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Contents

Front Cover: Katie Frazier, a Pauite, prepares cui-ui fish at Pyramid Lake, ca. 1930. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

Editor's Note

My beautiful Lake—
Used to be full,
Just plumb full!
Long time ago
Lots of fishes…

Mabel Wright's protest prayer-song begins with these words. Sung in May 1964 on the south beach of Pyramid Lake, and accompanied only by a drum, Wright's song called upon the traditional Paiute power of the spoken word to evoke the lake's past and to protest threats to its survival. She chose a perfect location. From there, she could view the shoreline and hills where Wizards Beach Man lived more than 9,000 years ago and where fishing tools—a hook, a line made from sagebrush, and a sinker—were found and dated to 9,600 years ago. She could see the place where Sarah Winnemucca—Nevada's greatest advocate for Native American rights—was born and lived her early years. And she stood near the spot where, in 1844, John C. Frémont's exploring party first saw the lake, its pyramid-shaped rock outcropping, and Sarah Winnemucca's band of Northern Paiutes—the *Kuyuidika-a* (*cui-ui* eaters).

Wright was a member of *Kuyuidika-a*, and the band's name itself (after the *cui-ui* or *Chasmistes cujus*, the lake's large sucker fish) points to the importance of fish to their culture. Equally important to the people of the region, though, was the Pyramid Lake cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii henshawi*). Today, the *cui-ui* is better known, perhaps due to publicity surrounding its endangered status, but the cutthroat trout provided an abundant source of protein as well. Frémont's fascination with these fish was second only to his fascination with the lake's geography. He enthused about the flavor of the two-to-four-foot cutthroat trout ("superior…to that of any fish I have ever known") and their abundance—so much so that he attempted to label the (now) Truckee River with the name Salmon Trout.

While Frémont left the lake untouched (except for its name), the development of the region around Pyramid Lake soon began to take its toll on the lake and its fish supply. Ranchers upriver dug channels to divert some of the river's water. A channel in the new town of Reno powered a flour mill. But the completion of the Derby Dam in 1905 was the biggest blow. For the first time, the natural flow of water to the lake was disrupted and greatly reduced.

By 1940, the Pyramid Lake cutthroat trout was extinct; in 1967, the Fish and Wildlife Service declared the *cui-ui* an endangered species. That same year, the lake's level hit an all-time low—87 feet lower than in 1905. "That's why *cui-ui* is so scarce now./ Big trout are scarce," Wright sang, because "White people/ They turn the water to their side."

I begin this issue of the *Quarterly* with these thoughts because its contents are built around the broad theme of the Native American experience in Nevada. Looking closer, some sub-themes appear as well: the economy and ecology of Nevada's Native Americans, the importance of large fish to these economies, and the Native American resistance to threats to their way of life. This issue's articles examine these themes throughout the entire 9,000-year history of Native Americans in Nevada. For instance, in "The Geologic Sources of Obsidian Artifacts from Spirit Cave, Nevada," Richard E. Hughes shares the results of scientific testing of obsidian artifacts from the ancient Spirit Cave archeological site. Located outside of Fallon, Nevada, the Spirit Cave contained numerous ancient artifacts and, most famously, the mummified remains of a 45-year-old man who lived 9,600 years ago (and these are still the oldest known mummified remains in North America). The spring 1997 *Quarterly* was devoted entirely to analysis of the archeological artifacts of Spirit Cave and Wizards Beach Cave; however, the place of origin of two obsidian projectile points and an obsidian scraper remained unknown. Hughes used x-ray fluorescence to identify the geological source of each artifact, and the results are somewhat surprising. The obsidian samples originated in three different locations, each more than 100 miles distant from the Spirit Cave. These findings confirm the wide trade networks of the inhabitants of the Spirit Cave area.

The remaining articles in this issue address the modern era. In "Salmon's Presence in Nevada's Past," Alissa Praggastis and Jack E. Williams analyze a combination of archeological, historical, and ethnographic evidence to reconstruct a little-known aspect of indigenous economy—the salmon and steelhead trout that had migrated from the Pacific Ocean through the Columbia River Basin. Historical records show salmon near Jarbidge so plentiful that they literally "dam[med] up the streams" and provided "subsistence to thousands of Indians" near Tuscarora and Jarbidge. The records point to a distinct turning point at about 1900 when a combination of agricultural, ranching, and mining development altered the delicate ecological balance and interrupted the salmon's long migration. Twenty-two large dams built between the Pacific Ocean and northeastern Nevada by 1973 were the final blow.

Development placed similar environmental pressures on Pyramid Lake and its fish population in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and generated a nearly century-long tradition of protest and resistance. This protest took several forms, including several lawsuits to protect the lake. In "Mabel Wright and the Prayer that Saved *Cui-ui Pah* (Pyramid Lake)," noted anthropologist and Northern Paiute expert Michael Hittman presents

a provocative case for a different type of protest—a protest song used to evoke traditional spiritual powers. Wright's remarkable song is published for the first time in this issue. In addition, Hittman places Wright's protest within the context of the historical importance of fish to Pyramid Lake's Paiute people and the history of threats to this resource from the 1860s through the 1990s. Hittman uses Wright's song as a provocative centerpiece to this analysis.

Finally, this issue ends with an examination of one of Nevada's most compelling figures—Wovoka. Michael Hittman returns to this issue with the transcript of his debate with the late Gunard Solberg, author of *Tales of Wovoka* (Reno: Nevada Historical Society, 2010). In this exchange, the two experts delve deeply into some of the methodological and interpretive issues involved in the study of this complex and somewhat inscrutable figure, and they do so in ways that bring together the fields of ethnography, history, and folklore.

Before you dive into these articles, though, let me inform you about some changes at the *Quarterly* and bring you up-to-date. First, you may have noticed from the masthead that this is my first issue as Editor-in-Chief. As I assume this responsibility, I must first express my gratitude to and admiration for Michael Green, Sheryln Hayes-Zorn, Hillary Velázquez, Frank Ozaki, and Juliet Pierson. This team continued to publish high-quality issues of the *Quarterly* through the most challenging period of its existence. They are responsible for the excellent issues forthcoming this year, and through their efforts, we will produce three more issues in 2014 and return to regular quarterly publication in 2015.

This assignment fulfills a lifelong dream for me. As a history professor since 1999 and department chair since 2001 at Truckee Meadows Community College, I have always shared the Nevada Historical Society's mission as expressed in the first issue of the *Quarterly*: to "arouse in the people an historical consciousness which it hopes will be carried to succeeding generations." I hope that this issue and future issues arouse your historical consciousness. While that may be too lofty a goal, I hope they deepen your knowledge, excite your interest, or, at the very least, pique your curiosity.

The articles in this issue have certainly deepened my knowledge and excited my interest. But beyond that, they do something far more important—they restore lives and voices to the historical record. In each, the authors have listened to the literal and figurative voices of native peoples and have recorded their agency in the face of persistent challenges to their land, resources, and economic autonomy. At the close of Mabel Wright's song, she sang these words in reference to Pyramid Lake:

> Keep it for yourself!
> For your generation!
> You got lots of generation coming yet…
> Save it for them!

As of the printing of this issue of the *Quarterly*, Pyramid Lake—diminished and threatened though it still is—has been saved. It remains under the control of Nevada's Native Americans, against all odds and in the face of more than a century of challenges. And while Wright was referring to the lake with these words, they resonate for those of us at the *Quarterly.* With this issue, I believe, some valuable Nevada history has been saved.

