indian in the group and try to convince him that his actions were hurting the tribe. Eells later recalled that the second part of the plan proved invaluable because the lieutenant reportedly became "very intimate" with the targeted Indian, Peter Stanup.⁸

Many years later, Eells claimed that Stanup's susceptibility to countervailing influences from men like Ross, and later Goodwin, put strains upon him that he was not prepared to handle. He surmised that Stanup went to Goodwin's tent shortly after the May 15 scuffle, possibly to gloat over the success of his and Ross's plan up to that point, but more likely to lobby against a military occupation of the reservation. The agent alleged that after Stanup arrived at Goodwin's quarters the Indian attempted to find some stress relief in a bottle of spirits. Eells did not say whether Stanup brought the liquor with him or Goodwin provided it, but he speculated that after Stanup's friends took him home, sometime during the evening of May 15, the activist leader headed back toward town to get more alcohol. The shortest path between his property and

⁷ "The Mystery Solved," *Daily Ledger*, May 23, 1893, 1.

⁸ Edwin Eells, unpublished autobiography, MS 76, Box 1, Folders 20-22, unpaginated, WSHS.

Tacoma involved crossing the nearby Puyallup River. Eells and other proponents of an accident theory postulated that an inebriated Stanup tried to ford the river and then slipped into the tributary and drowned.⁹

The news of Stanup's death, whether it troubled Eells or not, likely gave him some vindication after he heard that alcohol was a possible factor in the tragedy. Eells had long contended that these types of misfortunes would increase if the Indians accumulated disposable income and Stanup's end was proof to him that the government needed to maintain its control over the Puyallup's lives in order to prepare them for a future, independent existence.¹⁰

The initial autopsy report supported the accident theory. Dr. Albert Osborne, one of a handful of doctors who participated in a post-mortem analysis of Stanup's body, concluded that the only visible signs of trauma on Stanup's body were torn ligaments in his neck. He thought that the victim most likely received these injuries after rigor mortis had receded and the head and neck began twisting freely in the river's rapid current. He detected no break in the spine and reported that the condition of Stanup's main organs strongly suggested death by drowning.¹¹

While many local non-Natives believed that Stanup's death was an accident, a large number of Puyallup insisted that their leader's end had been premeditated by others. Numerous reservation residents saw Stanup as a model for what they might become, which was well-educated, charismatic, and economically successful. These Indians, unlike Eells, believed that Stanup was in full control of his life and they were certain that only a malevolent force could interrupt his dream of leading the Puyallup tribe into a more prosperous future.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "Peter Was Drowned," *Daily Ledger*, May 25, 1893, 1.

The Puyallup who supported a murder hypothesis had precedent to support them. There were non-Natives in the region who had concocted accidental deaths in order to rid themselves of what they deemed to be troublesome Indians. Those who wished to kill another Native and escape the authorities' detection would occasionally get their victims drunk and then put them in a location where a locomotive or a body of water would cause their demise. On other occasions, perpetrators killed the individual and then placed the body in these settings afterward to make the death appear to be the result of a mishap.¹² Around the turn of the century, Puyallup tribal member Silas Cross compiled a list with the names of six Indians who he claimed were victims of this type of violence. All perished by supposedly being hit by a train.¹³

Jonas Stanup, undoubtedly aware of such practices, was so certain that someone had murdered his son that he reportedly "...worked himself into a state of semi-insanity." Immediately after he buried Peter he called for members of his tribe to exact vengeance, though he gave no indication as to whom the Puyallup should go after.¹⁴ Jerry Meeker, Stanup's close friend and business associate, was also convinced that his partner had died at the hands of an assassin, a belief that he took to his grave many years later.¹⁵ Even some non-Natives questioned the accidental death supposition. Pierce County coroner Conrad Hoska was among a group of physicians who insisted that Peter died due to a "dislocation of the vertebra in the neck caused by

¹² Marian W. Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 163.

¹³ *Ibid.*; Silas Cross, list of deceased Puyallup, courtesy of Judy Wright, Puyallup Indian Nation historian, private collection.

¹⁴ "He Wants Revenge," *Daily Ledger*, June 9, 1893, 3.

¹⁵ Jerry Meeker, interview by Alfred Smith, 1948, Alfred J. Smith Papers, 49, Accession # 4515-001, Special Collections-University of Washington.

some person or persons unknown....”¹⁶ The murder theorists offered several primary suspects. Eells topped many Indians’ lists, though there were some who believed that soldiers or agents of the Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR) carried out the deed.¹⁷

While there is no evidence that another Indian may have killed Stanup, it was a possibility. Alexandra Harmon, in her study of economically successful Native Americans, shows that Indian-on-Indian violence over the issue of wealth during the post-treaty era was not unheard of. She explains that the Euro-American marketplace turned the Indians’ economic and political world on its head, by providing tribal members alternatives to customary methods of obtaining influence within their society. Some Natives who traded with non-Natives amassed assets that they then used to sponsor potlatches and obtain or enhance their authority within the tribe. This strategy conversely diminished the importance of other leadership characteristics such as bloodlines or merit. Harmon argues that over time, newly rich Indians who supplanted the influence of traditional chiefs or headmen sometimes created new fractures within a tribal community. This occasionally provoked violent responses from traditional leaders, especially if the nouveau riche Natives had used the tribe’s communal resources to their personal advantage.¹⁸

Stanup was among the Puyallup activists who used their reservation’s proximity to Tacoma and the market economy to accumulate wealth and gain power within the tribe. He had amassed significant amounts of capital from business and land dealings with non-Indians, which

¹⁶ Conrad L. Hoska, Pierce County, WA Coroner, Coroner’s Inquest of Peter Stanup, May 23, 1893, copy found in Darlene Reiter, “Peter Stanup: A Leader Among the Generous People,” UW-Tacoma Community History Project, 1998; “The Doctors Disagree,” 5.

¹⁷ “He Wants Revenge,” 3.

¹⁸ Alexandra Harmon, *Rich Indians: Native People and the Problem of Wealth in American History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 98-99, 102-103, 111-112.

contributed to his tribal impact. Some estimates placed his net worth at around \$50,000 at the time of his death.¹⁹ He stood to make even more money if the Puyallup gained total control of their lands from the government. Stanup was a prime example of an Indian who used aspects of American society to shake the tree of traditional Puyallup power.

As I indicated in the Introduction, there were Puyallup who were suspicious of Stanup's pro-land sales plan and some opposed his agenda before and after Congress passed the Puyallup Act. Recall that in 1892, tribal Chief Justice Joseph Swyell had told Secretary of Interior Noble that he welcomed the government's oversight of land sales. These critics may very likely have believed that the tribal land sales activists were attacking the foundations of the tribe's traditional leadership system. They might have also feared that a land policy of total alienation rights would invite foxes (i.e., non-Natives) into the Indians' chicken coop. In either case, some Puyallup felt that the Puyallup Act of 1893, despite its shortcomings, would protect their interests, at least for a while. Stanup's efforts to change the law may have troubled some of these Indians, perhaps to the point of bringing him harm.

Each of these theories about how and why Stanup died was plausible, but the evidence for any one of them was circumstantial at best. What was certain was that Stanup was gone. For many, his death symbolized how difficult the processes of cultural integration could be on individuals, even those with Stanup's skills and intellect. He was undoubtedly under a lot of stress at the time of his death and the struggle that took place between soldiers and Indians, though brief and bloodless, surely affected him. Peter's father Jonas had found acclaim and influence in the Puyallup tribe through his physical attributes, which included his experiences as a warrior. The elder Stanup might have favored a fight with American soldiers in an open field.

¹⁹ Eells autobiography; "The Mystery Solved," 1.

Peter, however, was not a warrior but a student, farmer, pastor, and businessman, and he preferred settling disputes by using the American legal system; physical confrontations were something he seemed to avoid. Hence, the scuffle possibly unnerved him for he feared what the long-term implications of the incident would be.

Stanup's untimely demise deprived the Puyallup land sales proponents of an important leader so other individuals stepped forward to continue his campaign to challenge the Puyallup Act. Thomas Lane carried on Stanup's use of American courts, petitions, and organizations to protect Puyallup interests, while Jonas Stanup honored his son's legacy by taking actions he believed would put more Puyallup land on the market for higher prices. At the same time, Jerry Meeker, one of Peter's closest friends, managed the tribe's links with Tacoma's business community. It took all three of these individuals to assume the responsibilities previously handled by Stanup, but they had no more success than he did in overturning the Puyallup Act's land restrictions. They would also fail to stem the law's ill effects upon most of their fellow tribal members.

As the news of Stanup's passing spread throughout the Puyallup community, the dispute over Cook's land continued. By the first week of June, the Indian crew had completely stopped working on the project and the confrontation moved to the courts. An injunction hearing took place on June 6 in front of a familiar face for the Puyallup, Judge Hanford. In the case of *Ross v. Eells*, Hanford ruled in favor of Ross and the Puyallup land sales activists, claiming that Cook had the right to allow the tribal work crew to build a railroad across his land. The magistrate reasoned that the 1887 General Allotment Act (Dawes Act) had elevated Natives with patented

allotments to citizenship, making them eligible to enjoy "...all the rights, privileges, and immunities" that other citizens did.²⁰

Hanford's decision gave the Indian land sales proponents the ruling that they wanted, yet the victory was short-lived. The Indian Office appealed the decision and one year later the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco unanimously ruled that Hanford had misinterpreted the portion of the Dawes Act referred to in his opinion. The court's three judges, using a racial perspective that was similar to Eells's, stated that the law actually retained the government's responsibility to review and approve the Indians' financial transactions that occurred on the reservation. They said that authorities had the right to continue this oversight until they felt that they had accomplished their efforts to transform the Indians. The judges added that the completion of this endeavor "...will not be soonest realized by attributing fanciful qualities of the Indians, or by supposing that their natures can be changed by legislative enactment." The court conceded that Congress could change these rules but until it did the Puyallup remained under federal oversight.²¹ Ross appealed the decision to the United States Supreme Court, which refused to hear the case.²²

The Supreme Court's rejection of the case allowed the federal government to put the Puyallup Act into effect. Congress and Indian Office officials initiated the law with the hope that it would enable Americans to access the Puyallup reservation in a way that would protect the

²⁰ *Ross vs. Eells, et al.*, Circuit Court, District Washington, Northern Division, June 13, 1893, accessed July 9, 2010, westlaw.org.

²¹ *Eells, et al. vs. Ross*, No. 143, Circuit Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, October 10, 1894, Accessed July 9, 2010, westlaw.org.

²² "Decided Against Ross, et al.," *Daily Ledger*, October 11, 1894, 4; *Frank Ross vs. Edwin Eells*, No. 1, 021, May 25, 1896, accessed July 9, 2010, westlaw.org.

Native inhabitants from ruin. Within a generation, the act proved as destructive to the Puyallup's way of life as the dangers that the government hoped to thwart.

SEEDS OF TRIBAL DEVASTATION

President Grover Cleveland put the Puyallup Act into motion by appointing three men to staff the Puyallup Land Commission (PLC). Recall from Chapter Four that they had several tasks. Their first job was to select and appraise land that they deemed eligible for sale. Committee members were to also collect sales proceeds and place them in a U.S. Treasury escrow account. The Office of Indian Affairs would then distribute the money to the Indian patentees in ten annual installments. Congress expected the reservation residents to pay a ten percent administrative fee each time the land commissioners collected a payment from a buyer and when the Indian Office forwarded payment to an Indian seller. The act gave Puyallup patentees complete alienation rights over their remaining property after ten years. Any unsold agency lands at that time remained under the oversight of the Indian Office.²³

One of the first things that the law did, aside from establishing a land sales protocol, was end Eells's tenure as reservation agent. He had become an unnecessary part of the reservation bureaucracy after the PLC arrived in Tacoma, so he left the Indian service in 1895 and started a dry goods business in town. He retired three years later due to poor health and then spent the next two decades helping to establish and run Tacoma's First Congregational Church. Eells died on May 16, 1917, at the age of seventy-five. At the time of his passing, he was the oldest living

²³ *Indian Appropriations Act of 1893*, in *Statutes at Large of the United States of America, from December, 1891, to March, 1893....*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1893), 633-634.

non-Native born in what became Washington State.²⁴ He had devoted the majority of his professional life to overseeing relations between Americans and the Puget Sound's Native American inhabitants, and he genuinely believed that he was championing the Indians' best interests.

Eells left a checkered legacy as an Indian agent, for while he was correct in his assumption that many Indians would have difficulty adapting to American culture, he was wrong as to why. He likewise made numerous mistakes when dealing with indigenous peoples due to his racism and his hardheaded belief that he always knew what was best for his wards. Perhaps the agent's biggest blunder was his support of a reservation land sales policy that economically shackled the Indian landowners. Tacoma was undoubtedly destined to swallow up the reservation, so it would be presumptuous for one to claim that the law was the sole reason behind the trauma that befell the Puyallup after 1893. What is certain is that the act, which contained some of Eells's recommendations, accelerated the onset of many of the Indians' post-1893 economic troubles.

The Puyallup Act upset many non-Indians as well as Indians. This included individuals who rented land from allottees because Indian landlords could sell their land and force their tenants to move elsewhere. Tacoma resident J.G. Crouch had leased thirteen acres of property from an Indian named George Reid and raised chickens on the spread. His 800 birds produced enough eggs each day for him to net about \$240 per month in sales and he feared he would have to find a new and potentially less suitable site for his egg empire if Reid sold his land.²⁵

²⁴ Herbert Hunt, *Tacoma: Its History and Its Builders, A Half Century of Activity, Vol. II* (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing, 1916), 69; "Oldest Native Son of State is Dead," *News Tribune* (Tacoma), May 17, 1917, 1, 12.

²⁵ "Doctors Don't Agree," *Daily Ledger* (March 6, 1893), 4.

Other non-Natives were upset with the law because so much of the reservation remained off the sales market. Their subsequent demands for change prompted Frank Ross to formulate new schemes and recruit more Indians to help him enact them.²⁶ He even tried to persuade Washington, D.C. lawmakers to pass new legislation that would have given the Puyallup full control of their land. He had no more success with policymakers at this venture than Stanup did during his visit to the Capitol in 1892.²⁷

Some frustrated non-Natives tried to make use of non-saleable lands by illegally settling on them or stealing their resources. Non-Native woodcutters continued to be a nuisance for the Indians after 1893. One common practice of these timber bandits was to buy or lease land adjacent to a well-wooded allotment and then sneak across the property line and take down as many trees as they could. Because the government had a hard time catching the interlopers, some Puyallup took matters into their own hands and occasionally used the situation to their advantage. These Indians sold stands of trees on their land to the non-Natives without the government's consent. This led to situations where a customer made a purchase, and then the government, after finding out about the deal, would deny him access to the lumber. According to one document, Antoine (a.k.a. Atwin) Jackson, "a rather shrewd Indian," and the man who, in 1892, had lectured the Puyallup Indian Commissioners about why he should have land rights equal to Americans, pocketed handsome sums of money by making several of these

²⁶ "Indians Won't Sell," *Daily Ledger*, December 4, 1893, 1.

²⁷ Puyallup Land Commission, letter to Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas Smith, October 18, 1895, Folder: "1897," Box 1, Series 25, Puyallup Indian Agency, Correspondences of the Puyallup Indian Commissioners, 1894-1909, RG 75, NA-PAR.

arrangements. One PLC administrator told several of the duped Americans involved in these cases that the Puyallup had tricked them and there was little to be done about it.²⁸

The Puyallup, like the non-Natives, responded to the law in myriad ways. Some supported it because they were happy to be protected from swindlers. Joe Young, whom one government official called “a Puyallup Indian of more than average intelligence,” was among those Indians who welcomed the government’s oversight because they felt “...that...white men...[were] actuated by selfish motives and not by a feeling of friendship for the Indian.”²⁹ Other Indians were happy they could sell any of their property at all because they desperately needed the income and would take any sum they could get for land they did not intend to put to seed. Approximately 100 of these pro-Puyallup Act allottees sent three petitions to Secretary of the Interior Hoke Smith and Commissioner of Indian Affairs D.M. Browning, declaring that they were content with the law.³⁰

Some of the allottees were against the Puyallup Act because it limited their income from land sales. Thomas Lane and twelve other tribal members, who represented the land sales activists’ interests, led one of the earliest attempts to change the legislation in ways that would “protect their rights in the premises.” Lane and his entourage began their efforts by announcing

²⁸ D.M. Browning, Indian Affairs Commissioner, letter to R.E.L. Newberne, Esq, Superintendent Puyallup Indian School and Acting Agent, January 15, 1897, Folder: “1893-1897” box 1, Series 25, Puyallup Indian Agency, Correspondences of the Puyallup Indian Commissioners, 1894-1909, RG 75, NA-PAR; A.C. Tonner, Acting commissioner of Indian Affairs, letter to Joseph C. Hart, Superintendent of Puyallup Indian School, May 12, 1899, Folder: “January-June, 1899,” Box 2, Series 25, Correspondences of the Puyallup Land Commissioners, 1894-1909, RG 75, NA-PAR.

²⁹ Puyallup Land Commission, letter to D.M. Browning, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, February 3, 1896.

³⁰ “Sale of Certain Lands: Letter from the Secretary of the Interior...,” February 24, 1896, ILL.

that, because the PLC and Congress were illegally ignoring the Washington State legislature's wish for unrestricted land sales, the Indians would, "beyond all possible chance for doubt," pursue their "...rights as demanded four years ago and as demanded now."³¹

Another tactic used by Lane and his colleagues was to ask the PLC to cede the administration of reservation land sales to the Puyallup Indian Land Company, an organization that would be staffed by tribal members. The commissioners knew that their superiors would never allow the Indians to manage land sales on their own so they told "Thomas Lane and twelve others," that Congress had drawn up the law in order to "protect the Puyallup Indians from robbery and wrong—the very opposite of which you complain."³²

The Indian critics of the Puyallup Act responded to the PLC's rebuff by organizing a boycott of the sales process. A Puyallup named James Coats, who owned 153 acres, said he would rather rely on his lease earnings than sell his land under the conditions spelled out within the Puyallup Act. Another allottee, William Wilton, owned valuable tide flat land that would earn him a handsome sum if he sold it. Yet, he believed waiting for the government to remove its sales restrictions would serve him better.³³

Support for the boycott flowed and ebbed over time. A few Indians who initially put their land on the market later requested that the PLC take it off due to low prices.³⁴ The

³¹ Puyallup Land Commission, letter to "Thomas Lane and twelve others, December 11, 1893, Letters Sent by the Puyallup Land Commissioners Regarding Proceeds of Land Sales, Box 1, Series 27, RG 75, NA-PAR.