John B. Reid
Editor-in-Chief

Geologic Sources of Obsidian Artifacts from Spirit Cave, Nevada

RICHARD E. HUGHES

INTRODUCTION

In a previous issue of this journal (Vol. 40, No. 1), Donald Tuohy, Amy Dansie and colleagues presented important information on material remains associated with early prehistoric human burials in Nevada, focusing particularly on the 9,000-year-old male mummy recovered from Spirit Cave. To complement information there presented, Donald Tuohy, then Curator of Anthropology at the Nevada State Museum, asked for an instrumental analysis to determine the geologic source of origin for the obsidian artifacts recovered from the site. This article presents the laboratory analysis results obtained for the Spirit Cave specimens.

Richard E. Hughes, Director of Geochemical Research Laboratory in Portola Valley, CA, received his Ph.D. in 1983, and taught for six years at the University of California, Davis, and California State University, Sacramento. He has authored numerous journal articles and book chapters on obsidian "sourcing" and hydration dating, and recently published an edited book, *Perspectives on Prehistoric Trade and Exchange in California and the Great Basin* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011).

The author would like to thank Donald R. Tuohy for asking him to examine the Spirit Cave artifacts using non-destructive EDXRF analysis, and Alanah Woody (former Collections Manager, Nevada State Museum) for facilitating the loan. Eugene Hattori (Nevada State Museum) and Thomas Burke (Bureau of Land Management) also provided assistance and permission to present the illustrations in Figure 1 (provided courtesy of the Nevada State Museum). Tammara Norton assisted with Figure 1, and Ben Hughes prepared Figure 3.

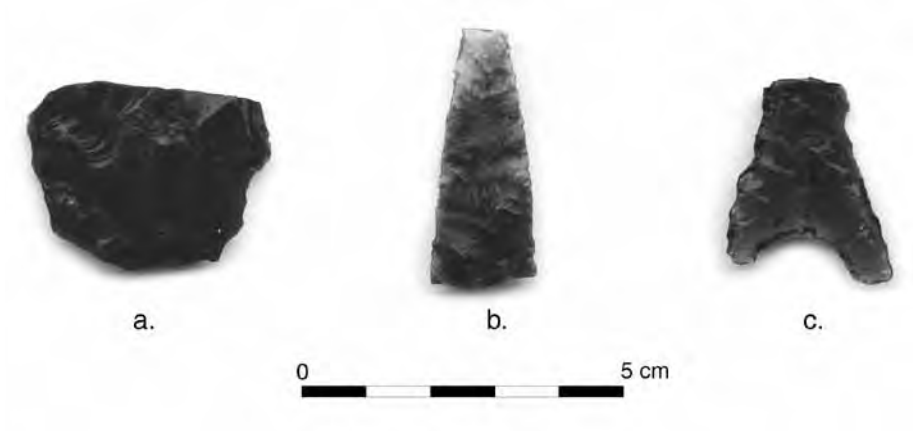


FIGURE 1
Obsidian Artifacts from Spirit Cave, Nevada
a. = 1-20-13; b. = 1-20-16; c. = 1-20-17
Catalog numbers are those assigned by the Nevada State Museum.
(*Nevada State Museum)*

LABORATORY ANALYSIS

Non-destructive energy dispersive x-ray fluorescence (EDXRF) analysis was used to determine the geologic obsidian source materials used to manufacture artifacts recovered from Spirit Cave. This EDXRF technique does not alter the original shape or size of artifacts in any way, and all that is usually required before analysis is a simple cleaning with distilled water to remove possible surface contaminants. EDXRF is a "fingerprinting" technique which essentially involves (1) collecting and analyzing natural geologic samples of obsidian from primary eruptions —the geologic "sources," (2) subjecting these samples to EDXRF analysis to determine the trace and/or rare-earth-element chemical composition of each source, and then (3) analyzing archaeological artifacts and assigning them to a geologic obsidian source on the basis of congruence in chemical composition. Obsidian is essentially a supercooled silica-rich liquid (volcanic glass) which chills rapidly and hardens after eruption, so obsidian from each geologic source is usually very homogeneous and unique in chemical composition. It is these unique chemical properties, retained through time, that allow analysts to determine the eruptive source from which prehistoric artifacts were made. A more technical discussion of EDXRF is found elsewhere,[1] as is a description of the formal instrumental analytical conditions for the Spirit Cave artifact analysis.[2]

TABLE 1
Quantitative Composition Estimates for Obsidian Artifacts from Spirit Cave, Nevada

	Trace Element Concentrations								*Ratio*		
NSM* Cat. Number	**Rb**	**Sr**	**Y**	**Zr**	**Nb**	**Ba**	**Ti**	**Mn**	**$Fe_2O_3^T$**	**Fe/Mn**	**Obsidian Source (Chemical Type)**
1-20-13	188	104	10	99	14	615	nm**	nm	nm	15	Bodie Hills, CA
	±4	±3	±3	±4	±3	±30					
1-20-16	168	28	14	80	20	31	nm	nm	nm	16	Mt. Hicks, NV
	±4	±3	±3	±4	±3	±30					
1-20-17	170	21	22	127	35	24	nm	nm	nm	11	Queen, NV
	±4	±3	±3	±4	±3	±30					
U.S. Geological Survey Reference Standard											
RGM-1 (measured)	150	111	23	223	9	823	nm	nm	nm	61	Glass Mtn., CA
	±4	±3	±3	±4	±3	±28					
RGM-1 (recommended)	149	108	25	219	9	807	1600	279	1.86	nr***	Glass Mtn., CA

* Nevada State Museum. ** Not measured. *** Not reported.

Values in parts per million (ppm) except total iron [in weight %] and Fe/Mn intensity ratios; ± = two □ x-ray counting uncertainty and regression fitting error at 120-360 seconds livetime. RGM-1 recommended values are from Govindaraju, K., "1994 Compilation of Working Values and Sample Description for 383 Geostandards," *Geostandards Newsletter, Special Issue XVIII*, 1994.

Table 1 presents the composition of the trace elements rubidium (Rb), strontium (Sr), yttrium (Y), and zirconium (Zr), and the ratio of iron/manganese in the three Spirit Cave artifacts analyzed here: Figure 2 shows how these measurements compare with those from archaeologically significant geologic obsidian sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

EDXRF analysis of the three Spirit Cave obsidian artifacts shows that each was manufactured from volcanic glass (obsidian) from a different geological source (see Table 1 and Figure 2), located in Figure 3. Specimen 1-20-13 (Figure 1a), described by Tuohy and Dansie[3] as a scraper made from a fragment of an obsidian biface, was manufactured from obsidian of the Bodie Hills chemical type from eastern California. Speciman 1-20-16 (Figure 1b), a medial section of a broken biface[4] was fashioned from Mt. Hicks obsidian, while speciman 1-20-17 (Figure 1c), the partially complete Humboldt Basal-notched projectile point recovered from the cave[5] was made from obsidian erupted from the Queen source in western Nevada.

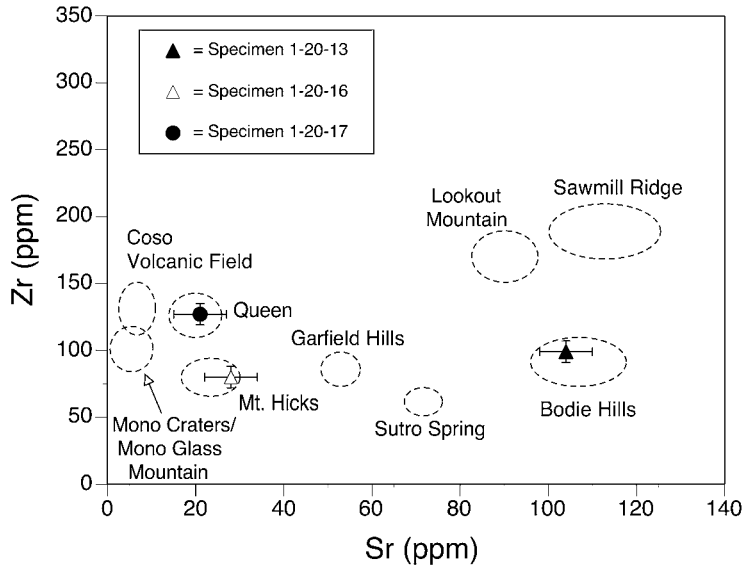


FIGURE 2
Zr vs. Sr Composition of Obsidian Artifacts from Spirit Cave, Nevada
Dashed lines represent the range of chemical variation in samples from archaeologically significant geological obsidian sources in western Nevada and eastern California. Error bars are two-sigma (95% confidence interval) composition estimates for each obsidian artifact from data in Table 1.

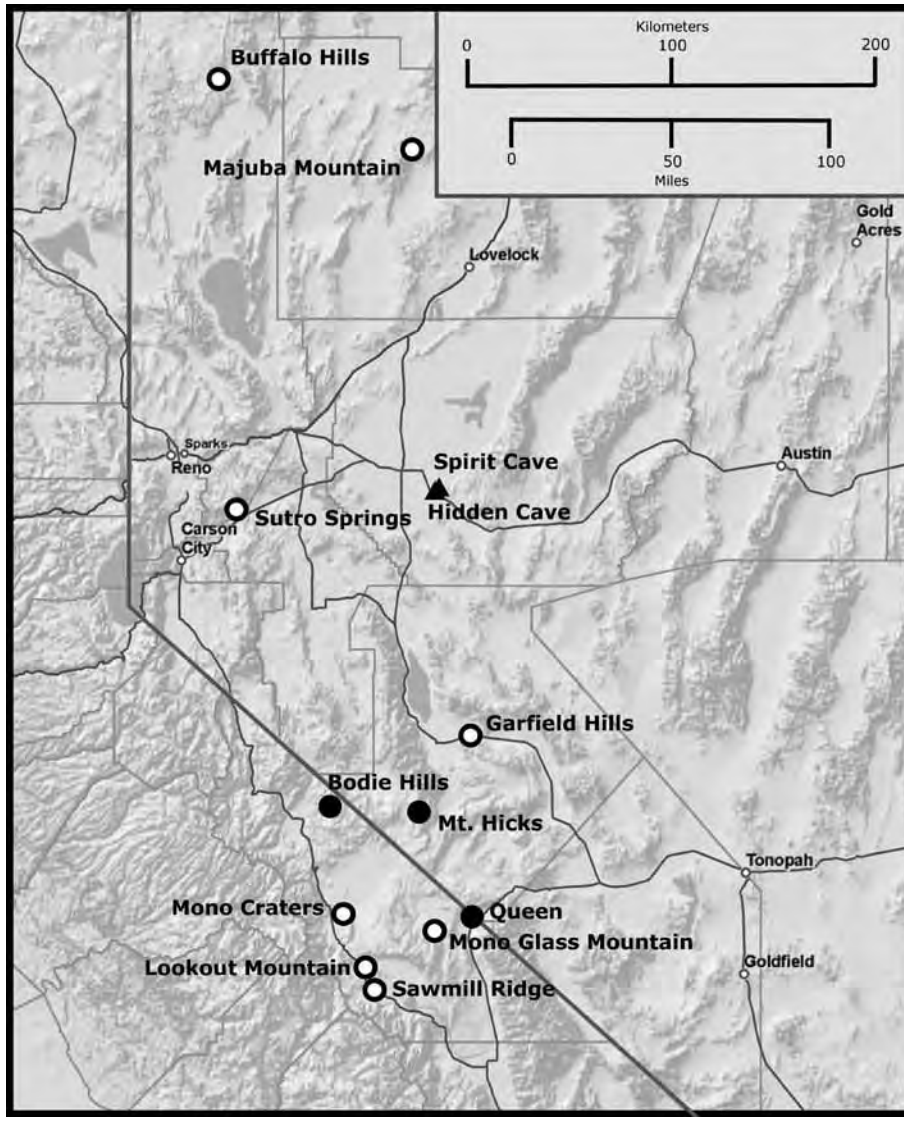


FIGURE 3
Locations of Archaeologically Significant Geologic Obsidian Sources in Western Nevada and Eastern California

Triangles plot the general location of Spirit Cave and Hidden Cave. Black dots specify the locations of the obsidian source material used to make artifacts recovered from Spirit Cave. Open circles plot the locations of other archaeologically significant obsidian source material not identified at Spirit Cave.

Since none of these three obsidian artifacts was found associated with a burial or other organic material, it was not possible to assign a direct date to any of them. Tuohy and Dansie,[6] however, suggested that specimen 1-20-17 is a reworked Humboldt Basal-notched projectile point which may be Early Holocene (ca. 8,000-10,000 years old) based on comparison with a specimen recovered from below Mt. Mazama ash at nearby Hidden Cave.[7] Elsewhere in the western Great Basin, Bettinger[8] proposed that Humboldt Basal-notched projectile point forms—like specimen 1-20-17 from Spirit Cave—date late much later in time (ca. A.D. 600-1300), although other archaeologists (e.g., Thomas)[9] do not consider Humboldt points to be particularly good time markers. The other two artifacts (1-20-13 and 1-20-16) are typologically non-distinctive.

Dating issues aside, it is noteworthy that no obsidian from nearby volcanic glass sources (e.g., Sutro Spring, Garfield Hills) was identified at Spirit Cave—only obsidians from farther south in the Mono Basin area in eastern central California and western Nevada (see Figure 3). These obsidian sources (Bodie Hills, Mt. Hicks, and Queen), located more than a hundred miles to the south of Spirit Cave, also dominated the inventory of obsidian projectile points that were analyzed from nearby Hidden Cave,[10] and they also were well represented at other archaeological sites in the Carson Desert and Stillwater Mountains.[11] Tuohy[12] showed that the use of these obsidians in western Nevada prehistory goes back as far as Clovis times (earlier than 11,000 years ago).

Depending on any number of social and environmental factors, obsidian from these southern Mono Basin sources may have been obtained by prehistoric occupants of the Carson Sink through trade/exchange, or as a result of direct visits to the sources. Regardless of the way(s) the obsidian got there, EDXRF analysis provides instrumental evidence to help document the longstanding prehistoric cultural connections between peoples of the Carson Sink and the Mono Basin.

Notes

[1]Hughes, Richard E., *Diachronic Variability in Obsidian Procurement Patterns in Northeastern California and Southcentral Oregon* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Publications in Anthropology, Vol. 17., 1986), 21-25.

[2]Hughes, Richard E., "Determination of the Geologic Sources for Obsidian Artifacts from Camels Back Cave and Trace Element Analysis of Some Western Utah and Eastern Nevada Volcanic Glasses." in *Camels Back Cave*, D. N. Schmitt and D. B. Madsen, eds., (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Anthropological Papers, No. 125, 2005), 249-56.

[3]Tuohy, Donald R., and Amy J. Dansie, "New Information Regarding Early Holocene Manifestations in the Western Great Basin," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly,* 40:1 (Spring 1997), 28, 33, Fig. 3, far left.

[4]*Ibid*., Figure 2, center.

[5]*Ibid*., Figure 2, left.

[6]*Ibid*., 32.