³² Ibid.; "Are Not Puyallups," *Daily Ledger*, December 21, 1893, 8; Puyallup Land Commission, letter to D.M. Browning, December 21, 1893.

³³ "Doctors Don't Agree," 4.

³⁴ "Revoked the Agreements," *Daily Ledger*, May 1, 1895, 5.

commissioners refused to honor such requests for they assumed that “a gang of white men, aided by some of the Indians...,” had spurred the Natives’ unwillingness to leave their land on the market.³⁵ Before he left the agency, Eells had been among those who accused “interested white men, who hope to reap a benefit by having all restrictions removed and the Indians left unprotected,” of influencing the Indian abstainers.³⁶

The discontented Puyallup also sought redress through the courts. They had employed the American legal system whenever they could, to obtain what they understood to be as justice. Prior to 1894, the courts often satisfied tribal members by granting the Indian plaintiffs the citizenship rights they sought. In this particular matter, anti-Puyallup Act Indians assumed that the courts would again support their understanding of the truth and then render a decision that would satisfy them. What this effort taught the Puyallup was American law often has little to do with justice and instead very often acts as a platform where powerful members of society, including judges, could shape policy at the expense of those with less power. Between 1894 and 1909, the Puyallup experienced this brand of law when they tried to use the courts to obtain solutions to their concerns.

The Puyallup’s frustrations with the courts after 1894 were due to the fact that they asked judges for a new set of rulings that would protect the Indians rather than give them more independence. The first instance of this took place in June of 1894, when Thomas Lane, Jonas Stanup, and sixty other Puyallup allottees filed suit against the PLC to block them from

³⁵ James Anderson, Chair of the Puyallup Land Commission, letter to D.M. Browning, July 23, 1896, Folder: “1897,” Box 1, Series 25, Puyallup Indian Agency, Correspondences of the Puyallup Indian Commissioners, 1894-1909, RG 75, NA-PAR.

³⁶ *Executive Documents of the House of Representatives for the Third Session of the Fifty-Third Congress, 1894-95* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), 319.

surveying reservation lands. Judge Hanford heard their plea, which may have initially given the Indian plaintiffs cause for hope because he had previously supported the Indians' rights to sell their land and purchase liquor. He disappointed the petitioners this time and a close examination of the judge's early life and legal career suggests that the Puyallup stood little chance in convincing him to treat them as indigenous people with treaty rights. This was because Hanford had a view of the world based upon his desire to build a nation where Americans would have access to as much land as they needed.

An overview of Hanford's time on the bench showed his unwavering support of social order and economic growth. For example, he often issued injunctions against strikes and supported military action against uprisings, such as the 1886 anti-Chinese riots in Seattle.³⁷ He also championed quick and unfettered economic development of the Pacific Northwest. In *U.S. v. Budd* (1890), Hanford ruled that settlers and miners could access land that Congress had designated for other uses. He thus allowed farmers to sow seeds on timber and mining land while he gave miners the right to extract minerals on property that the government had

³⁷ C.T. Conover, *Mirrors of Seattle: Reflecting Some Aged Men of Fifty* (Seattle: Press of Lowman & Hanford Co., 1923), 83-84. Hanford had a long-running feud with Pacific Northwest labor organizations. His attempts to quash radicalism ultimately led to his resignation from the bench in 1912. In 1912, Hanford ruled that the government had the legal right to revoke the naturalized citizenship of Leonard Olsson, an immigrant from Scandinavia who was also a strong supporter of socialism. Hanford had no personal sympathy for Olsson and was apparently happy to issue the verdict. A number of labor organizations and newspapers immediately criticized Hanford's decision because he had discounted Olsson's right to freedom of expression. Hanford's critics began formulating evidence for impeachment, which included the acquisition of information that supposedly brought the judge's character and integrity into question. Hanford ultimately resigned from the bench in July of 1912. John Caldbick, "Federal District Judge Cornelius H. Hanford resigns during impeachment investigation on July 22, 1912," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, accessed April 11, 2015, http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=9547.

pinpointed for agricultural use.³⁸

Hanford's belief in economic development and his advocacy for non-Native access to Indian land may have been the result of his experiences with Indians during his youth. He was born in Iowa in 1849, but then moved with his family to Seattle in 1853 to settle a Donation Land Law claim. Hanford's parents made improvements to their property but the aboriginals destroyed the results of all their hard work during the Indian wars. That, and other misfortunes, compelled the family to move to San Francisco in 1861. The Hanfords returned to the Puget Sound five years later, at which time the seventeen-year-old Cornelius earned money by carrying mail, via horseback, from Seattle to Puyallup. His weekly journeys took him through the Puyallup Reservation, which was an arduous trip due to the land's rough terrain. During this time, the young postman likely had numerous interactions with the Puyallup, as evidenced by his familiarity with the Chinook Jargon.³⁹

When Hanford became a judge, he had the opportunity to deal with Natives whom he felt were impeding his concept of progress. We can see this in his decisions concerning Puyallup land. He consistently pushed for non-Native access to the Commencement Bay area reservation by declaring that the Puyallup were American citizens with guaranteed rights and privileges, including the right and privilege of selling or leasing their land without constraint. Such was the case in his 1893 *Ross v. Eells* verdict. The federal court of appeals reversal of Hanford's 1893 ruling did not stop him from continuing to champion this legal theory.

³⁸ Clinton A. Snowden, *History of Washington: The Rise and Progress of an American State* (New York: The Century History Company, 1911), 12. (1065)

³⁹ Conover, 84. Snowden, 4.

This analysis suggests that Hanford's understanding of progress shaped his brand of justice. When Puyallup land sales activists came before him seeking to pursue their vision of progress during the late 1880s and early 1890s, his rulings pleased them because their requests coincidentally matched his perspectives. In 1894, however, the Puyallup appeared before the judge asking for putting the brakes on growth and development. Unfortunately for many of the Puyallup, while their legal needs had changed, Hanford's views about progress had not. He ruled that the commissioners could continue their work of putting the reservation lands on the market as quickly as possible.⁴⁰

The outcome of this case frustrated some Indians to the point of resorting to militancy to scare off potential non-Indian buyers. Several of the Puyallup placed notices on agency lands to discourage buyer interest. These signs illustrated Indians' familiarity with American legal concepts of ownership and an understanding of how tribal members could use these ideas to fit their needs. For instance, Jonas Stanup posted a placard that read, "All persons are warned not to trespass upon these premises, under penalty of the law." August Kautz fastened another notice to a post that warned potential customers that the Puyallup would challenge sales agreements in the courts, even if it meant removing the new settlers from lands that they had purchased and improved. Government officials were concerned enough by these threats that they considered stationing troops on the reservation to protect the PLC and non-Native buyers.⁴¹

The Puyallup land sales activists also continued to work with sympathetic non-Natives in seeking legislative revisions to the Puyallup Act. The resulting bills attempted to get as much

⁴⁰ "Commissioners Restrained," *Daily Ledger*, June 27, 1894, 5; "Sixty Indian Plaintiffs," *Daily Ledger*, June 28, 1894, 3.

⁴¹ "May Send Troops Here Again," *Daily Ledger*, May 12, 1895, 3.

land on the market as possible, with fewer encumbrances. Senator Watson Squire of Seattle introduced the first post-Puyallup Act legislation in August of 1893. It supported the 1891 Washington State legislature's removal of land sales restrictions, save for those delineated by the "heavy black lines" referred to in the Puyallup Indian Commission Report. The bill also stipulated that sales contracts took precedence over lease agreements.⁴² The senator introduced another bill in March of the following year that dealt specifically with the 598 acres of agency lands, most of which sat close to the city. He proposed allowing the Puyallup to plat and then distribute this especially valuable land to tribal members who could then keep or sell it.⁴³ Washington State Representative William Doolittle, who was also a member of the House Committee on Indian Affairs, concurrently presented bills to the House of Representatives. In September of 1893, he introduced legislation that was much to the liking of the Puyallup activists and potential reservation land buyers because it called for the complete repeal of all restrictions the government had placed upon patented Indian land.⁴⁴ Doolittle's proposal failed to garner support, so in March of 1894 he submitted a follow-up bill to the House that mirrored Squire's Senate proposal at that time.

These efforts were unsuccessful, though in 1894 Congress did try to prod the Indian sellers to put more land on the market by allowing them to negotiate directly with potential buyers and by reducing the number of years the Indians had to wait to receive their full sales

⁴² S. 645, August 21, 1893, 53rd Congress, Session 1, Vol. 2, 301-675, Reel 2, University of Washington Microfilm.

⁴³ S. 1727, March 5, 1894, 53rd Congress, Session 2, Vol. 6, 1581-1920, Reel 6, UW Microfilm.

⁴⁴ H.R. 395, September 6, 1893, Vol. 2, 234-655, Reel 2, UW Microfilm.

payments, from ten to five years.⁴⁵ These changes encouraged a few of the land sellers to put more property on the market, but the PLC's continued role in the land sales equation still angered the land sales activists. In the summer of 1894, Doolittle proposed appointing three Puyallup Indians, Atwin Jackson, August Kautz, and Jerry Meeker, as commissioners. House Democrats defeated the legislation because they claimed that it would make it too easy for Tacoma residents to swindle the Indians.⁴⁶ Doolittle met equally fierce opposition when he reintroduced the bill during the next session. The PLC members called the bill "a job of considerable proportions," and of the proposed Indian administrators the commissioners said, "Three more unprincipled rascals than are the men named cannot be found on the Reservation."⁴⁷

CONSEQUENCES

The proponents of unrestricted Indian land sales, both Puyallup and non-Native, were ultimately unable to alter the Puyallup Act's land sales rules. Over time, the law restricted allottees' opportunities and choices in the marketplace. It also created a situation whereby most of the Indians who sold a portion of their holdings between 1895 and 1909 ended up in a worse economic situation than they had been. Because of this, the Puyallup Act is a prime example of how well-intentioned government policy can go awry.

The Puyallup Act classified the reserve's land into two categories: reservation tribal lands (a.k.a. agency lands) and individual or family allotments. The law gave Indian landowners the

⁴⁵ "Puyallup Indians Succeed," *Daily Ledger*, May 22, 1894, 5.

⁴⁶ "Squire Defends Tacoma," *Daily Ledger*, July 20, 1894, 1.

⁴⁷ Puyallup Land Commission, letter to D.M. Browning, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 18, 1896, Folder: "1897," Box 1, Series 25, Puyallup Indian Agency, Correspondences of the Puyallup Indian Commissioners, 1894-1909, RG 75, NA-PAR.

right to immediately sell off a portion of their property at an appraised price or higher. In its effort to protect the Puyallup from financial destitution, Congress mandated that reservation residents keep some of their property, generally one-half to one-third, for a home site and a place to grow crops. Any proceeds from selling agency land had to go toward supporting the Puyallup Indian School.

The Puyallup Act did not adversely affect all of the reservation's residents. Several Indians avoided the law's negative consequences by hanging on to their land and being the successful yeoman farmers that Indian policy reformers hoped their assimilation program would create. In 1897, agency officials noted that there were a few Puyallup who "possessed...good farms of great fertility, with barns and comfortable houses, farming implements, and stock."⁴⁸ Additionally, their homes were "...good, comfortable, and roomy, fully equal to the average farm dwellings in prosperous communities of whites," and they were "...kept clean and tidy enough to satisfy the most fastidious...."⁴⁹ By the turn of the century these Indian farmers were together annually selling up to \$10,000 worth of harvest.⁵⁰ Records show that in 1915 there were still eleven Puyallup Indians farming their land.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Lida Quimby, Field Matron, Puyallup Consolidated Agency, *Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1897* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1897), 295.

⁴⁹ Frank Terry, Superintendent and Acting Indian Agent, Puyallup Agency, *Annual Reports of the Department of Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1898* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1898), 302.

⁵⁰ Frank Terry, School Superintendent in Charge of the Puyallup Agency, Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior for the Year Ending June 30, 1902. Indian Affairs, Part 1, Report of the Commissioner* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), 665.

⁵¹ 13th Census of the United States: 1910, Reservation District, sheets 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b...14a.14b, accessed January 24, 2011, Ancestry.com,

PLC members used these success stories as selling points for potential buyers who worried about purchasing property adjacent to an underdeveloped or run-down Indian allotment. One PLC commissioner told prospective customers that the Indians were hardworking and thrifty enough to “have tidy sums laid by in banks or other safe places.” He added that if people took a tour of the reservation, “...particularly...along [a section] of the main road...they would be agreeably surprised at the farms and gardens, and comfortable homes, fair orchards and more or less commodious barns and other evidences of ...progress they would see.”⁵²

James Goudy was one example of a productive farmer the PLC was referring to when its members made their sales pitches. The Indian Office had awarded him Patent 108 in 1886, which consisted of 109.5 acres of land. The records do not state what Goudy did on his land before 1886, but they do indicate that by 1890 he had constructed a “box house,” fenced eighty acres, and cultivated thirty-five of them by raising potatoes, oats, wheat, hay, and fruit. Goudy’s farming venture was evidently successful enough that he chose not to sell any of his property during the life of the act. He eventually accumulated enough capital to afford both a house servant and a “hired man,” and by 1915 he was able to purchase an additional 40 acres of land.⁵³ Of course, the law still adversely affected Goudy, for it ultimately forced many friends, neighbors, and perhaps family members to leave the area because they could not survive there.

Jerry Meeker was another patentee who kept his property off the market during the life of the legislation, though he did use the law to make money. He earned cash by working as a

http://searchlibrary.com/Browse/view.aspx?dbid=4454884_00499; *Kroll’s Atlas of Pierce County, Washington*, (Seattle, 1915), 26.

⁵² “Indians Get Their Money for Land,” *Daily Ledger*, September 1, 1899, 3.

⁵³ Puyallup Tribal Censuses, 1890 Puyallup Reservation Census, roll 407, Indian Census Rolls, NA-PAR.

broker for Indians selling their lands, as a part-time PLC employee, and as a guardian of patentees who were minors. He evidently was unconcerned with conflict of interest. In any case, between 1904 and 1914, Meeker used the capital he raised from these positions to acquire at least seventeen reservation plots.⁵⁴ Meeker's decision to become involved in the reservation land market after the act expired allowed him to negotiate his own terms, avoid the administrative fees, and, when he did sell land, forego the waiting period to receive his proceeds. These advantages not only added to Meeker's financial success, but also contributed to the growth of his prestige among the Puyallup tribal members and his stature within Tacoma's business community. By the time of his death in 1955, one observer claimed that he was "the best known Indian in Tacoma, if not in Western Washington."⁵⁵ Many local citizens credited his good fortune to his willingness to adopt the "white man's ideas."⁵⁶ Meanwhile, many Puyallup recognized him as an important tribal member. Today, there is a middle school named after Meeker in the Browns Point neighborhood of Tacoma, an area that was once part of the Puyallup reservation. Meeker, despite the fact he did not sell his land until later, was, in many ways, what the activists had envisioned Indian land sellers would become when they first began their land alienation campaign.

Unfortunately, Goudy and Meeker were exceptions rather than the rule when it came to the Puyallup's post-1893 financial fates. There were several reasons for this. As stated

⁵⁴ Jerry Meeker, See Pierce County index grantee lists 1901-1903, 739, 1904-1905, 739, 741, 751, 1906-1907, 713-14, 1908-11, 1,123-24, 1912-1914, 179, found at Public Records Division, room 200, Pierce County Auditor's Office, Pierce County Annex, Tacoma, WA.

⁵⁵ "Jerry Meeker, Good Citizen," *News Tribune*, April 5, 1955, available at Northwest People, accessed August 4, 2011, <http://search.tacomapubliclibrary.org/jerrymeeker.asp>.

⁵⁶ Sam Angeloff, "Browns Point Gets Forecast," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 1, 1952, Found in Northwest Room, Tacoma Public Library.

throughout this study, many Puyallup attempted to support themselves by farming, but their lack of capital, the undeveloped state of their land, and some residents' possession of land that was unfit for agronomy made it difficult for most of the Indians to earn more than a day-to-day existence. Another significant reason why most of the Puyallup put their land on the market under less than advantageous conditions was that few of them enjoyed the same legacy of wealth that Meeker did. Recall that both of Meeker's parents had found steady, decent paying work with Ezra Meeker and the couple's ability to comfortably support their family allowed their son to attend school for an extended period because he did not have to help subsidize his family's basic needs. This allowed young Meeker to obtain a more thorough education, which then helped him to interact with non-Natives in the marketplace. Equally important was the fact that Meeker's father accumulated significant amounts of wealth and, upon his death, was able to pass it on to his survivors. Meeker used his inheritance to make assorted investments, which increased his capital holdings. More money likewise allowed him to exercise more patience when economic conditions took a downward turn. Most of the Puyallup did not have this advantage because they could not find jobs that were as consistent and lucrative as those performed by Meeker and his parents.

Because being poor still costs money, and most Puyallup after 1893 did not have much of it, they decided to sell their land under disadvantageous conditions, which contributed to their rising state of dependency. The law's primary shortcomings were that the Indians, who sold their lands within its guidelines, received their earnings in yearly segments, paid relatively high administrative fees, and did not receive all of their property's anticipated value or its agreed-upon sales price. These financial setbacks forced a number of the allottees to make economic decisions that hurt them even further. In short, the legislation that Congress had designed to

protect the Puyallup's allotments and capital was partly responsible for taking large portions of the Indians' land away from them with little recompense.