[7]Pendleton, Lorann S. A., "Material Culture: Artifacts of Stone," in David Hurst Thomas, *The Archaeology of Hidden Cave, Nevada* (New York: Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, 61:1, 1985), 205; Thomas, David Hurst, *The Archaeology of Hidden Cave, Nevada* (New York: Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, 61:1, 1985), 368.

[8]Bettinger, Robert L., "Humboldt Basal-Notched Bifaces as Time Markers in the Western Great Basin," *Tebiwa,* No. 10 (1978), Pocatello.

[9]Thomas, David Hurst, "How to Classify the Projectile Points from Monitor Valley, Nevada," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology,* 3 (1981), 7-43.

[10]Hughes, Richard E., "Obsidian Source Use at Hidden Cave," in David Hurst Thomas, *The Archaeology of Hidden Cave, Nevada* (New York: Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, 61:1, 1985), 332-53.

[11]Hughes, Richard E., "2001 Energy Dispersive X-ray Fluorescence Analysis of Obsidian Artifacts from Archaeological Sites in the Carson Desert and Stillwater Mountains," in Robert L. Kelly, *Prehistory of the Carson Desert and Stillwater Mountains: Environment, Mobility, and Subsistence in a Great Basin Wetland* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Anthropological Papers, No. 123, 2001), 241-50.

[12]Tuohy, Donald R., "Implications of Obsidian Hydration Readings and Source Determinations for 28 Presumed "Early Man" Points from Nevada, in *Obsidian Studies in the Great Basin*, R. E. Hughes, ed. (Berkeley: Contributions of the University of California Archaeological Research Facility No. 45, 1984), 193-221.

Salmon's Presence in Nevada's Past

Alissa Praggastis and Jack E. Williams

Salmon used to run the South Fork of the Owyhee River every spring. The ranchers in the Independence Valley and the people in Tuscarora would take them with pitch forks and spears. It was quite a sport for a while. I remember the run of 1887. Those fish even went up that little stream that runs down through Tuscarora. It dried up completely in the latter part of July, but when it was high in the spring, the salmon could go up. Old Jess Snyder went out with a pitch fork one day and right down under the bridge, he saw one spawning. He just put the pitch fork under it and heaved it on the bank. The fish weighed about 30 pounds.

—Syd Tremewan: Forest Supervisor of the Humboldt National Forest from 1908-1913[1]

Alissa Praggastis was a Research Associate at Trout Unlimited. She recently completed graduate studies at the University of Southern California. Ms. Praggastis is now employed as a Research Analyst in St. Petersburg, Florida. She became interested in the historical presence of salmon in Nevada while working on fish conservation in the high deserts of southern Idaho and northern Nevada.

Jack E. Williams is the Chief Scientist for Trout Unlimited. He received his Ph.D. in Fisheries Science from Oregon State University. He has worked as the National Fisheries Program Manager for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and as the Science Advisor to the Director of BLM. Dr. Williams has published more than 150 articles on fish conservation, endangered species recovery, and stream restoration.

Shaded Relief of the Columbia River Basin. A total of 219 dams are located within the basin, severely altering the stream flow and ecology of the river. Source: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/swces/products/maps.htm

Introduction

The vast Columbia River, with its basin comprising an area roughly the size of France, is the largest North American river flowing into the Pacific Ocean. The basin extends west from the Continental Divide of the Rocky Mountains, and as far north as southern British Columbia and as far south as northeastern Nevada and northwestern Utah. Historically, but to a much lesser extent today, the Columbia River basin produced an estimated 10-16 million adult salmon and steelhead annually.[2]

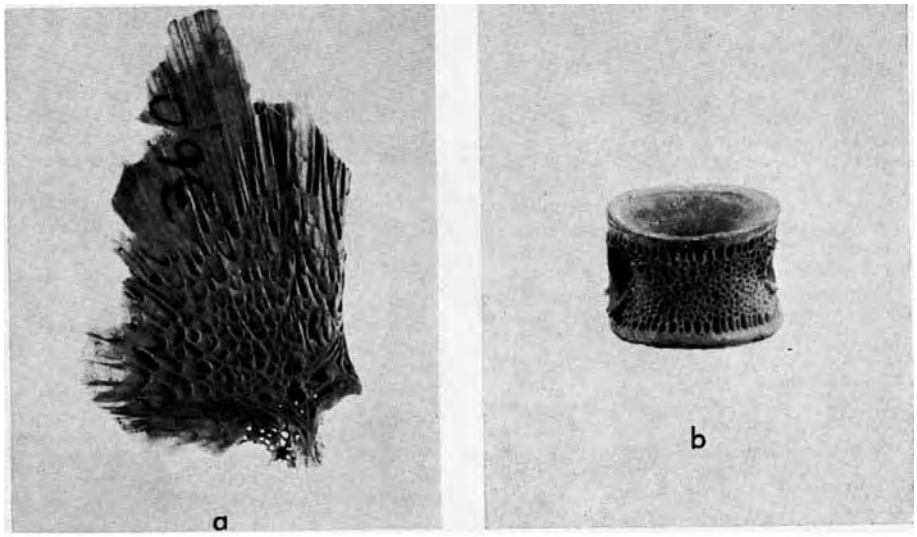
The natural ecology of the Columbia River has been severely altered since the Euro-Americans arrived in the 1850s and began mining, logging, ranching, farming, and developing hydroelectric power. Perhaps the most noticeable change has been the construction of dams and their reservoirs since the late nineteenth century. By 1975, a total of 211 hydroelectric dams, 83 of them classified as multipurpose, had been constructed in the Columbia River Basin (including tributary streams).[3] In addition, thousands of unlisted smaller dams have been installed for municipal, industrial, irrigation, livestock, and rural uses.[4]

While some dams contain fish-passage facilities, others are barriers and completely block salmon from their historic habitat. Prior to the 1850s, the Columbia River Basin provided approximately 14,666 stream miles of salmon (*Oncorhynchus spp.*) and steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) habitat. Because of impassable dams, salmon are now blocked from 31percent of their historic habitat, including much of the drainage of the Snake River, the largest tributary of the Columbia River.[5] Historically, the mainstem Snake River above Hells Canyon provided important spawning grounds for fall Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), while the tributaries between Hells Canyon and Shoshone Falls provided spawning habitat for spring/summer Chinook and steelhead. Of the anadromous fish historically produced in the Columbia River Basin, 50 percent of fall Chinook, 88 percent of spring/summer Chinook, and 28 percent of steelhead were produced upstream of the Hells Canyon Dam Complex.[6] Unfortunately, three Hells Canyon dams completed around 1967 made this area inaccessible to salmon and steelhead.

Few realize that spring/summer Chinook and steelhead used to spawn in the high desert streams in Nevada that were tributary to the Snake River. We document the historic presence of Chinook salmon and steelhead in the Nevada portions of the Owyhee, Bruneau, Jarbidge, and Salmon Falls Creek drainages by reviewing archaeological and ethnographic records from Indian tribes within the Great Basin, newspaper clippings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and oral histories of early settlers. Our contention is that these anadromous fishes were at one time economically, ecologically, and culturally significant to northeastern Nevada and its inhabitants. We hope to raise awareness of these largely forgotten desert fishes that migrated from the Pacific Ocean to headwaters of the Snake River system and to understand the reasons for their local extinction, which might in turn help inform future restoration efforts.