The Puyallup Act's debilitating effects had short- and long-term financial consequences for the allottees, which limited their independence in many ways. The economic panic of 1893 heightened the Indians' suffering. This economic catastrophe began in May of that year and lasted into 1897. It significantly impacted the entire country by lowering consumption, dropping income, and freezing investment activity. The financial drought also sent land values into a tailspin. The national economy ran at just seventy-five to eighty percent of capacity during the first year of the depression. This forced approximately 16,000 American businesses and 500 banks to close their doors, which in turn led to a twenty percent rise in unemployment.⁵⁷

The panic was very hard on Tacoma. During the depression's first years, fourteen of the city's twenty-one banks closed, the NPRR went into receivership, and creditors took over the Tacoma Land Company. Meanwhile, the city and county governments went bankrupt. Before long, Tacoma's Big Bang-like phenomenon of population growth slowly stopped and then shifted into reverse as numerous citizens purchased one-way train tickets out of town. A number of the residents who remained eventually lost their jobs or labored fewer hours for less pay. Many of the Puyallup who worked low-level jobs ended up competing with these non-Indians for employment and, over time, for the area's diminishing supply of natural flora and fauna, which they used to help themselves to survive.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Douglas Steeples and David O. Whitten, *Democracy in Desperation: The Depression of 1893* (Westport, Conn., 1998), 42, 53; Murray Morgan, *Puget's Sound: A Narrative of Early Tacoma and the Southern Sound* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), 275.

⁵⁸ Morgan, 275-278.

It is difficult to pinpoint how badly the depression hurt the Puyallup. The event undoubtedly made it more difficult for men like Meeker and Goudy to maintain their income level. On the other hand, the numerous Puyallup who lived hand-to-mouth prior to the panic may not have noticed much of a difference in their standard of living for they could not have gotten much poorer than they already were. Not surprisingly, Edwin Eells saw a positive aspect to this situation by claiming that the Indians' lack of income during this time "...had kept [them] from many excesses which plenty of money would have led them into."⁵⁹

Agent Eells's remarks aside, the depression economically savaged the Puyallup most directly by lowering the number and value of Puyallup reservation land transactions during the first half of the law's life.⁶⁰ An 1893 economic forecast illustrates how badly the depression affected Puyallup land sales. Early in the year, the Secretary of the Interior ordered the appraisal of the 17,463 acres of allotted Puyallup Reservation lands. Thirty local men conducted the assessment and they determined that the property was worth \$4,776,130. This worked out to an average of \$273 per acre, with some of the property valued as high as \$6,000 per acre.⁶¹ Over the next 10 years, the depression, the excess of land on the market, and the fact that Seattle was also becoming a magnet for investor dollars that may have gone to Tacoma, produced a different and more somber set of figures. As of July 1, 1904, the Puyallup had sold 7,027 acres (40 percent) of allotted reservation lands for a total of \$420,303.83. This averaged out to a price of \$59.81 per

⁵⁹ Eells, report to the Secretary of the Interior, 1894-95, 319.

⁶⁰ "On the Reservation," *Daily Ledger*, Oct. 26, 1893, 2. James Anderson to Thomas Smith, Oct. 18, 1895, folder "1897?," Box 1, Series 25, Correspondences of the Puyallup Indian Commissioners 1894-1909, RG 75, NA-PAR.

⁶¹ Figures derived from *Sixty-Second Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1893* (Washington, D.C., 1893), 383-92, University of Washington Digital Archives, accessed July 20, 2011, <http://content.lib.washington.edu/u/?lctext,4981>.

acre, or 22 percent of the 1893 estimated land value.⁶² After factoring in the transaction fees, the amount was reduced to \$48.44 per acre.

The damaging effects of these low prices were compounded by non-Indian land buyers who had overextended themselves financially and were therefore unable to make their payments on schedule, if at all. When a PLC member reported this problem to Commissioner of Indian Affairs William Jones in 1898, the official told the land commissioner to show more sympathy for the purchasers than for the Indian sellers. He ordered the land commissioner to investigate each buyer's circumstances, formulate a new payment schedule, and if needed, notify all the parties involved about the rearrangement. Jones asked the PLC members not to use the courts unless the new payment due date came and went without action.⁶³

Later on, some buyers refused to make payments on their land because they claimed that they were not liable for property taxes on their purchases until they had paid off the balance of their debt and the Indian Office gave them title to the property. In these cases, officials said that the courts should decide the matter. Once again, the government forced the Puyallup reservation land sellers to wait for their money.

When the PLC finally started selling land in early 1895, the Puyallup faced a host of other problems not directly related to the 1893 panic. One major issue that Indian land sellers had to contend with was the Puyallup Act's administrative shortcomings. Soon after Congress passed the act, President Grover Cleveland appointed John W. Renfroe of Georgia, Ross

⁶² *Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1905: Indian Affairs*, 2 vols., (Washington, D.C., 1906), 1:147-49, UW Digital Archives, accessed July 20, 2011, <http://content.lib.washington.edu/u/?lctext,5867>.

⁶³ William Jones to Clinton Snowden, January 5, 1898, folder "January–June, 1898," Box 2, Series 25, Correspondences of the Puyallup Land Commissioners 1894-1909, RG 75, NA-PAR.

Alexander of Ohio, and James J. Anderson of Illinois to staff the PLC. The president picked three men from outside of Washington State to limit the incidence of fraud. A consequence of this decision was that the commissioners had virtually no knowledge of the area or its people. Additionally, none of them had any real estate sales qualifications. Renfroe, who seems to have regularly benefitted from the spoils system prevalent during the Gilded Age, was a legislator, a railroad contractor, and a former postmaster of Atlanta. He was also a close friend of the secretary of the interior and the president. Anderson was a lawyer, newspaperman, and state legislator, while Alexander's professional career was in the law.⁶⁴ These backgrounds prevented the appointees from ably serving their potential Puyallup Indian clients.

The Puyallup Act also hurt the Puyallup because the Indian Office assumed that the Natives would be able to sell all of their eligible lands in under a year, a prediction that would have fallen well short of the mark even without the depression.⁶⁵ This delay occurred for numerous reasons, including the fact that Congress was slow to create a list of specific duties for the PLC. Hence, when its members arrived in Tacoma in December 1893, they were unsure of how to begin their work, they did not know where they were supposed to send their reports, and they were ignorant of the timetable for completing certain responsibilities.⁶⁶ When PLC members finally obtained a specific description of their duties, they found the list to be quite formidable.

⁶⁴ "Named by Cleveland," *Daily Ledger*, November 1, 1893, 5; "Arrived Last Night," *Daily Ledger*, December 2, 1893, 3.

⁶⁵ Puyallup Land Commission to Thomas Smith, Oct. 18, 1895, folder "1897," box 1, series 25, Correspondences of the Puyallup Indian Commissioners 1894-1909, RG 75, NA-PAR.

⁶⁶ "Named by Cleveland," 5; "Arrived Last Night," 3.

One of the first things the PLC staff had to do was to determine each allotment's list of owners; this difficult task was just the first of numerous concerns the Indians and commissioners had to solve. Another problem the Puyallup and the PLC had to confront was the government's inability to provide the Indians their sales proceeds in a timely manner because each payment made by a buyer took a circuitous journey. The PLC collected money from the buyer and then forwarded it to Washington, D.C., where Office of Indian Affairs employees recorded the payments and then deposited them into the correct accounts. Bureaucrats then calculated and added interest, subtracted administrative costs, verified each payment, and directed it to the proper recipient. It is important to keep in mind that Indian agencies from all around the West were conducting transactions with the Office of Indian Affairs at the same time. This forced many Puyallup Indian land sellers to wait longer than they anticipated for their money.

Payment delays were quite hard on the Puyallup. For example, several years after the 1893 Puyallup Act went into effect the government owed \$382.63 to Thomas Lefluer, and \$100.88 each to Mary Chadsam and Annie Lucee. However, the allottees had to wait patiently for their escrow funds to reach them. The Indians who were in this predicament frequently visited the PLC office to find out if their money had arrived. In some cases, the tribal members needed the money to purchase basic supplies and they often had to plead with officials to provide them with funds until their proceeds arrived.⁶⁷

This situation was especially difficult for destitute Puyallup who needed the money for their daily needs. When PLC authorities reported the problem to their supervisor, they seldom received an immediate response, which forced the land sellers to wait even longer for their

⁶⁷ Puyallup Land Commissioners to D. M. Browning, Jan. 23, 1897, Letters Sent, 1893-1897, Box 1, Series 25, Correspondences of the Puyallup Indian Commissioners, 1894-1909, RG 75, NA-PAR.

payments. At one point, a few Puyallup convinced a commissioner to notify local storeowners that the Indians had money coming, hoping that this information would allow them to purchase needed items on credit. One Puyallup was unable to work his farm because he had a broken wagon wheel and lacked the finances to repair it. Another allottee, whom a land commissioner knew to be “industrious” and “thrifty,” needed assistance to pay a threshing bill. The official initially ignored this man’s appeals, so the Indian brought a lawyer to the PLC office. The attorney compelled the official to create a document that confirmed the amount due to his client from the government. The official later reported that this Puyallup at one point had “pauned [*sic*] his watch to get money for which his creditors should have waited.”⁶⁸

The government’s efforts to protect the Indians made these delays inevitable. For example, the Puyallup Act stipulated that a buyer pay one-third of an allotment’s sale price up front and then forward the balance in five installments at five percent interest. The government awarded the title to the purchaser after he or she had made the final payment. Sometimes a buyer asked to pay off the balance early, but the Indian Affairs Office denied these requests. In 1896, Commissioner of Indian Affairs D.M. Browning claimed that early payoffs would create a situation in which too much money would end up in the hands of the Indian land sellers who, he presumed, would misspend it. He did say that particular Indians who required their funds immediately could have them if they showed that they “would make proper and judicious use” of their money.⁶⁹ Browning’s successor, W.A. Jones, also argued against any early payoffs because he believed Congress had designed the original purchaser payment plan to make the reservation

⁶⁸ C. A. Snowden to Commissioner of Indian affairs, Nov. 30, 1897, folder *ibid*.

⁶⁹ D. M. Browning to Puyallup land commissioners, March 19, 1896, folder “January-June, 1896,” box 1, series 25, Correspondences of the Puyallup Indian Commissioners 1894-1909, RG 75, NA-PAR.

lands more affordable and, hopefully, maximize the number of people who could participate in the process. He also felt that making changes in the payment scheme would lead to excess confusion.⁷⁰

In late 1896, Congress made things even more difficult for the Puyallup after some lawmakers became concerned about the cost of administering Puyallup reservation land sales. Congress had originally given the PLC a \$15,000 budget to carry out its tasks, but these funds ran dry in just over a year. It then earmarked another \$14,000 for the project in March 1895, but the commissioners spent that money by December. The Indian office consequently released one of the commissioners and in February 1896, budgeted another \$3,500 for the project. The two remaining commissioners quickly exhausted this money as well, so Congress pledged another \$4,000 to the act in June 1896. The high administrative costs and poor sales results compelled some lawmakers to consider shutting down the PLC altogether and ceding the Indians full control of land sales.⁷¹ The secretary of the interior blocked this move, reasoning that giving the Puyallup total alienation rights so soon “would result in robbing the Puyallup Indians of their homes and lands . . . bringing them to early poverty, and making them dependent upon the generosity of the government.”⁷² Evidently, even severe financial problems could not temper officials’ zeal to supposedly save the Indians.

⁷⁰ W. A. Jones to Clinton Snowden, Oct. 8, 1900, folder “1900,” box 2, *ibid.*

⁷¹ Thomas Smith to Secretary of the Interior, Oct. 30, 1896, folder “July–December, 1896,” *ibid.*

⁷² D.M. Browning, to Hoke Smith, February 21, 1896, in *Sale of Certain Lands: Letter from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Relating to the Removal of Certain Restrictions upon the Sale of the Allotted Lands of the Puyallup Indians, in the State of Washington. February 24, 1896*, 54th Cong., 1st sess., 1896, H. Doc. 258, 2-3.

Lawmakers eventually cut more costs by paring the PLC down to one man. At this point, the president appointed Clinton Snowden of Tacoma to fill that position. One can argue that this choice would have benefitted the Puyallup because of Snowden's familiarity with the local community. However, his tenure represented little improvement for the Puyallup, and in some ways it worked to their further detriment. To begin with, the new commissioner's loyalties were not with his Indian clients. He had previously been secretary of the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce as well as editor of Tacoma's *Daily Ledger* newspaper, two institutions that had adamantly supported immediate non-Indian access to the Puyallup reservation. Meanwhile, there is evidence that suggests Snowden hoped to profit personally from his new position. Soon after he took the job, a friend wrote, "...With best wishes to you and trusting that you will scalp a few of the Indians in your official duties and block out a few corner lots for yourself."⁷³ The Puyallup also suffered because they had to work with a man who wanted to get the reservation's lands out of Indian hands as soon as possible because he felt they were misusing it. In 1890, he told Washington Congressman John Wilson that he believed that all sales restrictions on the reservation should be removed because the Puyallup had "neither the means, the intelligence, nor the enterprise to improve it." He added that the reservation in its current state was "a wilderness of no value to anybody."⁷⁴

The Indian Affairs Office's reduction of the PLC from three members to one meant Puyallup reservation residents had to be even more patient and, consequently, more frugal than before. In 1898, Congress cut off all government funding of the PLC, a decision that made land

⁷³ Sandra Connell, "Indian Lands and Legislation as it Pertains to Pierce County Indians," League of Women Voters of Tacoma, December 1977, 12.

⁷⁴ Clinton Snowden to John Wilson, May 19, 1890, in *Law Student Indian Summer Project*, by National Lawyers Guild (Seattle, 1973), 10.

sales transactions fees the sole source of money for the administration of the Puyallup Act.⁷⁵ Ironically, this reduction in services and the budget came at a time when the effects of the 1893 panic were wearing off and the number of land transactions, which initially had been very low, was increasing.⁷⁶ Snowden was quickly overwhelmed and his obligations to travel throughout the reservation forced him to close his office for long periods. He eventually appealed to his superiors for a “competent clerk and book-keeper” to staff the office in his absence.⁷⁷ Indian Office administrators, wanting to keep costs at a minimum, only granted Snowden his request after much pleading on his part.⁷⁸

The Puyallup Act’s problematic framework prevented tribal land sellers from receiving their payments in a timely fashion, which represented a significant hurdle for those Indians attempting to benefit from land sales. One might explain this problem as an unfortunate byproduct of bureaucracy. However, this same reasoning does not explain a second set of issues that affected the Puyallup. These difficulties were a direct result of Indian policy reformers’ racially informed belief that Indians in general were not intelligent or responsible enough to sell their land or spend their proceeds without government oversight. The safety net that Congress

⁷⁵ *Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1898: Indian Affairs* (Washington, D.C., 1898), 35.

⁷⁶ There were 91 total land transactions between 1893 and 1897. From 1898 until the expiration of the Puyallup Act in 1903, Snowden processed 394 transactions. “Schedule of Blocks that were sold and added to the city of Tacoma, Box 1, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, RG 75, NA–College Park.

⁷⁷ C. A. Snowden to the Commissioner of Indian affairs, Jan. 17, 1898, folder “1893-1897,” box 1, series 25, Correspondence of the Puyallup Indian Commissioners, 1894-1909, RG 75, NA–PAR.

⁷⁸ W. A. Jones to C. A. Snowden, March 21, 1901, folder “1901,” box 2, *ibid.* Snowden was eventually granted an interpreter and a clerk to assist him.

created to address this supposed problem was as economically destructive to the Puyallup land sellers as any other factor they experienced.

One way that the government tried to protect Indian landowners from being swindled or making allegedly poor decisions, whether they were Puyallup or otherwise, was to employ the tenants-in-common system when issuing allotments and patents to the Indians. Prior to 1894, the government used this policy to transfer portions of a title to an allotment on to the survivors of a deceased allottee. This system impacted the Puyallup after 1894 by directing how the government made land sales payments to Puyallup sellers. Each sum had to be commensurate with the percentage of the allotment each individual owned. Officials felt that this method of land ownership would prevent heads of families from squandering lands sales income, and one can see how the process affected the distribution of funds by considering Patent 11. When Congress awarded the title to the Linnaywahs, they were a family of six, so the Indian office gave each family member a 16.6 percent share. While this system may have prevented one individual from misappropriating all of the proceeds, it could also make it very difficult for any one person to accumulate enough capital to invest in items reservation officials might have deemed appropriate. One could argue, of course, that the household head (in this case Richard Linnaywah), could have pressured his fellow family members to devote their shares to a common cause. But this was not always possible because many children had matured into adulthood after the government awarded patents to the families and they had their own households and subsequent financial obligations to attend to.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ This system was abandoned when the Puyallup Act of 1893 expired in 1903. Control then reverted to the head of the household. See *Meeker et al. vs. Kaelin et al.*, 173 Federal Reporter 216 (U.S. Circuit Court for District of Washington, 1909), accessed July 9, 2010, Westlaw.

The case of Patent 160 provides a good example of how tenants-in-common ownership could adversely affect the head of a household. The government awarded Patent 160 to Tom Chadsam, his wife, and their three children, which meant that Tom originally qualified for only twenty percent of the proceeds. Shortly thereafter a son named James died, which increased Tom's share of any land sales profits to twenty-five percent. Between February 1896 and April 1902, the Chadsams sold 20 acres of their land for a total price of \$1,000. Even though his percentage increased upon his son's death, Tom's stake in these proceeds was just \$243 after the Indian office subtracted administrative fees. Since the government paid out this amount over five years Tom likely did not have enough capital to make more than modest investments.⁸⁰

Surprisingly, there were cases when an individual patent holder's share dwindled when a co-patent holder died. Under tenants-in-common protocols, when a family member passed away, the government transferred his or her shares to immediate survivors. But if a child left home and started his or her own family and then died, the shares went to the new family's surviving spouse and children, causing a further dilution of the payments. A series of family deaths could chop up interest in a property into small and impractical portions.