PREHISTORY: EARLY RECORDS FOR USE OF ANADROMOUS FISHES BY INDIANS

Archaeological findings in southern Idaho, eastern Oregon, and northeastern Nevada demonstrate that prehistoric Indians used salmon. Archaeological evidence is rare, however, in part because salmon fossils are fragile and perishable.[7] Nonetheless, evidence dating from the archaic archaeological period, 7,800-220 Y.B.P. (years before present), provides a record of salmon and steelhead ascending into Nevada or into adjacent portions of Idaho and Oregon downstream of Nevada. Although uncommon, some fossils have been discovered at sites used by prehistoric Indians who occupied the Snake River Plain since about 14,500 Y.B.P.[8] Many of the sites discovered have been along the banks of the Snake River between Hells Canyon and Shoshone Falls and include Clover Creek, Three Island Crossing, Givens Hot Springs, Nahas Cave, the Bliss site, Cave no. 1, Pence-Duerig Cave, and Deer Creek Cave.[9]



Remains from Chinook salmon found at Deer Creek Cave, Elko County, Nevada. Source: W.I. Follett. "Fish Remains from Deer Creek Cave, Elko County, Nevada," Nevada State Museum Anthropological Papers, No. 11 (Carson City, 1963), 32.

The Western Shoshone and Northern Paiute ancestors were hunters and gatherers and established a settlement pattern described as "a dual central base pattern in which there were established major winter camps and closely spaced spring-summer and fall camps of shorter duration all within relatively restricted geographic areas."[10] Nahas Cave was a spring camp located on Pole Creek in southwestern Idaho and, according to radiocarbon dates, was used over the last 6,000 years. Remains of three individual steelhead dating from 4,990 to 2,920 Y.B.P. suggest that these early peoples used Nahas Cave during March or April when steelhead migrated up the Snake River and its tributaries.[11]

Deer Creek Cave is another important site located at the confluence of Deer Creek and the Jarbidge River, four miles north of Jarbidge, Nevada, and four miles south of the Idaho border.[12] Archeological evidence from Deer Creek Cave suggests that it was occupied between 10,000 Y.B.P. and during the Proto-Historic period (300-220 Y.B.P.). The cave was used for hunting, and, while the artifacts found primarily consist of mountain sheep, marmot, and porcupine, remains of two Chinook salmon were also found, one of which was about twenty-eight inches in length and an estimated eight pounds in weight.[13,14]
Evidence from Nahas Cave and Deer Creek Cave supports the hypothesis that salmon and steelhead spawned in the Owyhee, Bruneau, and Jarbidge

drainages in Nevada, but little archaeological evidence has been found for Salmon Falls Creek. Perhaps the best evidence for Salmon Falls Creek comes from the Bureau of Land Managements archeologist Tim Murphy, who discovered a large fish vertebra that he believes belonged to a salmon at a site three hundred feet from the creek, below the confluence of the north and south forks of the creek in Nevada. Unfortunately, archaeological evidence found at sites along Salmon Falls Creek is an anomaly since many sites have been heavily raided.[15]

EARLY 1800S: ANADROMOUS FISHERIES AND INDIAN CULTURES

Whereas prehistoric records are scant, there are numerous ethnographic records of Indians using salmon in and around Nevada during the 1800s. Tribes that occupied the northern Great Basin included the Western Shoshone and Northern Paiute. The tribes were culturally and linguistically similar, but they depended on different types of food according to availability.[16] The food they ate differentiated bands within a tribe. For example, bands of the Western Shoshone who lived along the Snake River were called Koa'aga'i, or "the salmon eaters," suggesting that salmon were an important food.[17] These salmon eaters also referred to themselves using a hand motion that appeared to signify a snake (resulting in the Shoshone Indians being called Snakes) but which actually referred to salmon.[18]

Salmon were such an important resource that Indians often traveled hundreds of miles to gather with other bands during the late spring and early summer when the steelhead and spring/summer Chinook salmon spawned. While Indians of northeastern Nevada more commonly went north to the Snake River to fish, Julian Steward notes that Indians from the Snake River and near the Humboldt River traveled to fish along the South Fork of the Owyhee River, implying that the South Fork of the Owyhee supported an important fishery.[19]

The Shoshone and Paiute used many different fishing techniques, including a large array of gear such as fish hooks, bi-pointed and barbed spears, harpoons with detachable composite points, dip nets, lifting nets, seine nets equipped with floats, weirs, and basket traps, as well as fixed platforms to provide access to the best fishing sites. Their fish-processing equipment included drying racks, split roasting sticks, fish skin bags, deep bowl mortars, cache pits and framed storage sheds.[20] Archaeological evidence of this gear was discovered at Shellbach Cave along the Snake River.[21] At another site near Shoshone Falls, the archaeologist Daniel Meatte found two conical baskets that both the Northern Shoshone and Northern Paiute apparently used as fish traps in the Snake River tributaries and in shallower, less turbulent portions of the Snake River mainstem. These baskets were thought to have been constructed in the spring because of the visible flower buds on the willow stems that coincide with the spring Chinook spawning run.[22]

The Shoshone and Paiute employed different gear combinations at important fishing locations. They used natural falls, cascades, and rapids, and other sites with constructed weirs during the peak days of the anadromous fish runs and worked together in large groups for as long as sixteen hours a day to garner enough food to survive. Simpler sites were located along smaller streams.[23]

In Duck Valley, located along the Nevada/Idaho border, Indians used many of the same techniques as in southern Idaho, which is not surprising since the bands in Nevada and southern Idaho often intermingled. Like the Indians of southern Idaho, the Indians of Nevada caught salmon with spears, arrows with small fork-like horn tips, nets and conical fish traps made of willows.[24] The Shoshones also constructed fishhooks as described by Hoffman in 1878:

> The Shoshones sometimes manufacture their own fishhooks by taking a splinter of bone and attaching another and smaller piece at one end, at an angle of about 40 degrees, by means of silver threads.[25]

The Duck Valley Shoshone cooked salmon in dugouts and covered them with rocks heated by a fire.[26] They also sun-dried fish on rocks or smoked them to improve taste and protect them against insects.[27]

After Euro-Americans came to Nevada, they negotiated with the Shoshone in 1877 for a reservation at Duck Valley, chosen because of its prolific salmon fishery.[28] According to interviews of tribal fishermen born in the nineteenth century and tribal catch records, the fisheries on the Owyhee and Bruneau rivers combined to produce an estimated six thousand fish, averaging about fifteen pounds each, and yielded an average annual catch of ninety thousand pounds prior to construction of dams impassable to fish.[29] The tribal member John Harney's memories of the salmon runs also denote the Duck Valley's large fishery. In an interview with the author Mike Hanley, Harney said, "When the salmon come, they die in the water…. It smelled so bad you can't ride a horse to the river."[30]

Mid to Late 1800s: Early Euro-Americans and their Fisheries

For a long time the Rocky Mountains and the harsh climate of the Great Basin discouraged occupation by Euro-Americans. The first contact the Shoshone and Paiute had with Euro-Americans was in the 1820s when fur trappers explored the land for beavers.[31] However, not until the second half of the nineteenth century did Euro-Americans fully settle in northeastern Nevada. The 1860s saw a period of gold speculation and discovery, followed by longer-term settlement activities of ranching, logging, and farming.

Dam on the Lower Bruneau River built at the turn of the twentieth century. Source: Adelaide Hawes, Valley of Tall Grass (Caldwell: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1975), 144.

While these activities would ultimately lead to the extirpation of salmon, the Euro-American settlers provided numerous records that help define the salmon's geographic distribution, economic and cultural significance, and the approximate time the salmon runs began to decline.

Geographic Distribution of Salmon

Some of the most valuable sources of information about the geographic distribution of anadromous fish runs in Nevada were documented in oral histories of nineteenth century Euro-American settlers and newspaper accounts from population centers in northeastern Nevada. Robert McQuivey, a retired fisheries biologist from the Nevada Department of Wildlife, reviewed newspapers published in Tuscarora and Elko from 1869 to 1900 and found hundreds of references to salmon in the headwaters of the South Fork of the Owyhee and mainstem Owyhee rivers; however, most references mention neither the Bruneau or Jarbidge rivers nor Salmon Falls Creek.[32] This, McQuivey says, is probably because Rowland, Jarbidge, and Contact, the small historic towns surrounding the Bruneau and Jarbidge rivers, and Salmon Falls Creek did not have local newspapers as did Tuscarora and Elko.

Fishery reports, other oral histories from settlers in northeastern Nevada, and newspapers from Ruby City and Silver City in Idaho, help to minimize this

distribution gap.[33] One of the most informative references was the 1894 report by Charles Gilbert and B.W. Evermann for the United States Fish Commission that documented salmon distribution in the Columbia River Basin. According to Gilbert and Evermann, J.L. Fuller had seen salmon spawning in the Bruneau River's headwaters, and others well acquainted with the river verified him.[34] Hugh Martin, also well acquainted with the Bruneau, remembered that "salmon and steelhead were plentiful in the Bruneau River and its tributaries prior to construction of the Swan Falls Dam on the Snake River in 1901."[35]

Gilbert and Evermann's report was again helpful in referencing Salmon Falls Creek. Fuller had also seen salmon in the lower two or three miles of the Salmon Falls Creek but did not know how far the salmon ascended the river.[36] We infer that salmon ascended into Nevada because of available upstream habitat. This is supported by Walt Gilmer, resident of the Gilmer Ranch in Contact, Nevada, who remembered as a child catching salmon with a pitchfork in Salmon Falls Creek.[37]

Based on newspaper reports, oral histories, and the scientific reports by Gilbert and Evermann and by Ira La Rivers, we can assume that the salmon and steelhead spawned in the headwaters of the Owyhee, Bruneau, Jarbidge and Salmon Falls Creek drainages.

Salmon's Economic and Cultural Impact

Salmon were a significant part of northeastern Nevada's economy in the late nineteenth century, particularly for the Indians. Before the reservation was established in Duck Valley, the Indians tried to adapt to some of the settlers' ways of life such as farming and ranching, but they still relied heavily on salmon, as described in 1870 in the Elko *Independent*:

> INDEPENDENCE VALLEY, TUSCARORA AND BULL RUN DISTRICTS…. Wild game of nearly every species roam at large, and salmon from the Columbia literally dam up the streams, affording subsistence for thousands of Indians…[38,39]

Indians also played a large role in the Elko and Tuscarora fish markets. Using their knowledge of good fisheries and their fishing expertise, Indians brought countless salmon into nearby towns to sell: *The Tuscarora Times-Review* reported, "Salmon are quite plentiful, being hawked about town by Indians."[40] According to the *Times-Review*, the Indians frequently came into town during spring with salmon from the Owyhee and its tributaries,[41] and their arrival often caught the attention of local newspapermen: As the Elko *Independent* reported in 1873, "An Indian brought in a wagon load of salmon trout from the Owyhee on Tuesday, and retailed them out at ten cents per pound."[42] Another report in Winnemucca's *Silver State* in 1878 marveled at the size and weight of fish the Indians brought:

> A LARGE FISH – The TIMES-REVIEW notes the arrival of an Indian in Tuscarora with a salmon trout, three feet eight inches in length, and weighing eighteen and a half pounds…. Such whales are only found in the tributaries of the Owyhee.[43]

While the fish market clearly furnished the Indians with food and capital, it also was an economic resource for settlers in Elko County. Numerous newspaper reports describe fish brought into Elko and Tuscarora to be sold at restaurants. One account noted, "Charlie Wood getting his spear in readiness this forenoon. [We] infer that he will serve his customers with salmon for breakfast."[44] The ability to feast on fresh salmon was an attractive feature of Elko County. In fact, the *Silver State* reported, the idea of rusticating in northern Nevada while indulging in fresh salmon even appealed to the governor of Nevada:

> ON THE OWYHEE – Governor Bradley, who has left the cares of the State and the Capital for a little recreation in the mountains, is contemplating the beauties of nature and feasting on fine salmon on the headwaters of the Owyhee near Cornucopia.[45]

Clearly, the bucolic way of life in Elko County was alluring, and the unique ability to see, catch, and eat salmon from the ocean enhanced Elko's charm. Fresh salmon had marketable value and served as a local tourist attraction.

Similar to their economic importance, the salmon were also valued culturally. The Nevada salmon, today only a distant memory were once part of seasonal recreation for locals. Each spring, ranchers, farmers, miners, and Indians eagerly awaited the first salmon runs. For example, in 1890 the *Tuscarora Times-Review* reported, "Our local sportsmen are getting out and sharpening up their fish-gigs preparatory to a general onslaught on the salmon when they make their appearance in the Owyhee in Independence Valley."[46] Upon the salmon's arrival, fishing parties departed to test their luck. These fishing excursions made lasting memories. For instance, Ed Strickland, resident of Diamond A, Nevada, in 1925 remembered steelhead fishing on the Jarbidge as a boy:

> When I was growing up there on the Diamond A, I would sometimes go with my uncle, Albert Tayler, fishing down on the Jarbidge River. We'd take our saddle horses, along with four packhorses and spend two weeks fishing for steelhead. There were a lot of big steelhead in the Jarbidge at the time.[47]

By the early 1900s, however, the ability to catch steelhead in the Jarbidge was rapidly disappearing.[48]

The unique ability to catch salmon from the Pacific Ocean became a source of pride for settlers in northeastern Nevada. For example, in 1882, the *Tuscarora Times-Review* reported:

> Referring to the distribution of fish throughout the State by the Fish Commissioner, the SILVER STATE says: The Tuscarora people ought not to complain because the streams in other parts of the State are given the preference over the Owyhee and its tributaries. That stream is the only one in the State of Nevada that has an outlet to the Sea, and Tuscarorans are the only people in the State who can go before breakfast and catch a twenty-pound salmon right from the ocean.[49]

This statement is not entirely true since the Bruneau, Jarbidge, and Salmon Falls Creek also had outlets to the ocean. Still, it demonstrates the Tuscarorans' satisfaction that they were among the only settlers in Nevada to have salmon. Their feasting on a twenty-pound salmon for breakfast, however, stirred envy in other parts of Nevada. For example, one newspaper account relayed the suggestion to plant the salmon of Owyhee in the Truckee River. That report continued, "Though they would have no ocean into which to descend, they could run down into Pyramid Lake and would probably never find out the difference."[50] Another report proposed connecting the Owyhee River and the North Fork of the Humboldt River. In 1869, the Elko *Independent* reported:

> HUMBOLDT AND OWYHEE – Prospectors who have recently explored the country bordering on the South Fork of the Owyhee, inform us that the waters of the North Fork Humboldt could be diverted from their present course into the Owyhee at a mere trifling expense. Such being the case, it renders it not only possible but probable that some of the waters of the Humboldt river may yet find their way by open outlet to the Pacific ocean, and that epicures living on the banks of the Humboldt may be enabled in the future to feast on salmon caught in its waters, as the waters of the Owyhee are well stocked at certain seasons of the year with these fish which penetrate to its very source in the spawning season. Let us open communication between the streams and supply our tables with Humboldt salmon. [51]

While the propositions are far-fetched, they are important examples because they demonstrate the cultural value the settlers bestowed on salmon.