Of course, there were situations in which deaths within a family led to a significant increase in the shares of surviving family members, as in the just referred to case of Patent 11. Richard and Lucy Linnaywah saw each of their portions of the patent climb from twenty percent to thirty-three percent because of the deaths of some of their children.⁸¹ There were other cases on the reserve in which one individual was able to obtain complete control over the patent

⁸⁰ Tom Chadsam et al., Patent 160, found in "Schedule of blocks that were sold and added to the City of Tacoma, pp 11-12, box 1, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, RG 75, NA-PAR.

⁸¹ Richard Linnaywah et al., Ibid.

because of family deaths, as exemplified by Patent 24. The government awarded the title to John Salesman, his wife Che-kud-a-Kai, and a daughter named Mary. A son named Peter John, who was born after 1886, assumed complete control of the patent after the deaths of all of the original patentees.⁸² Cases like Patents 11 and 24, however, were rare.

Perhaps the most distressing aspect of the Puyallup's land sales experience between 1894 and 1904 was that individuals, whether they had complete control over a patent or not, received much less money than they would have without the law. The case of Lucy Jim, the sole interest in Patent 116 ½, illustrates this point. In 1896, she sold sixty acres of land for \$3,660.00, and in 1899, she sold another 14.64 acres for \$585.60, earning her a total of \$4,245.60, a significant amount of capital at that time. According to the law, the government deducted a ten percent administrative cost from this sum to fund the collection of payments from buyers and then another ten percent each time it paid her cash from her escrow account. The four percent interest that the Puyallup Act directed the government to pay her on her money while it was in the escrow account would have partially offset the administrative deductions. Hence, the government should have paid her a minimum of \$3,438.94, or \$46.07 per acre (this sum represented eighty-one percent of the original sales price). The Indian Affairs Office paid Lucy the money over ten years because the sales did not occur at the same time. This meant that she was due to receive a minimum average annual payment of \$343.89.⁸³ Though this sum represented a useful amount of cash, based upon these figures, Lucy would not have been able to purchase the land she sold with the money she got from that land's sale.

⁸² John Salerhanul et al., Patent 24, p. 104. Ibid.

⁸³ Lucy Jim, Patent 116½, p. 104, Ibid.

This was not the only penalty Lucy had to bear. According to the records, the government inexplicably failed to pay her all of the money it owed her. The Indian Office gave Lucy only \$2,977.24, which was just seventy percent of the initial sale price, or eighty-six percent of the amount she was due after she had paid her administrative fees. In fact, documents indicate that the Indian Office may not have paid any of the Puyallup Indians the entire amount that it owed them. In the course of gathering information for this study, I viewed several hundred sets of sales records. I excluded any partially recorded entries from consideration, but I was still able to find more than seventy complete accounts. Of these, I did not find one instance in which the government paid a Puyallup allottee at least the eighty-one percent it had pledged to him or her. Allottees should have received slightly more than eighty-one percent with the four percent interest their money earned while in escrow. I found no evidence that explains why this shortfall occurred.

This loss of income was devastating to the Puyallup. One way to contextualize the impact that the Puyallup Act's payout system had upon reservation allottees is to compare sales proceeds to Puyallup wage earnings and buying power at the turn of the century. Some Indians would have been able to use the land sales income to complement their wages or, if they were a farmer, their sales receipts. Due to the tribe's high unemployment rate, many Natives would have used their payouts as their primary source of revenue. In either case, this money would have given Puyallup land sellers additional buying power. Unfortunately, the evidence suggests that while the Puyallup Act provided the reservation allottees with much needed income it also forced the Indians who sold their land to exchange it for what proved to be just a stopgap measure to their poverty.

To appreciate the gravity of the Puyallup's economic situation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one can compare it to what other Americans earned and spent during the life of the law. For instance, in 1901, the national average family income was \$891.82.⁸⁴ I have found no similar information about the Puyallup nor have I located employment records or pay scales for them from this time period. Nevertheless, anecdotal information tells us that some Puyallup did have regular jobs. Some of the occupations open to Indians during this time were in the timber industry. Two low-skilled positions that a Puyallup would have likely qualified for were as a common laborer and a logger. Between 1901 and 1902, a common laborer earned, on average, \$1.95 per day for a ten hour shift. This translated to \$11.70 per week, based upon a six day workweek, and \$608.40 per year, which was sixty-eight percent of the average annual income in America. Meanwhile, a logger earned roughly \$2.67 per day, which equaled \$16.05 per week and \$834.60 per year.⁸⁵ This sum was much closer, ninety-three percent, to the national income average.

A typical Puyallup would have more likely earned a living as a farm hand. The information available reveals that the daily rates for non-harvest workers in Washington State, in 1899, was \$1.62, which calculates to \$9.72 a week or 505.44 per year, or fifty-six percent of the national yearly income average. Meanwhile, harvest work in Washington State was \$2.13 each day during that same year. This type of work garnered higher pay than general farm work, but it

⁸⁴ "Cost of Living," *Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor*, November, 1903, accessed December 1, 2015, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.35112103417178;view=1up;seq=1159>.

⁸⁵ *Department of Commerce and Labor, Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor, Volume VIII.-1903* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), accessed October 14, 2015, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.35112103417178;view=1up;seq=11>.

was only available at certain times of the year, usually in the fall months.⁸⁶ It is likely that most Puyallup who worked as harvesters did so to pad their income rather than rely upon it for their survival.

Puyallup who worked any of these jobs would have earned less than the national average yearly income and therefore would have had less purchasing power than typical Americans did. Once again, it is difficult to know how much money the average Puyallup spent to survive. Yet, we do know that at the turn of the century, the average American family spent \$751.46 or eighty-four percent of their yearly income, on basic expenditures. They spent \$308.53 of that sum, or forty-one percent, on food.⁸⁷

Any of the Puyallup who earned money solely in the timber or the agricultural industries would not have had enough money to meet the American annual average food budget unless they sold their land or they participated in time-consuming customary hunting and gathering practices. This made their earnings on allotments sales significant to their well-being. To understand how important they were, one may consider these figures. As I stated earlier in this chapter, during the life of the Puyallup Act, the average Puyallup land seller earned \$59.81 for each acre they sold. The average size of each allotment was forty acres and each allottee could sell up to half of their land until 1904. Unfortunately for the Puyallup, they sold, on average, only forty-percent of their land, or sixteen acres, through 1894. Using these figures, each allottee would have grossed an average of \$956.96 at this time. After the government took out

⁸⁶ George K. Holmes, "Wages of Farm Labor. Nineteenth Investigation, in 1909, Continuing a Series that began in 1866," *U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Statistics—Bulletin 99* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), accessed October 14, 2015, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015070561595;q1=%22Wages%20of%20Farm%20Labor%22;start=1;size=100;page=root;view=image;seq=537;num=7>.

⁸⁷ "Cost of Living."

administrative fees, the seller would have netted eighty-one percent of that sum, which was \$775.13. Since the government paid this out over five years, a typical Puyallup allottee would have received \$155.02 per year. Of course, this ever-diminishing amount shrank further if the primary allottee had to split the earnings with their adult children. The total also shrank due to the fact the government apparently did not pay each land seller what was owed. Nevertheless, for simplicity's sake, I will use \$155.02 for this argument.

The \$155.02 that an average allottee received annually would have been significant to them because it would have provided an extra twenty-five percent of income for a common laborer in the timber trades or an additional thirty percent to the wages of a non-harvest farm worker. Even though these two percentages should have been higher, they still gave some employed Indians enough money to approach, and in the case of a logger, exceed the national average income. The land sales proceeds would have been even more vital to those Puyallup who could not find consistent employment, despite the fact that the annual average land sales payment represented a meager seventeen percent of the national income average.

Thus, one can see that the money the average Puyallup land seller made—or lost—on land sales during the life of the Puyallup Act had various impacts upon tribal members. When one considers the sales proceeds as a revenue stream one can also see that there were some obvious and consistent negative effects of government supervised land sales upon allottees. To begin with, once an Indian made a sale the real value of the proceeds diminished because the government paid out the sum over time and the government charged administrative fees. These decisions more than cancelled out the interest the government paid on the escrow accounts. They also made the seller more susceptible to the ill-effects of inflation. For example, from 1895

to 1900, the price of food along the West Coast increased by nearly one and one-half percent.⁸⁸ Unfortunately, food was just one of many items that rose in price during this time. All the while, the purchasing power of the land sales proceeds that sat in escrow accounts diminished.

Another problem for the Puyallup was the fact that most of the Indians earned less money per acre after the Puyallup Act ended than they did during its tenure. One reason for this was that after 1904, the government did not ensure that buyers would pay a minimum price for the land. Prices would have also dipped after that time because approximately sixty percent of the reservation's land was still available, which would have meant supply exceeded demand. Seattle's growth at this time would have also competed for land purchasers' money.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, much of the reservation land that was still available after 1903 was not as good for farming, which would have reduced its value as well.

Perhaps the biggest problem for the Puyallup who came to depend upon land sales receipts was that the payments from each sale had a limited life span. (The length was first ten years and then Congress reduced it to five.) This meant that when the payments stopped, the sellers were without that particular income stream and, more importantly, they no longer had the land that had produced it. Since most of the Indians used their land income for basic needs rather than luxuries or investments, they often sank back to a poverty level that they had experienced prior to the Puyallup Act.

⁸⁸ "Cost of Living."

⁸⁹ A cursory analysis of Tacoma farmland prices in the classified advertisement section of the *Daily Ledger* newspaper shows this pattern. Between 1895 and 1905, a sampling of farmland prices in and around the area shows that prices asked for an acre of farmland in 1895 was \$24 per acre. In 1900, the price asked rose to \$40 per acre. By 1905, the price asked dropped to \$12 per acre. *Daily Ledger* (Tacoma), August 22, 1895, p. 7; July 29, 1900, p. 15, August 25, 1905, p. 10.

The Puyallup Act's administrative shortcomings and restrictions, the government's failure to pay land sellers what it owed to them, and the economic slowdown all brought on by the 1893 depression economically devastated a large number of Puyallup. For better or for worse, we can put a face upon some of the victims of the law. For instance, many Puyallup who suffered were aged allottees who became especially susceptible to dependency at this time. John Willahe had owned Patent 103 since 1886, which consisted of approximately fifteen acres of land. By 1890, he had farmed just three acres of his property, likely because of his advanced age. His inability to develop his allotment compelled him to sell it in order to make ends meet. The poor economic conditions and the Puyallup Act's restrictions left him with little capital. Therefore, by 1904, as Willahe and his wife became disease ridden, blind, and crippled, they had no assets to fall back upon. A Puyallup reservation resident attempted to support the couple but found the task overwhelming, so Harry Liston, the head of the Puyallup reservation school, requested that a local government agency help support them.⁹⁰ The odds were that John Willahe's age and poor health, combined with the ill effects of the Puyallup Act and the economy, would have trumped any strategies he might have employed to remedy his situation.

When the Puyallup Act expired in 1904, many of the Puyallup found themselves in a precarious financial condition. A number of reservation property owners responded to their predicament by selling what was left of their holdings in order to obtain some financial relief. Many were desperate sellers, which meant they were apt to sell their land as quickly as they

⁹⁰ Edwin Eells, personal notes for his 1890 Puyallup Reservation Census, in folder 10, box 3, Eells Papers,; Harry Liston, Puyallup Indian School superintendent, to Pierce County Commissioners, September 12, 1904, book "August 1, 1903–March 15, 1905," box 25, "Miscellaneous Letters Sent, 1901-1919," Records of the Puyallup Indian Agency, RG 75, NA–PAR.

could, even if it was at a reduced price. In one case, a family sold a forty-acre section of their property, which had an appraised value of \$2,000, for \$300.⁹¹

Over time, the Puyallup's poor financial state caused some of them to turn against each other in the courts over land titles. One such case involved Annie Guyatt, and brothers Nugent and August Kautz, who contested the ownership of an allotment originally held by Napoleon and Sarah Gordon. The Kautz brothers were motivated to obtain this land because, as stated in Chapter 4, their original allotments were too swampy to farm. Napoleon and Sarah had no children living with them when the government awarded them their patent. Then in 1886, Napoleon died without a will, survived by his wife and a sister named Kitty Kautz, who had her own patent. Then Kitty died without a will, but she was survived by her sons, August and Nugent. Then, in 1897, Sarah died without a will, leaving behind her adult daughter from another marriage, Annie Guyatt, who took possession of the Gordon land. The Kautz brothers challenged this possession by claiming that the Dawes Act of 1887 had made the Puyallup citizens and therefore extinguished their tribe. They therefore insisted that state law and not federal rules or treaties should determine land inheritance. They added that they should have the land because, unlike Annie, they were Napoleon's direct blood relatives. The Washington State Supreme Court eventually heard the case and ruled that Annie was the rightful owner of the land for three reasons: she was the natural daughter of Sarah, the possession of the allotment reverted

⁹¹ Harry F. Liston, Superintendent and Special Disbursing Agent of the Puyallup Agent, Report, August 29, 1903, *Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior..., Ending June 30, 1903. Indian Affairs, Part 1, Report of the Commissioners* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), 109.

to Sarah upon Napoleon's death, and the transfer from Napoleon to Sarah took place while the Medicine Creek Treaty's jurisdiction over the Puyallup was still in effect.⁹²

George Bird also found himself in court fighting fellow Puyallup for control of allotment lands. George and his wife Mary, who were childless, received their patent from the government in 1886. Mary died one year later, leaving children from another marriage who eventually claimed their mother's portion of the allotment. George challenged the claim and, as in the previous case, the judge ruled that Mary died while the Puyallup were still under the jurisdiction of the Medicine Creek Treaty. Mary's children attempted to appeal the decision all the way to the United States Supreme Court, but the judges refused to hear the case because they said it involved treaty interpretation, which, they stated, was the responsibility of Congress.⁹³

While some Puyallup tribal members litigated against each other, most of their courtroom activity involved cases against non-Natives. Frank Ross, the supposed friend of the Puyallup, was the busiest of the non-Indian plaintiffs, suing numerous Puyallup with whom he had made lease agreements after 1889. Recall that Ross had worded the contracts so that as soon as the Natives obtained the right to sell their land, the lease payments reverted to sales transactions. After the Puyallup Act went into effect, some of the Indians who signed these deals with Ross sold their land to other customers, which Ross claimed was a breach of contract. He thus sued individuals who bought land he had leased and the Puyallup who had sold that land to others.

⁹² *Annie Guyatt vs. Nugent Kautz, et al.* 41 Wash. 115, 83 P. 9 *Guyatt v. Kautz* (S. Ct. 1905), accessed July 27, 2009, Westlaw.org; Judge Whitson, Opinion *Guyatt v. Kautz*, Folder: "1903," Box 3, Series 25, Correspondences of the Puyallup Land Commissioners, 1894, 1909, RG 75, NA-PAR.

⁹³ *Terry v. Bird*, Circuit Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, February 1, 1904, accessed July 9, 2009, Westlaw.org; *Bird V. Winger*, 24 Wash. 269, 64 P. 178 (S Ct. 1901), accessed July 7, 2009, Westlaw.org; "Affects Title to Indian Land," *Daily Ledger*, August 9, 1900, 3.

When Ross took the Indians to court he also demanded that they transfer enough of their remaining property to him to compensate for the money he had paid them. The fact that Ross won most of these suits caused “much anxiety among both Indians and white people.”⁹⁴

These land sales conditions, the resulting lack of money, and the lawsuits led many allottees to make ill-advised financial choices. In one situation, an allottee traded his half interest in a forty-acre lot, valued at approximately \$100, for a small saloon. He may have believed that this transaction would provide him with a viable, long-term moneymaking operation. However, it was not long before authorities raided the establishment and confiscated his entire stock of liquor. Ironically, the government official who reported this and similar incidents blamed the Puyallup for their bad fortunes. He observed, “There is no law to prevent an Indian or a white man from throwing his property away if he desires to do so.”⁹⁵ He gave no thought to the possibility that government policy had played a role in causing these unfortunate events.

Official criticism of Puyallup “throwing...property away” was prevalent after the Puyallup Act took effect, especially when the Indians traded for or purchased alcohol. These complaints echoed Edwin Eells’s earlier criticisms of Natives who used their land sales earnings to purchase spirits, which often brought calamity to their lives. One government critic of the land sales policy reported, “Not only men, but even women, drink to excess and can be seen

⁹⁴ William Jones, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, “Puyallup Lands, Washington,” Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1903. (University of Washington Digital Collection) accessed April 10, 2007; *Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior..., Ending June 30, 1903. Indian Affairs, Part 1, Report of the Commissioners* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), XXX; Puyallup Land commission, letter to Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Thomas Smith, Folder: “1897,” Box 1, Series 25, Puyallup Indian Agency, Correspondences of the Puyallup Indian Commissioners, 1894-1909, RG 75. NA-PAR.

⁹⁵ Liston, Report, August 29, 1903, 109.

almost every day and night lying either in the road or in a ditch near by, dead drunk....” He went on to say that even children were “...following the same example set them by their parents, and, in some cases, leading rather than following.”⁹⁶

For some Indians, alcoholism was a serious problem that cost them their lives and it is not a stretch to imagine these individuals had succumbed to hopelessness due to their poverty. Nevertheless, it is also worth noting that despite their financial hardships, numerous other Puyallup tribal members were teetotalers. Sadly, officials never bothered to say much about these people.

Over time, the promise of land sales had become a nightmare for many of the Puyallup who sold or lost their property under the Puyallup Act. They suffered further when they could not earn enough money in the marketplace to supplement their reduced land sales proceeds. Meanwhile, many of the non-Natives who had moved on to reservation lands further transformed their surroundings in ways that continued to diminish the Puyallup’s pre-treaty hunting, fishing, and gathering opportunities. This left many Indians with fewer ways to alleviate their difficult economic situation. Some of these Puyallup understood that their poverty was confining them to the fringes of American society and exposing them to Tacoma’s basest elements, so they abandoned the reservation to find new places of refuge.⁹⁷

It is difficult to make an accurate determination of exactly how many Puyallup resettled elsewhere and where they went. Puyallup Indian School superintendents conducted a series of

⁹⁶ Ibid., 335

⁹⁷ Frank Terry, to Commissioner of Indian affairs, August 20, 1897, *Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1897: Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (Washington, D.C., 1897), 293.

tribal censuses between 1904 and 1909, indicating an average of 485 Puyallup per count.⁹⁸ But other records suggest those numbers were not entirely accurate. While the government's issuance of allotments and patents had lured many Puyallup back to the reserve, by 1904, school superintendent Harry Liston was reporting that many tribal members were now living in other parts of the region, which, as he lamented, made an accurate count both difficult and expensive.⁹⁹ Federal census records support Liston's suspicion that many of the Puyallup had become an increasingly dispersed and mostly landless people. As of 1910, only twenty-three Puyallup-run households, consisting of 130 individuals, still remained on what had been allotted reservation lands. In fact, in the whole of Pierce County at that time, there were just forty-two Puyallup-run households, for a total population of 198 Puyallup.¹⁰⁰

A Pierce County map reveals that by 1915, fewer than one dozen Puyallup families still owned what had been reservation land.¹⁰¹ This does not mean that most of the Puyallup had vacated the region, but it strongly suggests that a large percentage of Puyallup had sold their

⁹⁸ Puyallup tribal censuses 1904-1909, Puyallup et al. Indian Census Records, 1901-1909, roll 409, Indian Census Rolls, NA-PAR.

⁹⁹ Harry F. Liston, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Aug. 18, 1904, in *Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1904: Indian Affairs*, Pt. 1: *Report of the Commissioner, and Appendixes* (Washington, D.C., 1904), 353-55.

¹⁰⁰ 13th Census of the United States: 1910 Population, Reservation Precinct, Pierce County, WA, Reservation District, Earl District, Artondale District, Tacoma Ward 4, Tacoma Ward 5, Gig Harbor, Puyallup Precinct, Puyallup Ward 3, Steilacoom Precinct, Lake Tapps Precinct, Milton, Pierce County, Washington, found at Ancestry.com, accessed January 24, 2011, <http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/search/db.aspx?dbid+7884>; Information also available on microfilm, National Archive rolls T624, 1665; T624, 1664 (Tacoma City Only); T624, 1664, found at Tacoma Public Library Northwest Room.

¹⁰¹ *Kroll's Atlas of Pierce County*, 19-20, 26.

most valuable asset, probably for a fraction of its worth, and then established roots elsewhere. The Puyallup's predicament of poverty and landlessness would endure for generations.

THE TIDELANDS

Between 1893 and 1904, the Puyallup Act played a significant role in the collapse of the Puyallup Reservation. In 1904, Congress carried out its final obligation in administering the law by passing legislation that officially ended the act and gave the Puyallup the freedom to dispose of their property as they wished.¹⁰² Time would show that the lawmakers' decision proved bittersweet for the Puyallup because while the law's restrictions on land sales were now gone, conditions generally did not improve for the Indians.

After 1904, some Puyallup believed that ownership of the reservation's valuable tidelands remained in question. The problem was that after 1857, state and federal officials had made several decisions that put the rightful ownership of this ribbon of property in dispute. When Isaac Stevens surveyed the new, larger reservation for the Indians during that year, he drew a straight line across the waterfront region of the reserve, which should have preserved a large portion of the tidelands for the Puyallup. The tribe welcomed this concession for many members used the area to meet their subsistence needs. When the government prepared to institute the allotment portion of the Medicine Creek Treaty after 1872, it resurveyed the reservation and this time authorities changed the mapped coastline to a meandering border that hugged the waterline at the high-tide mark. This decision apparently removed most of the tidelands from the Puyallup's possession. However, when the government issued patents after

¹⁰² "An Act Confirming the Removal of Restrictions Upon Alienation by the Puyallup Indians of the State of Washington and their Allotted Lands, April 28, 1904." Found in: *Statutes at Large of the United States of America, From November, 1903 to March, 1905* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1905), 487.

1886 it again adjusted the Puyallup's rights to the Commencement Bay coast. Some of the titles that officials gave to allottees included tidelands, which now put portions of the property back into Indian hands.¹⁰³

Washington State made its own claims to the tidelands after 1889. State officials believed that as soon as Washington became a state, it automatically gained control of these portions of the shoreline and, therefore, had the jurisdiction to plat and sell them. By 1906, the state was offering the tidelands to private interests.¹⁰⁴ Frank Ross, ever the entrepreneur, was among the first in line to purchase some of this property.¹⁰⁵

By 1909, most of what had been the 1857 reservation was in the possession of non-Indians, and the Puyallup community from the reservation era was now unrecognizable. Puyallup leadership sought to reclaim what they could of the reserve by insisting that Washington State had illegally sold the tidelands. They therefore sued the new non-Native owners to get back the land. This case unified two previous adversaries, the Puyallup and the federal government, which joined the case as the Indians' guardian.

The Puyallup's suit went to the U.S. Circuit Court in Seattle, where Judge Cornelius Hanford issued what became his final ruling concerning the Puyallup. As I stated earlier, the

¹⁰³ *National Lawyers Guild. Law Student Indian Summer Project* (Seattle, Washington, 1973), 51; "Puyallup Lands," Report of the commissioner of Indian Affairs, (1908/09?), UW Digital Archives, accessed April 10, 2007, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/lctext/id/1443/rec/1>; "Indians Never Laid Claim to Tidelands," *Daily Ledger*, March 29, 1908, 23.

¹⁰⁴ Caroline Gallacci, "Planning the City of Destiny: An Urban History of Tacoma to 1930" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1999), 296.

¹⁰⁵ *Law Student Indian Summer Project*, 51; E.T. Short, "Frank C. Ross and the Tacoma Tideflats," *The Tacoma Times* (No date given), found at Tacoma Public Library Electronic Files, "Northwest People."

Indians had most often come before the jurist seeking the designation of “citizen” and the rights that came with it, and he had obliged them. The Indians’ most recent example of this occurred in the 1901 case *U.S. v. Kopp*. Hanford ruled that the government had illegally arrested Kopp, a non-Native man who had sold liquor to a mixed-blood Puyallup and reservation allotment owner named Walter Davis. Authorities charged Kopp with breaking an 1897 Congressional act that prohibited the sale of alcohol to Indians “for whom the United States hold title to land in trust, or who is a ward of the government under charge of an Indian superintendent or agent, or over whom the government, through its departments, exercises guardianship....” Hanford used the Medicine Creek Treaty and the General Allotment Act, as well as the 1893 Puyallup Act, to declare that Davis was not a ward of the government and, therefore, able to legally purchase liquor.¹⁰⁶ As usual, Hanford was not concerned with Davis’s privilege to become intoxicated but he wanted to ensure that Americans had the opportunity to conduct business transactions with the Indians that were free of government restrictions.

In *Ashton*, Hanford once again ruled for the flow of commercial transactions and development. He acknowledged that the Washington State Constitution established that state citizens could not claim unappropriated public lands lying within state boundaries or any lands held by Natives or tribes. However, this rule became moot after Congress had extinguished the Puyallup’s reservation when it enacted the Puyallup Act. Since the Puyallup landowners were now citizens, they only had claim to shoreline at the high-water mark. This meant that Washington State possessed the tidelands in question, which made Ashton et al. “bona fide purchasers from the state of the lands involved in this litigation.” Hanford added that he was

¹⁰⁶ *U.S. v. Kopp*, July 24, 1901, accessed July 9, 2010, Westlaw.com; “Red Man May Quench Thirst,” *Daily Ledger*, July 25, 1901, 3.

bound to issue this particular verdict since the plaintiffs had failed to produce "...any deed, grant, law, treaty, record, or prescriptive right evidencing any color of title...in this litigation." He finished his declaration by reminding everyone concerned that the government had legally obtained the lands in question from the Puyallup in the Medicine Creek Treaty, and while he acknowledged that the agreement gave the Indians fishing rights, it did not imply that the Puyallup retained control of lands or waters where the fish were. According to him, only an act of Congress could to that.¹⁰⁷

CONCLUSION: THE END OF THE PUYALLUP RESERVATION?

Many Puyallup, both poor and financially secure, believed at some level that selling their valuable reservation land would provide them with significant amounts of capital that they could use to attend to their basic needs and improve their level of comfort. The Indians could also spend the money improving their fishing and farming operations and other assorted businesses. Government officials, on the other hand, were eager to give their American constituents the opportunity to access the reservation, but they feared that their efforts to transform the Puyallup into independent and contributing members of the larger American society remained unfinished. Congress therefore created the Puyallup Act to make the Puyallup's reserve available to Americans while keeping the Indians tied to some of their land.

The Puyallup Act contributed to the demise of the Puyallup's reserve, and the 1909 *Ashton* case seemingly closed the book on its existence. Sixteen years after the Puyallup Act's passage, Americans owned the lion's share of the original 18,060 acres of Indian land and almost all of its former residents were mired in financial destitution. It appeared Judge Hanford's

¹⁰⁷ *United States et al. v. Ashton et al.*

decision had proven that Edwin Eells was correct when he insisted the 1893 law would cause the Indians to lose their land and misspend their money.

Eells may have accurately foretold the long-term impact of the Puyallup Act, and some historians who are critical of allotment would have agreed with him that the government's efforts to modernize the Indians failed because it abandoned the program before it accomplished its goals. This reproach of government policy suggests that if Congress and the reformers had just held on longer to their original plan, things would have turned out better for the Indians. An analysis of the Puyallup Indian Reservation between 1893 and 1909 suggests otherwise. The fact was the Puyallup Act was a misguided government program that hurt the allottees, regardless of their comfort level with American society. For many Puyallup, one of the law's primary flaws was not that it removed government oversight and assistance too soon, but that it was overly protective. These restraints prevented the Indians from enjoying the full value of their land and ultimately pushed most tribal members into a state of dependency.

The Puyallup Indians' life next to a rapidly expanding city had a direct impact upon this outcome. On one hand, the town brought added value to the Puyallup's land and it offered Indians the opportunity to participate in numerous social and economic interactions with their American neighbors. These associations accelerated the pace at which many Puyallup adopted aspects of non-Native culture and used them to their benefit. One group, the land sales activists, believed that they had integrated themselves into American society at a pace that met, if not exceeded, the expectations of reservation administrators. On the other hand, the reservation's proximity to Tacoma exposed its inhabitants to harsher economic consequences during the 1893 panic. When the city fell into an economic depression, it dragged the reservation down with it.

Because the Puyallup Act and other factors put most of the Puyallup under financial

duress, they grudgingly sold their property under the Puyallup Act's restrictive system, and they suffered for it. In the end, the majority of Puyallup remained impoverished, just like numerous other Indians throughout the nation at this time. We will never know what might have happened to the Puyallup if Congress had created a less confining law or if the economic panic of 1893 had not occurred. It is likely that more Indians would have benefited from selling their land. Yet we should be cautious in presuming that a large number of tribal members could have avoided experiencing some level of economic trauma. They still would have had to endure the effects of racism, and the Puyallup, like their American neighbors, possessed various levels of understanding of marketplace mechanics. Thus, some Puyallup would have suffered, regardless of the law's makeup. In any case, agency officials' efforts to transform the Puyallup, Congressional efforts to protect them, and a judge's 1909 decision to abandon them made it much more difficult for many tribal members to do what their ancestors had done for generations: accept and shape new ideas, institutions, and practices to maintain their community and customs.

EPILOGUE

One of the world's most astounding transportations systems is the United States interstate highway grid, an intricate web of roads that allows travelers easy access to all of the nation's forty-eight contiguous states and their primary cities. These highways are commercial zones as well as thoroughfares, where one can see thousands of billboards and road signs that call out for travelers' attention and their dollars.

Interstate 5 is a major north-south artery that runs from the southern reaches of California to Washington State's border with Canada. Approximately ten miles of this road passes through the city of Tacoma, Washington, which sits on the southeast corner of Puget Sound. Each day, nearly 200,000 drivers travel along this portion of the I-5 corridor and see signs of various shapes, sizes, and technological formats. One billboard along this strip of road stands out among the rest. Its owners paid over one million dollars for the structure and they placed it near the bottom of a descending stretch of the highway, just southeast of Tacoma. This marker is 140 feet tall and rests upon a foundation of over one million pounds of concrete. Two hundred thousand pounds of steel make up its frame and it encases approximately two miles of electrical cable—statistics that imply the edifice's permanence. The accompanying message board is 3,200 square feet in size and features 290,000 pixels that provide sign operators with the ability to access roughly 281 trillion color combinations. The sign's brightness can be so intense that the Washington State Department of Transportation has required its owners to reduce the brilliance of its light by ten percent after dark in order to protect the eyesight of nocturnal travelers.¹ Despite this regulation, the billboard continues to make its proclamations as boldly as any that one can find between Mexico to Canada.

¹ "No, really—you can't miss It," *News Tribune* (Tacoma), May 31, 2008, D-1, D-4.

The sign is a beacon for the Puyallup Indian Tribe's Emerald Queen Casino (EQC), one of the largest gambling and entertainment centers in Washington State. The business is successful due, in large part, to its location within the radius of the Seattle-Tacoma Metropolitan Area, which as of 2014, contained a population of 3.61 million residents.² The Puyallup have derived enormous financial benefits from the casino and have used the proceeds to strengthen their economic and political position within the South Sound community. The EQC is also a testament to the ways in which the Puyallup community has adapted and continues to adapt to ever changing circumstances in its efforts to maintain a tribal identity and culture.

In the five chapters of this study, I explain that during the post-contact era the Puyallup generally welcomed and used Euro-American ideas and technologies, in part, to perpetuate important aspects of their culture. This was not an easy task, and tragically, within a generation after contact, Euro-Americans had taken more from the Puyallup than they had provided. The Indians subsequently had to make numerous unanticipated adjustments to their lives. One significant change the Puyallup tribe had to make after the turn of the twentieth century was becoming nearly landless. Without the lion's share of their reservation, the Puyallup were almost invisible to numerous non-Indian residents of the South Puget Sound. It was easy for Americans to assume these Indians had disappeared because a small cemetery and vacant school grounds were the only residual reminders of what had been their post-Medicine Creek Treaty reservation. Meanwhile, for nearly forty years, the government did not officially recognize the Puyallup as a tribe. In the eyes of many non-Native observers, this condition made the Puyallup

² "The Greater Seattle Datasheet, accessed December 30, 2014, accessed December 30, 2014, <http://www.seattle.gov/oir/datasheet/demographics.htm>; Gene Balk, "Census: Seattle is the fastest-growing big city in the U.S.," *Seattle Times*, May 22, 2014, accessed December 30, 2014, <http://blogs.seattletimes.com/fyi-guy/2014/05/22/census-seattle-is-the-fastest-growing-big-city-in-the-u-s/>.

who remained scattered throughout the South Sound area the last living relics of a bygone society. The anthropologist Marian Smith gave credence to this assumption in 1940, when she wrote that her research on the Puyallup-Nisqually peoples was a “monument to the culture into which they were born and which they saw vanish before their eyes.”³ The Puyallup’s 140-foot sign is a proclamation that Smith and like-minded observers were wrong.

The EQC’s sign is a testament to the Puyallup’s ability to survive and thrive in an urban environment. Their story is significant for at least two reasons. First, the Puyallup’s inhabitation of lands in and around a major urban center is part of a nationwide trend in which Native Americans have come to reside in cities in large numbers. As of 2013, seven of every ten Indians lived in a metropolitan area, which was up from eight percent in 1940 and forty-five percent in 1970.⁴ Second, while most urban Indians have endured high rates of poverty, the Puyallup are currently experiencing economic and political success by selecting, reshaping, and then integrating aspects of American culture into their own.⁵ The EQC has been the cornerstone of a set of recent economic enterprises that the Puyallup have undertaken within the market economy to rebuild their reservation and reaffirm their culture. These ventures also prove that the Puyallup people continue to balance tradition and change.

The Puyallup’s significance within the South Sound economy is a recent phenomenon. For most of the twentieth century, tribal members struggled to rebound from the traumas inflicted by the Medicine Creek Treaty and the Puyallup Act of 1893. Puyallup culture

³ Marian W. Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), xi.

⁴ Timothy Williams, “Quietly, Indians Reshape Cities and Reservations,” *New York Times* (April 13, 2013), accessed July 5, 2013, www.nytimes.com/2013/04.

⁵ Ibid. As of 2013, urban Indians experienced a poverty rate of nearly 27%, as compared to a national rate among urban groups of 14.3%.

persevered during these dark days because some tribal members participated in a host of activities that were a legacy of their past. Many Puyallup maintained their community by creating an identity based upon “relatedness,” or an “informal consensus.”⁶ Other tribal members employed activism. The Puyallup’s use of courts and legislatures was an especially effective strategy in reestablishing treaty rights. These efforts not only pushed the government to acknowledge and then enforce the Medicine Creek Treaty, but they allowed the Puyallup tribe to regain portions of their reservation and reinvigorate their community.



Prior to 1893, many Puyallup Indians believed that the Puyallup Act of 1893 would be a panacea for many of their financial problems. It instead initiated a fifteen-year process in which the Commencement Bay Indians sold virtually all of their reservation lands but received only a fraction of its value. Consequently, many tribal members became part of a diaspora to other locations throughout the region. The results of the 1909 *Ashton* case perpetuated this trend. Some tribal members resettled on the nearby Nisqually or Muckleshoot reservations, or found work in Seattle or Portland. Others ventured farther from their old homes. Indians did remain in the area, either to take advantage of any economic opportunities that they could find or because they had nowhere else to go. As of 1913, government officials placed the number of Puyallup in the South Sound area at around 372 individuals. This number did not vary much over the next several decades. By 1929, the total dropped to 344 and eight years later, it fell further to 322.⁷

⁶ Donald Lee Fixico, *American Indians in a Modern World* (Lanham: Alta Mira Press, 2008), 39-40; Susan Lobo, “Is Urban a Person or a Place? Characteristics of Urban Indian Country,” in *American Indians and the Urban Experience*, eds. Susan Lobo and Kurt Peters (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2001), 76-66, 80-81.