The Decline of Salmon

Salmon runs that, according to the Elko *Independent* in 1870, "dammed up the streams" in Nevada, started to dwindle around 1900.[52] By 1899, settlers were noticing the difference in run size and reported in the *Tuscarora Times-Review* that the dams and traps downstream of the South Fork of the Owyhee River prevented many fish from ascending into Nevada.[53] Again, in 1900, the *Times-Review* reported:

> …These fish used to ascend the creeks around here in swarms, but the cannery traps and dams between here and the ocean have almost completely stopped the runs, and a salmon is now almost a curiosity.[54]

While Nevada settlers noticed the declines in 1900, the United States Fish Commission had already expressed concern about the decline of salmon at the Columbia River's headwaters. The commission ordered a study that documented the abundance, distribution, and spawning habits of salmon in the Columbia River Basin and addressed the reasons for the decline of salmon runs. The 1894 report stated:

> There is no reason to doubt—indeed, that fact is beyond question—that the number of salmon now reaching the head waters of streams in the Columbia River basin is insignificant in comparison with the number which some years ago annually visited and spawned in these waters.[55]

The Fish Commission report blamed the commercial fisheries at the mouth of the Columbia, but the decline of salmon was probably a consequence of the many economic activities undertaken in the basin by that time, including fur trapping, mining, ranching, and agricultural development.[56]

The sheer resilience that salmon have shown over millions of years of environmental change makes one question why these species that have adapted to survive in climates ranging from rain forests to deserts are now on the verge of extinction. For millennia, anadromy was the salmon's greatest strength. Exploiting the rich ocean food resources, the migratory salmon were larger at maturity, allowing them to fight harder through falls and strong currents and carry more eggs to distant spawning grounds, thereby increasing their geographic distribution throughout the Northwest.[57] Returning adult salmon also brought large quantities of nutrients and minerals from the ocean into low-productivity headwater streams, which created more robust ecosystems that benefited a wide range of species and enabled their offspring to thrive.[58] Unfortunately, as Jim Lichatowich noted, this migratory lifestyle also made salmon more susceptible to land-use changes caused by humans:

> Their ubiquitous distribution brings them into contact with a wide range of human economic activities: mining and timber cutting in the headwaters; grazing, irrigation and other agricultural operations farther downstream; industrial and residential development in the lower river reaches and the estuary; and large scale commercial fishing in the ocean.[59]

These economic activities are the reasons for the salmon's decline, which started with the coming of the Euro-Americans during the early nineteenth century and continues today.[60] The Euro-Americans brought their cattle,

Hydraulic hoses at Gold Creek Mine. Source: Stanley W. Paher, *Nevada Ghost Towns and Mining Camps* (Berkeley: Howell North Books, 1970), 211.

plows, seeds, and axes, but, more importantly, they brought their belief that resources were there for the taking and that their supply was inexhaustible.

Beginning as early as 1820, there was a strong demand for beaver to be made into the "high hats" that symbolized high social status. During this era, British fur trappers of Hudson's Bay Company had a monopoly on the fur trade in the Columbia River Basin, and fear of losing this control drove the company to intentionally exterminate beaver from much of the Pacific Northwest.[61] Between 1826 and 1834, trappers in the Pacific Northwest killed an average of three thousand beavers per year, and by 1900, the beaver was nearly extinct throughout much of the country, including areas in northeastern Nevada.[62]

Discovery of gold in California in 1849 spurred a large influx of miners and prospectors who fixated on finding precious metals throughout the western United States and triggered a strong market for the miners' support systems, such as logging, ranching, and agriculture. In Nevada, gold discoveries in the Reese River District in 1862 catalyzed the mining boom in northeastern Nevada.[63] Most mining in the nineteenth century was placer mining, which used water to separate the denser gold or silver from alluvial deposits and, unfortunately for the salmon, damaged their spawning and rearing habitat by depositing substantial quantities of fine sediment and mercury into streams. Once the surface minerals were extracted, placer miners often used hydraulic hoses to wash mountainsides into the river, which caused stream siltation and the loss of riparian habitat.[64]

TABLE 1.
Characteristics of Mainstem Dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers

Dams	*Year Started*	*Year Completed*	*Distance From Ocean (km)*
Columbia River			
Bonneville	1933	1938	233
The Dalles	1953	1957	307
John Day	1958	1968	348
McNary	1947	1954	470
Priest Rapids	1956	1959	639
Wanapum	1959	1963	668
Rock Island	1930	1933	729
Rocky Reach	1956	1961	763
Wells	1963	1967	832
Chief Joseph*	1950	1955	877
Grand Coulee*	1934	1941	961
Snake River			
Ice Harbor	1957	1961	538
Lower Monumental	1962	1969	589
Little Goose	1963	1970	636
Lower Granite	1965	1973	716
Hells Canyon*	1961	1967	919
Oxbow	1958	1961	961
Brownlee	1955	1958	980
Swan Falls	1906	1910	1,255
C.J. Strike	1950	1952	1,313
Bliss	1948	1949	1,423
Lower Salmon	1910	1910	1,444

*Blocks anadromous fish.
Source: National Research Council, *Upstream: Salmon and Society in the Pacific Northwest* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1996), 61.

Farming and ranching brought additional problems for the salmon. Livestock grazing in riparian zones trampled much of the streamside vegetation, which led to erosion and increased stream temperatures.[65] Meanwhile, the irrigation canals built for agriculture took water and juvenile salmon from the streams and diverted them into fields. Adding to the impact was the loss of the beaver ponds, which reduced the upstream rearing habitat for juvenile salmon and steelhead.[66]

Downstream, salmon faced other obstacles, particularly hydroelectric dams. Dams flood important spawning habitats and create problems for migrating fish, including juvenile fish swimming downstream. First, the juveniles must find their way through slack-water reservoirs created by the dams. With slower stream flows, juvenile salmon migrating downstream often become disoriented, causing them to spend more time traveling to the ocean. This has energetic consequences and increases their exposure to non-native fish predators that reside in the reservoirs.[67] Second, juveniles must pass through the dam. To increase survival, dam operators transport juveniles around dams by truck or barge, spill fish over the tops of dams, and have developed turbines that lower mortality rates for fish that pass through the them.[68] While these actions help the fish directly survive dams, salmon that do pass through or around dams are still at risk and suffer delayed mortality downstream. Many fish that successfully pass through dams are stunned and sluggish, making them easy targets for birds and piscivorous fishes.[69] In addition, the accumulated stress from the reservoirs and dams leads to decreased swimming performance, disease resistance, foraging ability, growth, reproductive success, and, ultimately, survival.[70] Juvenile salmon that are barged or trucked around dams suffer increased stress and reduced homing abilities when they return as adults.[71]

Currently, a series of large dams, which began in the 1930s with the Grand Coulee and Bonneville dams, hinders mainstem passage on the Columbia and Snake Rivers.[72] By 1973, twenty-two dams had been constructed on the mainstem of the Columbia and Snake rivers. Acknowledging the impact of dams on fish, the United States Congress in 1976 authorized the Lower Snake River Compensation Plan (LSRCP), which called for hatcheries to mitigate the loss to the Lower Snake River dams of 48 percent of the Chinook salmon and steelhead. Unfortunately, this program has not met target returns, and the presence of large numbers of artificially produced fish has caused unexpected disease and domestication problems. A 1998 status review of the LSRCP program found low smolt-to-adult survival rates and projected that natural populations would go extinct between 2025 and 2050 if mainstem passage conditions and spawning and rearing habitat were not substantially improved.[73]

A Possible Salmon Future

Most salmon and steelhead populations south of the Canadian border are currently at risk of extinction. To date, salmon have disappeared from

40 percent of their historic breeding ranges in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and California.[74] Of the remaining populations, many are listed as endangered or threatened, demonstrating the ongoing nature of the many threats they face.[75] Many fishery scientists believe that the Snake River salmon's best hope for survival is through the breaching of the lower four Snake River dams (Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental, and Ice Harbor dams). This would ease fish passage, restore a more natural flow regime to aid both upstream and downstream migration, remove reservoir habitat that delays outmigration and favors non-native predatory fishes, and create shoreline habitat for juvenile rearing and feeding.[76] In 1998, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game called breaching the dams and restoring natural river conditions "the best biological choice for recovering salmon and steelhead in Idaho."[77] Conservationists also are hopeful that the ongoing relicensing of the Hells Canyon dams will result in Idaho Power providing fish passage around the dams and restoring habitat above the dams.[78] Breaching the lower Snake River dams and mandating fish passage and habitat improvement above Hells Canyon would increase the possibility of salmon and steelhead returning to Nevada streams.