⁷ The 1929 numbers are based upon the Puyallup who participated in the government enrollment. These numbers are smaller than other counts because many tribal members refused to register

Most of the Puyallup who found economic possibilities around Tacoma still faced hardships precipitated by poverty and structural racism. As usual, these circumstances hit the tribe's elderly especially hard. A member named Indian Dick was a case in point. Dick's age was undocumented, but a photograph of him from the late 1920s suggests he lived well into his eighth decade, if not longer. His advanced age prevented him from working what was left of his lands or hiring himself out to others. Dick suffered even more because his lone surviving son had to move elsewhere to find steady employment. The son's departure forced Dick and his wife to depend upon the kindness of a non-Native friend who provided the elderly couple with food and other necessities until they both passed away.⁸ Indian Dick's case was not an isolated one. In 1915, several Puyallup were among a group of older Indians who were so poor a local official asked the Indian Office for \$500 to help care for them. The administrator noted that the scarcity of jobs in the area made it quite difficult for friends and relatives of older Indians to support themselves, much less their aged dependents.⁹

Despite the Puyallup's dire economic conditions, tribal members continued to retain their identity and community in a host of ways, which included participating in traditional activities. For example, in 1928 a group of Puyallup Valley Indian gamblers assembled from dusk to dawn

back into the tribe out of fear of what the government might do with the information. Robert Ruby, John Brown, and Cary Collins, *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of the Pacific Northwest, Third Edition* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 238; Annual Reports, 1913-1914, Box: 34, Folder: Annual Report—Statistical (Cushman Indian School....) 1913, NA-PAR; John R. Swanton, *The Indian Tribes of North America* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), 434.

⁸ "Indian, Once Owner of Puyallup Lands, Dies Almost a Pauper," *Daily Ledger* (Tacoma), February 14, 1925, 2.

⁹ Thomas Wilson, Cushman Indian School Superintendent, letter to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 28, 1915, Press Copies of Letters Sent to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1915, 1917-1918, Folder July 1, 1915-August 31, 1915, NA-PAR.

to “toss the bones” for social and economic reasons. The activity also still had religious implications, for the players like their ancestors, believed that success or failure in the game revealed whom “the great Manitou” was favoring that evening.¹⁰

In some cases, the Puyallup practiced their customs in order to earn money from Americans. In 1914, Puyallup Indian School officials sponsored boxing and wrestling “smokers” (contests) that pitted contestants from the Indian school against those representing Tacoma and YMCA clubs. Indian war dancers amused the guests in between bouts. The entertainers were reportedly “especially popular” among the non-Native attendees.¹¹ In addition, the Puyallup attracted large numbers of non-Indian tourists to regional powwows where the Indians sold assorted Native curios to interested customers. One gathering in August of 1933 featured a host of activities, including a clambake “in the traditional manner,” and storytelling. The “widely known Puyallup Indian,” Henry Sicade, closed one evening by recalling a famous battle between canoe wielding Puyallup and members of a northern tribe. One enraptured non-Native member of the audience described the Indian’s recollection of the Puyallup’s fierce, imaginative, and victorious warrior ancestors as magical in nature.¹²

There were times when the city’s growth made it difficult for the Indians to continue some of their traditions. When this happened, the Puyallup accommodated this intrusion of

¹⁰ We know about these contests because the host’s non-Native neighbors complained that the players were “often drunk” and so noisy that they prevented locals from getting their nightly sleep. The plaintiffs in a subsequent case successfully convinced Pierce County Superior Court Judge E.D. Hodge to shut the games down. “Indians Must Stop ‘Bone’ Game is Court Ruling,” *Daily Ledger*, August 2, 1928, 3.

¹¹ “Indians Hold First Smoker in History,” *Daily Ledger*, January 25, 1914, 24.

¹² “Browns Point Club Host Tonight for Indians’ Pow-Wow,” *Daily Ledger*, August 25, 1933, 1; “Extra! Puyallups Rout Indian Foes in Naval Warfare,” *Daily Ledger*, August 26, 1933, 1.

outside culture to fit their post-reservation needs. The Puyallup's adoption of Euro-American burial practices illustrates this point.

Cemeteries are sacred places in American society because they provide the living with a location to grieve and celebrate past lives. Cemeteries also possess assorted social and political meanings.¹³ The Puyallup regarded their burial sites in similar ways. Prior to contact, many of the Indians who lived along the southeast corner of Puget Sound and the Puyallup River interred their dead in an area between what is now Point Defiance and Commencement Bay. After survivors prepared the deceased for the afterlife, they hoisted the body and some of his or her possessions into the branches of a willow or crab apple tree.¹⁴

The Puyallup continued using this location and these burial methods after they relocated to their reservation in 1856. After 1882, however, Americans began settling and developing the Puyallup's customary burial land, so American authorities forced the Indians to employ non-Native burial practices on a site next to their reservation. Officials felt that this would not only free up space for expansion, it would also facilitate the Puyallup's transformation towards American culture.¹⁵ The Indians, while adopting these new burial protocols, also reconfigured

¹³ Julie Rugg, "Defining the Place of Burial: What Makes a Cemetery a Cemetery?" *Mortality* 5:3 (2000): 259, 261-264; David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 79-80.

¹⁴ Early American settlers recalled how the Indians' remains sometimes hung from the trees for long periods of time, which created an eerie image, especially when moonlight silhouetted the corpses after dark. The Puyallup were not of one mind concerning burial practices. Inland Puyallup buried their dead away from the water, among stony patches of ground. They protected the remains by erecting cedar plank sheds over the sites. After Euro-Americans entered the area, these Puyallup reverted to their custom of adopting outsiders' ideas and technologies to meet their cultural needs by using canvas rather than cedar to protect the graves. Herbert Hunt, *Tacoma: Its History and Its Builders, A Half-Century of Activity* (J. Clarke Publishing, 1916), 19; Smith, 201-205.

¹⁵ "Ten Acres Not Enough," *Daily Ledger*, June 12, 1894, 5.

the process to fit their wishes. The government's decision to separate the Puyallup dead from the remains of non-Natives' provided the Indians with the opportunity to carry out these distinctions.¹⁶ The Puyallup cemetery of today continues to exhibit the Indians' asymmetrical method of laying out gravesites, which represents a notion of order that continues to differ from Euro-Americans'.

The post-*Ashton* Puyallup also continued using their government-run school to preserve some of their culture. Pupils attended the institution to prepare for adulthood in a non-Indian world by learning academic and workplace skills. At the same time, the school was a meeting place for members of tribes from outside the Commencement Bay area.¹⁷ Indian use of reservation schools as a cultural rendezvous site was common throughout the nation. Government-run reservation schools served as places where disparate Indians could share their cultures, frustrations and concerns with each other, and these conditions contributed to the emergence of a pan-Indian movement that united America's Natives into a more cohesive and communicative group. The government gave the Puyallup the opportunity to use the reservation school to interact with non-Puyallup in 1893, when school officials began accepting students from outside the South Sound in order to boost enrollment.¹⁸

¹⁶ The Puyallup shared this aspect of the cemetery experience with numerous immigrants. Americans often prohibited ethnic minorities from burying their dead in a common cemetery so the outsiders created their own sites, which ultimately reflected their unique cultural practices. Sloane, 125.

¹⁷ Jon Allan Reyhner and Jeanne Eder, *American Indian Education: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 64, 199.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Shackelford, "A History of the Puyallup Indian Reservation" (Thesis, College of Puget Sound, 1918), 50.

The Puyallup used the school to solidify their unity and identity in other ways as well. For instance, instructors often entered Puyallup Indian School students into county and state fair exhibitions, or an occasional national event like the 1914 Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. The goal of these officials was to assimilate the Indians by teaching students the supposed Euro-American virtues of hard work, teamwork, and the employment of technology to complete a task. In 1915, Puyallup students were seemingly learning this lesson when they won a handful of awards at the Washington State Fair in Yakima. Afterwards, one observer noted, “The exhibit from the Cushman School attracted considerable attention, as well as much commendation from men of a mechanical turn.”¹⁹ These events could also strengthen the pupils’ Indian identity as they worked together to complete a common goal. Exhibitions in which the Natives successfully competed against non-Natives from other schools likely had an especially cohesive effect.

The dialectical relationship between government modernization programs and the Indian pursuit of tradition and identity took place on athletic fields as well. Indian school officials across the country sponsored reservation sports teams to raise money and publicize their institutions. They also believed that the competitions played an integral role in their school’s curriculum.²⁰ Proponents of aboriginal assimilation were especially supportive of indigenous

¹⁹ Don Carr, Superintendent of Yakima Agency, letter to Thomas Wilson, Superintendent of Cushman School, September 28, 1915, “Correspondence with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1907-1920,” Box 10, Folder: “Education-Schools, June 3, 1915-December 29, 1915,” NA- PAR. Officials changed the name of the Puyallup Indian School to the Cushman School in 1910, in honor of U.S Representative Francis Cushman of Tacoma, who emerged as the school’s legislative benefactor.

²⁰ Richard Henry Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964), 317-318; David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1995), 184-185.

peoples competing against non-Natives because they believed these events gave members of each group a physical and emotional portal to cross into each other's world. Meanwhile, athletically talented Natives earned a degree of acceptance and respect from many non-Natives. From the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, the athletic field became one of the few locations where Americans made room for Indians in their racially tinted world. (Blacks did not enjoy this opportunity until much later.)²¹

Puyallup Indian school officials supported sports teams for all of these reasons. When, in 1911, Superintendent Herbert Johnson requested \$96 from the Indian Office to equip a baseball team, he stated, "I consider athletic sports a very valuable part of an Indian pupils [*sic*] training and believe anything expended to encourage athletic sports is money well spent."²² However, the Indians who played sports did not see the contests solely as a way to acquire non-Native habits or acceptance. They instead viewed it as an opportunity to maintain important aspects of their own culture. This included Indian athletes using the events to perpetuate their warrior tradition. In the minds of numerous aboriginal athletes, the contests were "metaphoric war[s] between nation-states—containing...most of the identity-building features of warfare and few of the violent, destructive..." consequences.²³ The Natives also used sports to unite into single

²¹ Philip Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 118, 131.

²² Herbert Johnson, Superintendent Puyallup Indian School, letter to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 17, 1911, "Letters Sent to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1908-1915, Box 2, Book 4, NA-PAR.

²³ Thomas Hylland Erikson, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2002), 111.

units and defeat their adversaries. The Indians' successes bred pride, which was something the Puyallup could then use to enhance their tribal identity.²⁴

Baseball was one of the first games where the countervailing forces of cultural assimilation and distinctiveness converged. Philip Deloria suggests that this sport was an ideal activity for Indians and non-Natives to compete against each other because it provided members of both groups an environment where they generally did not come into direct physical contact.²⁵ According to Jerry Meeker, it was one of the first American team sports that many young Puyallup played.²⁶

Cushman's male athletes also faced off against non-Natives, and other Indians for that matter, on the gridiron. During the late nineteenth century, and into the early to mid-twentieth century, football's military-style characteristics served as a metaphor for the frontier where Natives and non-Natives had first met. David Wallace Adams notes that newspaper accounts of football games between the Indians and Americans used verbiage that recalled past Indian-American conflicts along the nation's periphery. He adds that Indians often jumped at the chance to "fight" again.²⁷ The Cushman football team was part of this legacy.

The Puyallup's cemetery and school helped them maintain a sense of Indian-ness. However, as helpful as these places were, they could not satisfy all of the South Sound Natives' needs. The Puyallup therefore adopted and shaped other non-Indian institutions and practices to fit their own cultural and subsistence requirements.

²⁴ Deloria, 118, 131.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 116.

²⁶ Jerry Meeker, Interview by Alfred Smith, 1948, Alfred J. Smith Papers, Accession # 4515-001, University of Washington Special Collections.

²⁷ Adams, 186-188.

An analysis of the Puyallup's twentieth-century history reveals the tribe's use of several different strategies, including a continued reliance upon agitation and activism to accomplish certain goals. This was especially true when it came to the interpretation of treaty rights and the creation and use of state and federal legislation. Agitating for specific needs was common during the Puyallup's immediate post-treaty reservation era. Recall the actions of some first generation reservation farmers, who had asked for government protections in the form of allotments and patents. Peter Stanup's efforts to obtain independence from those protections also serve as examples of Puyallup activism. Twentieth-century Puyallup agitators and activists came full circle by calling once again for direct government involvement in their lives. Their crusade for government acknowledgement and enforcement of treaty rights initially united tribal members into a group who possessed a shared identity of the oppressed. The coalescing effects of subjugation eventually gave way to a tribal cohesiveness based upon government recognition of the tribe's existence and the benefits that came with such a classification.

Twentieth-century Puyallup activism took many forms. For instance, we can interpret events like the aforementioned Puyallup clambake as a type of engagement because it gave tribal members an opportunity to represent their culture to non-Indians in a specific manner. The Native hosts and performers were, in a roundabout way, attempting to earn non-Indian sympathy and support for Indian economic and political causes.²⁸ Another example was Jerry Meeker's representation of himself as a link to his tribe's past by characterizing himself as the "patriarch of the forests." This persona allegedly gave him the ability to forecast long-term weather conditions, which he claimed was the result of his consultations with the birds and his

²⁸ Rosenthal, 47, 109.

observations of the mountains, stars, and tree bark. Newspaper reports occasionally marveled at the accuracy of Meeker's seemingly uncanny predictions.²⁹

Puyallup engagement also came in the guise of tribal members' unwillingness to participate in events that patronized and belittled the Indians. An example of this occurred in August 1913, when Dr. Joseph K. Dixon led a troupe of Indian sympathizers into Tacoma. He hoped to promote a sense of citizenship, freedom, and respect for the American flag among indigenous people throughout the country. During the group's visit with the Puyallup, Dixon asked tribal representatives to declare their loyalty to the American government and their willingness to embrace American cultural practices. Dixon stood in front of the Puyallup in attendance and presented the tribe with an American flag that he claimed represented "the interests and fair play of the Indians." As he handed the banner to the attendees he added, "Make yourselves worthy of it through truth, honor, integrity and loyalty....Call this flag your god [for it] stands for peace, progress and prosperity...."³⁰

The Puyallup showed their disinterest in this event from the very start by sending only three adult representatives to greet Dixon and his entourage. Puyallup schoolchildren comprised

²⁹ Jim Faber, "He Predicted Long, Hard Winter, But Foresees Long Warm Summer," *Tacoma Ledger*, January 29, 1950, clipping located at Tacoma Library Northwest Room; Sam Angeloff, "Browns Point Gets Forecast," *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, June 1, 1952, clipping located at Tacoma Library Northwest Room; "Good Weather's Sure to Come Says Jerry Meeker, the Infallible," *Tacoma Reporter*, June 24, 1952, clipping located at Tacoma Library Northwest Room.

³⁰ "Indians Pledge Faith to Flag," *Daily Ledger*, August 24, 1913, 1.

the rest of the audience. This dearth of Puyallup grownups reportedly offended Dixon, who exclaimed, “All of my efforts are futile. I did not come here to see a lot of schoolboys.”³¹

After the trio of adults grudgingly signed Dixon’s pledge, Henry Sicade, who was one of the three, publicly expressed his feelings on the issue by chastising the visitors for treating the Indians as if they were “strangers in their own country.” Sicade’s anger grew as he criticized Americans for forcing treaties upon the Indians and then making them feel like they had been “corralled and herded” and “...that what we got was merely given us.” The Puyallup speaker then informed Dixon that the Indians did not need his reminders about patriotism, for “All Indians are patriotic.” He said that what the Puyallup really required was the government to help them meet their basic needs: “...Do not lose sight of home building for the Indians...Patriotism means nothing to those who have no homes or families.”³²

Puyallup activists also joined pan-Indian organizations to obtain rights and protections and preserve customs. The tribe’s location near an urban environment contributed to the growth of a pan-Indian identity because the city tended to blur, though not dispose of, tribal distinctions. Meanwhile, the racism that permeated urban settings constantly reminded the Indians of their ethnic identity. These conditions helped draw the Puyallup toward the Northwest Federation of American Indians (NFAI).

Snohomish tribal member Thomas Bishop organized the NFAI in Tacoma, in 1913, as a way to get local, state, and federal governments to reestablish Northwest Indian treaty rights.

The NFAI’s charter spelled out the goals of preserving Native culture and history, which

³¹ Ibid.; H.H. Johnson, Superintendent of Cushman School, letter to F.H. Abbott, Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1913, “Correspondence with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1907-1920,” Box 10, Folder: Education Schools, July 2, 1912-June 20, 1913,” NA-PAR.

³² “Indians Pledge Faith to Flag,” 1.

included “promot[ing] citizenship among Indians” and pursuing legal means to achieve Indian equality in American society.³³ The Puyallup used the NFAI to vent their frustrations and put pressure upon authorities to honor the government’s promises imbedded in the Medicine Creek Treaty. At an NFAI powwow in June of 1914, an assortment of Indian and non-Indian speakers stood before audiences and accused the federal government of renegeing on its treaty promises. Henry Sicade once again spoke his mind by lodging two concerns during his time at the podium. He charged non-Natives with trying to exterminate Indian language by either ignoring Indian names for places or mispronouncing Indian words that had significance to the region. At one point during his speech, Sicade lectured Americans about how to pronounce the word “geoduck.” He exclaimed, "You’re all wrong!It’s gweduc, not goeyduck or geoduck or joduck or juiduc, or any other kind of duck. It’s a plain word from the Nisqually-Puyallup language and means ‘dig deeply’.”³⁴ Sicade then charged the government with failing to live up to past promises, a refrain that many Puyallup would utter repeatedly for the next sixty-odd years.³⁵

The unwillingness of most Puyallup adults to meet with Dixon and Sicade’s lecture on how to pronounce “geoduck” were one of many acts that symbolized the Puyallup’s frustration with the treatment that many Americans gave them. Sicade’s concern about word pronunciation

³³ “Lo in Protest Against Agents,” *Daily Ledger*, February 8, 1914, 11; “Indians Ask Square Deal,” *Daily Ledger*, February 22, 1914, 1, 11-12; Frank W. Porter, III, “In Search of Recognition: Federal Indian Policy and the Landless Tribes of Western Washington,” *American Indian Quarterly* 14:2 (Spring, 1990): 117; Alexandra Harmon, “A Different Kind of Indians: Negotiating the Meanings of “Indian” and “Tribe” in the Puget Sound Region, 1820s-1970s” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1995), 493-494, 498.

³⁴ “Indian Says it is Mt. Tacobut,” *Daily Ledger*, June 16, 1914, 1,3.

³⁵ Ibid.

also suggests how some Puyallup believed that language was one of several prominent cultural threads holding the South Sound Native community together. Unfortunately, his rant did not put food on Puyallup tables or money in tribal members' pockets. Treaty rights would do this.

Twentieth-century Puyallup activism expressed itself in other ways that ultimately restored the tribe's treaty rights and addressed its economic woes. The Puyallup achieved these victories by once again using government institutions, specifically the courts, legislatures, and Congress, to seek validation of their interpretation of the Medicine Creek Treaty. For example, in 1927, the Puyallup joined eighteen northwest Washington tribes that took advantage of a 1925 Congressional Act that allowed Stevens Treaty Indians to seek monetary compensation for broken treaty promises in the United States Court of Claims.³⁶ While the court ultimately ruled against paying the Native plaintiffs, it nevertheless conceded the existence of the Puyallup community and that the government had wronged them.³⁷

Official re-recognition of the Puyallup tribe came after 1934, when Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act. This law allowed registered Indian tribal members to vote whether or not to become a government-recognized, independent body that could receive federal economic and educational assistance. The law also

³⁶ Jerry Meeker was one of the Indians who submitted testimony during the deposition phase of the case. He accused the government of taking land, timber, and even furniture from the reservation school without properly paying the tribe. The Indians sought \$2.4 million in damages that the tribes would split among themselves. The court ruled that the government did not owe the Indians this money because it had already provided more than that sum in previous payments to the Indians. See: Arthur Griffin, ed., *Duwamish, Lummi, Whidby [sic] Island, Skagit, upper Skagit, Swinomish, Kikiallus, Snohomish, Snoqualmie, Stillaguamish, Suquamish, Samish, Puyallup, Squaxin, Skokomish, upper Chehalis, Muckleshoot, Nooksack, Chinook and San Juan Islands tribes of Indians, claimants, vs. the United States of America* (Seattle: Argus Press, 1933), 626-643.

³⁷ The Indians appealed the Claims Court decision to the Supreme Court, which rejected the petition on May 27, 1935. *Duwamish v. U.S.*, 79 Ct. Cl. 530 (1934), accessed July 31, 2015, Westlaw.

permitted Natives to create a constitution and a set of bylaws, as well as receive government assistance in developing any lands their tribes still possessed. The Puyallup became one of 181 Indian nations who participated in the IRA when the secretary of the interior approved the tribe's constitution on May 13, 1936.³⁸ The importance of the IRA to the Puyallup grew significantly over time, especially as tribal members campaigned for a restoration of their treaty rights and financial restitution.

The government's 1936 re-recognition of the Puyallup tribe brought little immediate change to the community's dire economic condition. While I have found no specific records concerning Puyallup employment rates during the 1930s and 1940s, we can assume most tribal members endured the same, and likely more, employment fluctuations that regional non-Indians endured through this period. For instance, Washington State logging operations experienced a fifty percent drop in employment during the Great Depression. Washington State's unemployment rate during the early to mid-1930s was at approximately thirty-three percent of the workforce, which was higher than the national average of twenty-five percent.³⁹ As was the case during the 1893 depression, the Puyallup were already experiencing high unemployment and low-wage work prior to 1929 stock market crash. What the economic downturn of this period did do was make it even more difficult for the Indians to climb out of their fiscal abyss.

³⁸ Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 954-957, 963-965; Charles McEvers, et al. *Uncommon Controversy: Fishing Rights of the Muckleshoot, Puyallup, and Nisqually Indians* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970), 48, 57. The government defined a "registered" Puyallup as any individual who participated in a 1929 census. This count was incomplete because many Puyallup had left the area or wanted to remain anonymous to government authorities whom the Indians did not trust.

³⁹ "The Great Depression in Washington State, Pacific Northwest Labor and Civil Rights Projects, University of Washington, accessed July 29, 2015, http://depts.washington.edu/depress/economics_poverty.shtml.

As World War II improved the South Sound economy during the 1940s, job opportunities grew for both Indian and non-Indian residents. Still, the Puyallup were plagued by racism, a lack of proper education, poor health, and squalid living conditions. These circumstances fueled tribal members' hopes that life would improve if the government lived up to its treaty promises. Beginning in the 1950s, a set of Puyallup activists and militants focused upon retrieving these rights.

The Puyallup tribal activists and militants of the mid to late twentieth century acted during a time when other minorities and immigrants were also trying to obtain equal footing in American society. These movements sometimes worked together and borrowed ideas from each other. As Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cesar Chavez fought for the rights of African Americans and Mexican Americans, respectively, some Indians launched their own Red Power Movement. Two well-known Indian protests of this period, the 1969 takeover of Alcatraz Island and the 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee, put Indian rights on the same national stage as those of Blacks and Latinos. Moreover, although these two events were significant, they represented a mere fraction of the total number of Indian protests that occurred across the country.

The Puyallup pressed the government to act on a handful of problems during the twentieth century; their longest campaign concerned fishing rights. Fish taking had continued to have important subsistence and spiritual implications for the Puyallup during the twentieth century. The Medicine Creek Treaty's third article guaranteed the Indian signers continued access to the local waterways. It stated, "The right of taking fish, at all usual and accustomed grounds and stations is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the

Territory....”⁴⁰ For the first forty years of the treaty’s existence, Puyallup could fish at almost any time and place due to robust fish stocks and a dearth of non-Indians living in the region. This changed in the fall of 1897, when the state’s attorney general ruled that the state fish commissioner had the power to establish fishing seasons, issue fishing licenses, and enforce existing fish regulations among the Indians as well as the non-Natives because the treaties did not ask the state to cede sovereignty over its lands,. Over time, authorities extended these controls to Indians who fished on their reservation.⁴¹

Washington State’s Indians challenged the state’s fishing restrictions and conservation laws on numerous occasions and in various ways. A handful of these individuals eventually disputed the validity of the legislation in state and federal courts. An analysis of these court decisions shows that the jurists in these legal battles did not all agree on the Medicine Creek Treaty’s meaning regarding Native fishing rights. For example, federal judges mostly supported the Indians’ right to fish in “usual and accustomed” places in *U.S. v. Winans* (1905), *Seufert Brothers v. United States* (1919), and *Tulee v. Washington* (1942). Then the pendulum of Indian fishing rights swung to the other side. In *Makah Tribe v. Schoettler* (1951), the court claimed that state regulations could curb Indian fishing if it was for conservation purposes. Later, in the 1963 case of *State v. McCoy*, the Washington State Supreme Court gave the state’s Fish and Game Department control over off-reservation fishing by Indians for conservation purposes.

⁴⁰ Treaty of Medicine Creek, 1854, accessed February 9, 2010, <http://www.washingtonwars.net/Medicine%20Creek%20Treaty.htm>.

⁴¹ Bradley G. Shreve, “‘From Time Immemorial’: The Fish-in Movement and the Rise of Intertribal Activism,” *Pacific Historical Review* 78 (2009): 409. “Fish Laws for the Indians,” *Daily Ledger*, October 5, 1897, 3.

However, in *Sohappy v. Smith* (1969), a federal court in Oregon ruled that the Yakama qualified for “a fair and equitable share” of the fish inhabiting the Columbia River and its tributaries.⁴²

Washington State justified its decision to regulate fish taking in part because of regional fish shortages. The state’s Indian fishers understood that fish stocks were low and they did not object to some fish regulations since diminished fish populations directly affected their subsistence and customs. What the Puyallup and their fellow Indians protested was the fact that non-Native sportsmen had persuaded the state government that Indian net fishing was the primary cause of fish shortages. In reality, the problem was mostly the result of overfishing, development, and the resulting pollution. The Natives therefore thought it was unfair that authorities were forcing them to follow the same rules as those that regulated sportsmen in the state.⁴³

Beginning in the 1950s, Puyallup tribal members fought back, and in some cases became leaders in what historians have labeled the “Fish War.”⁴⁴ The Puyallup’s zeal in this fight was due to tribal members not only protesting for fishing rights, but also fighting for economic opportunity, the right to be self-governing, and the chance to practice cherished cultural traditions.

Alexandra Harmon has argued that the Pacific Northwest Indians’ crusade for the government’s recognition of Indian treaty fishing rights also contributed to a modern Native identity. She contends that prior to these events, the Puyallup, like members of most Washington

⁴² Shreve, 410-411, 414, 433; McEvers, 42-43.

⁴³ McEvers, xxiv; Alvin M. Josephy, Jr. *Now that the Buffalo’s Gone: A Study of Today’s American Indians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 178-179, 186.

⁴⁴ Josephy, 178, 211; Prucha, 1116-1117.

State tribes, generally pursued their rights in modestly sized groups, like the NFAI. Some Puyallup's decision to carry out numerous protests in conjunction with other tribes throughout the northwest region, including their traditional Nisqually allies, shows that this trend continued into the 1960s.⁴⁵

The Puyallup's push for fishing rights began somewhat quietly, in 1955, when state game officials arrested a Puyallup-Yakama Indian named Robert Satiacum for gill-net fishing on non-reservation waters. A superior court judge dismissed the charges against Satiacum because officials failed to show that the Indian's actions threatened fish stock levels. The state's Supreme Court upheld the lower court's ruling three years later, but justices rendered their decision in such a way that allowed the state to limit Indian fishing if authorities could prove the integrity of regional fish runs was in peril.⁴⁶

During the 1960s, local authorities continued arresting Puyallup fishermen in the South Sound area. The Puyallup responded to the arrests and restrictions with an assortment of tactics that they believed would press the fishing rights issue. This included some tribal members' employment of militancy. Their efforts eventually garnered the attention of activists and Indian advocacy groups across the country. In the spring of 1964, the leaders of the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC), who were adamant about preserving Native culture, winning Indian rights, and confirming tribal sovereignty, got involved with the fishing controversy in Washington State. They recruited famed film and stage actor Marlon Brando to travel to the South Sound and lend his celebrity to the Puyallup's protest. On March 2, 1964, Satiacum,

⁴⁵ Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities Around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 232-233.

⁴⁶ *Washington v. Satiacum*, 1957, accessed November 6, 2014, http://wa.findacase.com/research/wfrmDocViewer.aspx/xq/fac.19570701_0040149.wa.htm/qx.

Brando, and Episcopalian Canon John Yaryan, a former Tacoma resident who resided in San Francisco, boarded a twenty-foot canoe, paddled out to the middle of the Puyallup River, and allegedly gillnetted two ten-pound steelhead salmon. State game officials detained the three men when they returned to shore.⁴⁷ Brando's presence did little to modify the state's Indian fishing policies, but he did help draw national attention to the Puyallup.

The Puyallup also obtained support, to one degree or another, from radical groups like the Black Panthers, the Seattle Liberation Front, members of the Socialist Workers Party, and Students for a Democratic Society. Many members of these counterculture organizations supported the Indians because they felt that aboriginals practiced a more ecologically informed lifestyle that supposedly represented a greater respect for nature. Many non-Indian allies also assumed that all Natives were inherently communal, spiritual, ecological, and culturally "authentic." While the extreme views of some of these radical groups occasionally worked against the Indians, Bob Satiacum noted that at least they were there to help, unlike what he referred to as supposedly "good church people."⁴⁸

Despite Satiacum's criticism, perhaps the most significant outside support the Puyallup received came from the American Friends Service Committee, an organization that consisted of the "good church people" for which he searched. This Quaker organization began in 1917, initially to help conscientious objectors find nonviolent solutions to their situation. The group became involved in Indian affairs after World War II and in 1965 members produced a study on

⁴⁷ Shreve, 405; Don Hannula, "Star Given Loud Cheer by Indians," *News Tribune*, March 2, 1964, A-1-A-2; Jack Ryan, "Marlon Steals Lead in Mutiny on the River," *The News Tribune*, March 2, 1964, A-1-A-2.

⁴⁸ Sherry L. Smith, *Hippies, Indians, & the Fight for Red Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 4-5, 7-8, 18-20.

the Pacific Northwest fishing issue they entitled *Uncommon Controversy*. The document effectively brought national attention to the issue.⁴⁹ It also propagated a legal theory that supported the Pacific Northwest Indians' needs. As the historian Sherry Smith has written, the Indian rights movement differed from that of other minority groups due to their treaty status. They therefore had to put more reliance upon the American legal system to get what they wanted. Smith points out that Indian sovereignty is "inherent and pre- or extra-constitutional," due to its "explicit recognition in the commerce clause of the United States Constitution and ratification in treaties, agreements, federal legislation, and case law." Consequently, the Indians were pursuing rights that "came from the established political system, not from outside of it." The Puyallup and their allies therefore banked upon the government's willingness to keep past promises found in a host of documents.⁵⁰ The authors of *Uncommon Controversy* attempted to remind the government of those promises.

Unfortunately, justice is often slow and so the Puyallup did not immediately feel the impacts of these Indian fishing rights supporters. In the meantime, in 1965, Superior Court Judge John Cochran attempted to quash the Puyallup fishing rights movement by issuing an injunction against net fishing on the Puyallup River. Puyallup and Nisqually tribal members responded by setting nets along portions of the Puyallup and Nisqually Rivers that were outside reservation boundaries. State fish and game officers in turn arrested twenty-three of the Indians and confiscated fifty nets, seven boats, and other assorted fishing equipment.⁵¹ During the trial that followed, Cochran maintained his injunction and claimed that Puyallup tribal members were

⁴⁹ Ibid., 34-37.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 12.

⁵¹ "Tribe in Battle for Fishing Rights," *New York Times*, October 17, 1965, accessed October 10, 2014, <http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1965/10/17/94992452.html>.

not entitled to treaty fishing rights because they were no longer an officially organized community of Indians. Department of Justice officials disputed Cochran's claim that the Puyallup tribe did not exist, so they assigned part of their staff to participate in the Puyallup's appeals process.⁵²

The Puyallup's challenge to Cochran's decision—*The Department of Game v. The Puyallup Tribe*—went to both the state and federal supreme courts but did little to settle the issue. While justices from both benches announced that Congress, not Cochran, had the power to determine if a tribe existed, they also ruled that the Medicine Creek Treaty's description of how Indians could fish, in a "usual and accustomed" manner, was too general. Therefore, the courts claimed that states could regulate how the Indians fished and how much of the stock they could take.⁵³

Puyallup militants, frustrated by the US Supreme Court's refusal to rescind Cochran's injunction on net fishing the Puyallup River, responded on August 1, 1970 by setting up a fishing camp along its banks and then positioning a set of nets from one side of the river to the other. The camp's size grew quickly, and on the evening of August 10, state Fish and Wildlife authorities raided the site. The Puyallup reassembled the camp two days later and then placed armed guards around the location. State officials attempted to dissipate tensions by offering the Natives expanded fishing rights between September 21 and October 23. As the Puyallup turned down the offer, tribal council member Ramona Bennett declared, "If anyone lays a hand on that net, they are going to get shot." Local authorities took action once again on September 9, 1970,

⁵² McEvers, 87.

⁵³ *Department of Game v. Puyallup Tribe, Inc.*, No. 38611, 1967, accessed November 13, 2014, <http://law.justia.com/cases/washington/supreme-court/1967/38611-1.html>; *Puyallup Tribe v. Dept. of Game*, 397, U.S. 392 (1968), accessed November 13, 2014, <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=391&invol=392>.

by sending in some 100 state officials and local police. Close to 200 Indians and supporters met the “invaders” and members of the two factions exchanged gunfire, though no one was injured. Law enforcement officers ended up arresting sixty of the protestors and sympathizers. The police then bulldozed the camp.⁵⁴ In the hearing that followed, the court maintained the injunction.⁵⁵

In 1970, Washington State officials were still limiting Indian fish taking, below levels that the court had granted in the *Sohappy* case. Therefore, in 1970, the U.S. Attorney General filed suit. Justice George Boldt of the Federal District Court for the Western District of Washington heard the case. The plaintiffs, who included the Puyallup, claimed that Washington State was illegally limiting their fishing rights. Over the next three and a half years, both sides prepared for the case. The trial finally began in 1973.

Boldt issued his decision in the case on February 12, 1974. He stated that over time the combination of state laws and non-Indian encroachment upon traditional fishing areas had denied the Indians their fishing rights. He added that Indian parties to the Washington Territory treaties had not ceded their fishing rights but had instead agreed to share fishing privileges with non-Natives. Boldt therefore ruled that the Indians had a continuing legal right to access fish in “usual and accustomed” fishing sites, including locations beyond their reservations’ borders. He also confirmed that the Indians had the right to use customary methods to catch those fish. Boldt

⁵⁴ “Police and Coast Indians Clash Over Fishing Rights, *New York Times*, September 10, 1970, accessed October 10, <http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1970/09/10/78815908.html?pageNumber=30>; Josephy, 203-204.

⁵⁵ “A Fishing Dispute Expands on Coast,” *New York Times*, September 27, 1970, accessed October 10, 2014, <http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1970/09/27/90421610.html?pageNumber=53>.

ended his commentary by ruling that the Indians could access one-half of the allowable fishing stock, not including fish taken for subsistence or ceremonial uses.⁵⁶ A federal appeals court upheld Boldt's decision and the Supreme Court refused to review it until it became evident that state officials were not going to enforce the lower courts' ruling. In 1979, the Supreme Court upheld Boldt's decision, though the justices did make subsistence and ceremonial fish taking a part of the equation that determined fifty percent of the Puyallup's catch.⁵⁷

Justice Boldt provided the Puyallup with a significant victory when he verified their treaty fishing rights because it gave the tribe increased opportunities to participate in customary spiritual, social and economic activities. The judge likewise pronounced what the Puyallup already knew: they were a federally recognized tribe even without their reservation. Tribal members were now interested in pursuing other treaty rights, and previously lost reservation land was their next target. Land was important to the Indians at this time, for while the Boldt decision had expanded the ways in which Puyallup fishermen could earn a living, most of the tribe's members lacked the necessary capital to begin a large-scale fishing operation. Hence, the Puyallup remained limited in their ability to access the state's fish stocks.

By the 1970s, the Puyallup tribe had just twenty-two acres of reservation land, which was the combination of the cemetery and old school grounds. In October of 1976, approximately 100 Puyallup tried to expand that amount by illegally occupying a juvenile detention center located on property that sat within the old reservation's boundaries. The protestors claimed the

⁵⁶ George Boldt, "The Boldt Decision, *United States v. Washington*, 1974," accessed November 8, 2014, <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/salmon/BoldtDecision8.5x11layoutforweb.pdf>, 106-108; Prucha, 1184-1185.

⁵⁷ Prucha, 1184-1185.

tribe owned the twenty acres of land and after seven days the state ended the standoff by agreeing to give the Puyallup six acres of the property.⁵⁸

The Puyallup then increased their efforts to gain back more of their homeland by making new claims on other pieces of their former reservation. This strategy ultimately produced one of the largest settlements between Indians and whites in U.S. history. The agreement of the Puyallup, federal, state, and local governments was the result of a plan that the Indians put into action in their effort to reclaim government, corporate, and privately held lands that, by the 1980s, sat within the Port of Tacoma and the cities of Tacoma, Fife, and Puyallup. The Puyallup succeeded, in part, by using a series of previous federal court decisions as a legal basis for their claims.

The 1974 Boldt ruling was one of these cases. In his decision, the judge ruled that the land that the government had originally allotted to the Puyallup still held its reservation status. This meant that if the Indians ever again possessed any of this property, the treaty once again protected it.⁵⁹

The Puyallup regained more of their reserve in July 1981, when U.S. District Court judge Jack Tanner ruled that the tribe had legal title to twelve and a half acres of riverbed that Port of Tacoma authorities had drained to improve a channel in the Puyallup River. In his written opinion, Tanner explained that when Isaac Stevens moved and enlarged the Puyallup Reservation in 1857, he intended that the Puyallup River channel be part of this grant. Tanner's

⁵⁸ "Tribe in Tacoma, Wash., Leaves Juvenile Center," *New York Times*, October 31, 1976, accessed October 10, 2014, <http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1976/10/31/357037772.html>.

⁵⁹ Rick Slagle, "Reservation Disestablishment: The Disestablishment Test and the Puyallup Indians," unpublished manuscript, University of Washington Law School, May 11, 1978.

justification for this reasoning was that members of the Puyallup nation had lived along the river's banks for multiple generations and they depended upon fish to satisfy their subsistence needs. He added that when the government allotted the reservation and then later allowed the Puyallup to sell their lands, it retained the land between the high tide marks of the river as tribal land. Consequently, the property should have remained in Puyallup hands and the state should not have sold it. The judge therefore awarded the Puyallup \$77 million because Washington State had not compensated the Puyallup.⁶⁰

The Puyallup initiated another suit in May of 1984 for ownership of 170 acres of land that sat in the middle of the port. The tribe suspended the suit at the request of the defendants, which included the mayors of Tacoma, Fife, and Puyallup, the Pierce County executive, representatives of the Port of Tacoma and the Union Pacific Railroad, and assorted private owners of tidal-flat property. Several years of heated back and forth negotiations followed. The Puyallup eventually tried to pressure their adversaries into a deal by sending eviction notices to private landowners who possessed property along the Puyallup River. The letters advised the recipients to settle with the Puyallup if they wished to keep their land.⁶¹ The Puyallup's challenge to the legitimacy of the non-Natives' land titles prevented the landowners from selling their property or using it as collateral.

⁶⁰ Puyallup Tribe of Indians v. Port of Tacoma, 1981, accessed July 30 2015, http://www.leagle.com/decision/1981590525FSupp65_1579.xml/PUYALLUP%20TRIBE%20OF%20INDIANS%20v.%20PORT%20OF%20TACOMA. Rob Carson, "Celebrating the Deal that Brought Prosperity to the Puyallups," *News Tribune*, September 21, 2008, A-12; "Puyallup Tribe of Indians Accepts a \$162 million Settlement for Lost Land on March 25, 1990," accessed April 19, 2009, http://historylink.org/essays/printer/friendly/index.cfm?file_id=7969.

⁶¹ Carson.

The Puyallup had a lot to gain from these negotiations because poverty was still rampant throughout the tribe. By the early 1980s, the average annual per capita income among the tribe's members was a mere \$3,308.⁶² This was in comparison to an overall Pierce County per capita income level of \$11,898.⁶³ The Puyallup's dire need for cash occasionally produced rifts between tribal members who argued with each other over the amount of patience they should exercise with the non-Native respondents and the level of compensation that the tribe should expect from their non-Indian neighbors. Tribal member Silas Cross represented one perspective within the community. He insisted that the Puyallup should stand pat on their demands for a return of all of their reservation, claiming it was improper to take cash for sacred lands.⁶⁴ Cross stated, "All this does is say that the Indian is for sale. You put money on an Indians' head and he'll go for it." He added that the tribe was missing a chance to repossess "their greatest asset and their best future income source—the city of Tacoma."⁶⁵ Tribal Chair Frank Wright took a more pragmatic view by supporting a policy of securing a settlement as quickly as possible. Wright believed that asking for too much from the government would extend the talks indefinitely and perpetuate the Puyallup's suffering. Ramona Bennett, a former tribal chair, and an activist, headed another faction whose members believed that patience would produce a more lucrative payout.⁶⁶

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ "Per Capita Personal Income in Pierce County, WA," *Economic Research: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis*, accessed December 4, 2015, <https://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/series/PCPI53053>.

⁶⁴ "Puyallup Tribe of Indians Accepts a \$162 million Settlement...."

⁶⁵ McEvers, 98.

⁶⁶ Carson.

Despite this infighting, the negotiations continued. Early in 1986, the chair of the non-Indian negotiating team, Jim Waldo, told the Puyallup that they should prepare for a trial. At this point, U.S. Representative Norm Dicks, who had been participating in the process, asked Senator Daniel Inouye of Hawaii, the chair of U.S. Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, to meet with representatives from both sides of the suit.⁶⁷ With Inouye's guidance, the parties finally reached a compromise on June 13, 1988. The Puyallup accepted a government offer of \$162 million, which included a direct per capita payment plan of \$24 million that tribal members would divide among themselves.⁶⁸ On August 27, after intra-tribal debate, the tribe voted 319-162 to accept the offer. Less than one year later, on June 21, 1989, President George H.W. Bush signed the Puyallup Tribe of Indians Settlement Act of 1989 into law.⁶⁹ At the time, this

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid. In return for giving up their claims to their original 18,060 acre reservation, the Puyallup Tribe received the following items after the President Bush signed the law:

1. Two-hundred and seven acres of land, that sat in four parcels along the Port of Tacoma. This included a 43-acre tract along the Blair Waterway.
2. Fifty-seven acres of land in Fife, owned previously by the Union Pacific RR.
3. Twenty-seven acres of land adjacent to Frank Albert Road in Fife.
4. A \$22 million trust fund for housing and social services.
5. Each of the tribe's 1,545 members received a \$20,000 cash payment.
6. \$10.1 million to go toward the improvement of the tribe's fisheries activities and to restore area fish habit.
7. \$1 million for job-training and placement.
8. \$1.2 million for an elderly care facility, children's day care center, and youth substance abuse treatment center.
9. \$9.5 million focused on economic development and the purchase of more land to be used for economic development.
10. \$2 million for small business incubation among interested tribal members.
11. \$500,000 for the purchase of land for cultural activities.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

agreement represented the second largest financial deal ever between the American government and Native Americans.⁷⁰

The 1989 settlement has proven to be as significant to the history of the Puyallup as were the Medicine Creek Treaty and the Puyallup Act of 1893. On a practical level, the law has helped most tribal members climb out of poverty and gain access to improved educational opportunities and health services. With this new footing, the Puyallup have been able to strengthen their political and economic positions within the Tacoma community. The legislation also has a symbolic and cultural value, for it allowed tribal members to pursue and fund assorted customs, while simultaneously reformulating what it means to be a Puyallup in the twenty-first century. The sign that stands in front of the Emerald Queen Casino represents one aspect of that identity. It cries out, “We are here!”



⁷⁰ “Puyallup Tribe of Indians Accepts a \$162 million Settlement...” The largest settlement at that time was a \$962 million payout to Alaskan Natives who ceded land for the construction of the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline. A larger settlement occurred in 2009, when the federal government and the nation’s Native Americans produced a \$3.4 billion agreement over the Department of the Interior’s mishandling of Indian land trust accounts. This settlement came in response to the case *Cobell v. Salazar*. The court ordered the government to pay numerous Native plaintiffs restitution from a \$1.4 billion dollar cash settlement, minus attorneys’ fees, and provide a \$2 billion account in which to purchase land from sellers that will then go to tribal holdings. Some of the money will also go to a Native American higher education trust fund. The case began in 1996, when a group of Indians sued the Interior Department for mismanagement of land accounts that ended up cheating the Indians out of billions in cash since the 1887 Dawes Act. As of December 2015, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia was still accepting claims. Eighty-eight members of the Puyallup Tribe are eligible for compensation. “Indian Trust Settlement,” accessed December 4, 2015, <http://www.indiantrust.com>; “Obama Administration Strikes \$3.4B Deal in Indian Trust Lawsuit,” *New York Times*, December 8, 2009, accessed October 10, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/gwire/2009/12/08/08greenwire-obama-admin-strikes-34b-deal-in-indian-trust-l-92369.html?module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Aw%2C%7B%221%22%3A%22RI%3A10%22%7D>.

In 1833, the Puyallup hunters Nuckalkat and Quilniash accepted Dr. William Tolmie's offer to lead him on an expedition to Mt. Rainier. The two Indians participated in this transaction because it provided them with items they could use to satisfy their assorted cultural and survival needs. In return, the two men provided Tolmie with the knowledge and muscle power necessary to successfully complete the journey.

Nearly two centuries later, the Puyallup people continue to negotiate and conduct business with non-Indians for similar reasons. For example, on June 27, 2007, Democratic National Committee (DNC) Chair Howard Dean stood in front of the Puyallup Tribal Council, attempting to convince tribal leaders to become more active in influencing the regional and national political discourse. He invited the Puyallup to provide candidates for the Democratic Party, which could conceivably put tribal members in positions of power. Dean also hoped to coax the tribe to contribute some of its wealth to his party's campaign coffers.⁷¹ The fact that the campaign chair of a major political party was lobbying the Puyallup spoke to the tribe's economic and political value at that time.

Further proof of the tribe's current power occurred in October of 2014, when the Puyallup secured a lucrative agreement with state and federal officials whereby Washington State paid the Puyallup \$9.5 million and transferred the ownership of three sections of land, valued at \$3.8 million, in return for the tribe's permission to construct a new Interstate-5 bridge on Puyallup land. Since some of the bridge's pillars sit in the Puyallup River, the state also agreed to schedule its construction around fishing seasons.⁷² In this deal, tribal negotiators

⁷¹ Sean Cockerham, "Dean's visit with tribal leaders shows Puyallups' growing clout," *The News Tribune*, June 27, 2007, A1, A8.

⁷² Stacia Glenn, "Deal with tribe clears way for I-5 bridge," *The News Tribune*, October 3, 2014, A-1, A-12.

secured additions to their reservation, which will expand the Puyallup's opportunities to practice cultural traditions and maintain a degree of autonomy.

All of these events, from 1833 to 2014, have contributed to a present-day definition of what it means to be a Puyallup. The tribe is once again becoming a landed community that could assert its views rather than having to defend them. The Puyallup enjoy these opportunities due to their successful participation in the market economy after the Settlement Act. One of the first large investments the tribe made after 1989 went to the establishment of the Emerald Queen Casino, which has provided tribal members with enormous opportunities. In 2005, the casino netted \$126 million; by 2008, each tribal member received \$2,000 each month from casino proceeds. Today, every Puyallup also has the opportunity to go to college, tuition-free, and has access to a host of reservation-sponsored health and social services.

These benefits provide Puyallup with even more opportunities to engage the non-Indian world that surrounds them. The tribe has also invested in the preservation of their past as well. For example, the tribe used some of its settlement proceeds to build the Chief Leschi school, which offers primary and secondary instruction to young Native Americans from sixty tribes. The site hosts monthly powwows, and tribal members sponsor drummers, dancers, and a canoe club. School officials are also working to maintain the Puyallup language, something that Henry Sicade would have applauded.

The EQC's success has also provided the Puyallup with investment capital and loan collateral that the tribe can apply to other projects. The tribe is now using profits from its various economic endeavors to protect it from any possible future decline in gambling revenues. For instance, the Puyallup became involved in shipping in 2012, when it joined SSA Marine (the largest private container and cargo ship handling company in the world) in the \$300 million

development of a set of docks along Tacoma's East Blair Waterway. The tribe also became involved with the expanding health care industry in 2015 by purchasing the Seattle Cancer Treatment & Wellness Center from the Cancer Treatment Centers of America.⁷³ These and other investments have made the Puyallup among the top five employers in Pierce County.⁷⁴

Economic success has brought the Puyallup a higher degree of security and autonomy, but problems remain within the community. Since the start of the twenty-first century, the tribe has focused on protecting its resources. A significant threat has come from individuals claiming that they are Puyallup and should thus enjoy the financial benefits of that affiliation. After the 1989 settlement, a growing number of people wanted to join the tribe and by 2002 roughly 200 individuals were applying for membership each year. The tribe initially rejected about half of the applications, and the increases in numbers that did occur forced leaders to redefine the definition of "Puyallup." The tribe has stopped using blood quantum as a measure for admission to tribal citizenship, though it does require applicants to prove that they are direct descendants of previous tribal members who had enrolled with the tribe in 1929. This policy has angered some unsuccessful applicants, who claim that their ancestors did not register in that year because they feared what the government would do with that information. These people therefore remain

⁷³ C.R.Roberts, "Puyallup tribe buys Seattle-area cancer clinic; will move operation to Fife," *News Tribune*, accessed May 5, 2015, <http://www.thenewstribune.com/2015/03/12/3685165/Puyallup-tribe-buys-seattle-area.html>; "Puyallup Members Debate Payouts; Critics say Growing Tribe Can't Afford Stipends; Leaders See no Problem," *Columbian* (Vancouver, WA), January 16, 2006, C-2.

⁷⁴ Lynda V. Mapes, "Tribes are state's new high rollers—in business," *Seattle Times* February 23, 2008, accessed May 5, 2015, <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/tribes-are-states-new-high-rollers8212-in-business/>.

outsiders.⁷⁵ In any case, the tribe, and not the federal government, is defining what it means to be a member.

A related issue the Puyallup leadership council now faces is determining how much money the tribe should distribute to its roughly 3,500 members. Some Puyallup are urging leaders to scale back the payouts to compensate for the growing membership numbers and to rein in debt that is in the millions of dollars. They are also concerned that the payouts are quashing tribal members' incentive to seek higher education or job training. This has especially been a concern with youth who receive a hefty check for their accumulated payouts at the age of eighteen.⁷⁶

Tribal members have discovered that developing solutions to these and other problems is not easy, and the subsequent debates about how to solve them have created new fractures within the Puyallup community. One case is reminiscent of the 1880s confrontation between the "bare feet" and the progressives who clashed over how to deal with a changing political and economic landscape. In 2007, long-tenured tribal council members faced a challenge from younger members of the tribe who demanded more transparency in the council's decision-making process. The challengers also insisted that the tribe begin conducting council elections in a way that allowed outsiders a better chance to defeat incumbents.⁷⁷

Nuckalkat and Quilniash's decision to barter their knowledge and labor to Dr. Tolmie for blankets, gunpowder, and shot, marked the beginning of this story. The Puyallup who followed

⁷⁵ Rob Carson, "Blood Won't Always Tell," *News Tribune*, February 17, 2002, accessed July 26, 2014, http://www.tribnet.com/news/top_stories/0217all.html; McEvers, 57, 76.

⁷⁶ "Puyallup Members Debate Payouts," C-2.

⁷⁷ Rob Carson, "From Dictatorship to Democracy?" *News Tribune* (December 2, 2007, A-1, A-8-A-9).

them continued the process of integrating aspects of the Euro-American world and accommodating them to fit their needs. Engaging in the market economy became one of many ways that the Puyallup accomplished this. After 1854, government programs to transform the Natives, and the close proximity of a significantly sized American city also affected the Puyallup's lives by introducing changes that further pushed individuals to continue transforming. Throughout the post-contact era, these alterations affected the way that outsiders saw, and continue to see, the Puyallup as well as the way the Puyallup saw and see themselves. It was tribal members' willingness to accept change, while preserving their identity, which compelled individuals like Atwin Jackson to be a farmer and Peter Stanup, Jerry Meeker, and Henry Sicade to become students, entrepreneurs, and then activists. Robert Satiacum and Romona Bennett also transformed themselves into effective militants. Today's Puyallup are no different in this regard. They are employers, philanthropists, campaign contributors, entrepreneurs and developers, and they continue to prove that one can remain Puyallup while accepting rather than rejecting the opportunities that outsiders and the city of Tacoma have provided.

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- University of Washington: Ph.D in history, June, 2016.
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PUBLICATIONS

- "Play Ball" (History of the Seattle Pilots), *Columbia: The Magazine of Northwest History* (Summer 2000), 14-22. Voted the John M. McClelland, Jr. Award for best contribution to *Columbia* in 2000.
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