Historically, salmon were an important part of Nevada's economy, ecology, and culture, and economy. They were a source of subsistence for the Indians and a source of excitement as well as food for Nevada's early settlers. Contemplating the eighteen-hundred-mile journey that salmon made annually to spawn in Nevada, it is easy to marvel at the persistence and resilience of these high-desert fish. Unfortunately, our actions over the last two centuries have seldom considered the requirements of these fish. Thinking only of our immediate economic gains, we have failed to acknowledge the natural limits of the ecosystems.

The question now before us is whether we can conduct our economic pursuits in ways that are compatible with the requirements of salmon and steelhead. Clearly, it is possible to manage farms and ranches in ways that improve water quality and protect riparian habitats.[79] Providing fish passage around some existing dams is needed but the cumulative extent of mortality to migrating adults and juvenile fish suggests that some dams may need to be substantially modified or removed in order to restore salmon to Nevada.

Removing the lower four Snake River dams, which has been described as an essential recovery action for remaining Idaho salmon, also might improve local economies.[80] While there are no studies on the economic impact of restored salmon and steelhead fisheries in Nevada, we can infer the economic benefits based on the results of a similar study done in Idaho.[81] The study found that a restored salmon and steelhead fishery in Idaho could bring $544 million annually to the state: $196 million in direct expenditures (out-of-pocket spending by anglers) and $348 million in indirect expenditures (the total economic impact of angler spending in a community). Furthermore, this study also found that the economic contribution of the restored salmon and steelhead fishery reaches areas outside of the riverside communities. This is an important finding since many of the Nevada river communities near the tributaries occupy a very small percentage of the state's land.

Conclusion

It has been approximately a hundred years since the last native salmon swam Nevada streams, yet they have not completely disappeared from the Snake River. According to University of Washington professor David Montgomery, salmon are "like weeds colonizing a vacant lot."[82] They are extremely resilient fishes; still, we have tested their limits. Restoring salmon to Nevada requires at least four actions:

- Significantly modify or breach the lower four Snake River dams.
- Provide upstream and downstream fish passage at the Hells Canyon Dam Complex.
- Improve fish passage and water quality along the Snake River in southern Idaho.
- Restore spawning habitat in Nevada tributaries to the Snake River.

Passage to only one of three river systems—the Owyhee, Bruneau, or Salmon Falls Creek—need to be restored to potentially bring salmon back to Nevada. From our present perspective in the twenty-first century, it is hard to imagine that salmon ever spawned in Nevada streams, but the anomalous situation is that Nevada is without salmon. Perhaps one day these fish again can inspire Nevada residents and reconnect them to the broader Columbia River Basin.

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[75]*Ibid.*

[76]Pinit, "What's the Dam Problem?"

[77] "Scientific Reports on Columbia Basin Salmon and Dams," *Save Our Wild Salmon* (1999), www.wildsalmon.org/library/lib-detail.cfm?docID=58 (accessed December 2008).

[78]Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, et al., "Hells Canyon Project FERC no. 1971-079," (La Grande, Oregon: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2006).

[79]U.S. Department of the Interior, "Riparian Area Management: Grazing management Processes and Strategies for Riparian-Wetland Areas." Technical Reference 1737-20. BLM/ST/ST-06/002+1737 (Denver: Bureau of Land Management, National Science and Technology, 2006).

[80]*The Boise Idaho Statesman*, "Dollars, Sense and Salmon: An Argument for Breaching Four Dams on the Lower Snake River," reprint of opinion pages published 20, 21, and 22 July 1997 (Boise: The Idaho Statesman).

[81]Don C. Reading, "The Potential Economic Impact of Restored Salmon and Steelhead Fishing in Idaho" (Boise: Ben Johnson Associates, Inc., 2005).

[82]Montgomery, *King of Fish*, 230.

Mabel Wright and the Prayer that Saved Cui-ui Pah (Pyramid Lake)

Michael Hittman

Introduction[1]

"Pyramid Lake has been saved!" This is the sense of a recent article in *Indian Country* (16 April 2012), reporting the sizable economic grant made to the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe for fisheries located on its reservation established in 1859 in western Nevada. It was cause for celebration after two centuries of attacks leveled against these essential lacustrine resources owned by these Northern Paiute (descendants of the *Kuyuidokado)*, members of which today occupy the Pyramid Lake Reservation, whose heart remains this relatively pristine body of water. Indeed, the Pyramid Lake Indian Tribe on 2 May 1993 reportedly celebrated the first successful spawn in many years of the very species of fish for which their ancestors were named—*cui-ui,* a bottom-sucker—hence their name *Cui-ui*-Eaters. If that successful spawn were not reason enough for celebration, there was also the fact that thirty thousand fingerlings of the other major fish resource found in *Cui-ui Pah* (Pyramid Lake) were released as fries;

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these were from a species closely related to the Lahontan cutthroat trout and were planted in the Truckee River that feeds the lake. They came from a second fishery established on this federal reservation after a forty-year absence.

Yet a mere quarter-century ago, in 1984, the authors of a definitive ethnohistorical study about these Great Basin Indians and their environmental crisis warned:

> Time is running short. Each year Pyramid Lake's surface level falls another foot; it now stands 100′ lower than it did when the reservation was established … The Truckee River mouth has moved two full miles into the lake, and the river now dribbles across the great neck sand delta. The surface of the lake has shrunk by 34,000 acres. Salinity has increased over 50%. The cutthroat trout is on the threatened species list and the *cui-ui* on the endangered list because neither can spawn in their natural habitats, but must rely completely on artificial propagation.[2]

Their pessimism could only have been cast against the shadow created in 1969, when two western state governors, Paul Laxalt of Nevada and Ronald Reagan of California, met with Walter J. Hickel, President Richard Nixon's secretary of interior. On July 6, for ninety minutes on Lake Tahoe, in a private yacht borrowed from Harrah's Club's wealthy owner, they colluded to do to Pyramid Lake what other power brokers more successfully had done to Owens Lake after the turn of the century.[3] Odd as it might sound in this age of globalization and seeming unprecedented (connected or not) natural disasters to invoke the so-called great-man hypothesis as an explanation for what most contemporary scholars more likely would "explain" in historical and/or economic terms, this article nonetheless will argue that all praise for saving Pyramid Lake and its fisheries should more rightly be given to an elderly Northern Paiute resident of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation, an indigenous woman who was neither a public figure nor possessed of the sort of shamanic-like supernatural *booha,* or power, that Great Basin Indians in the past culturally were expected to possess in order to positively (or negatively) impact nature. Nonetheless, so perturbed was Mabel Wright Paulina by the continuing shrinkage of Pyramid Lake and the assault on its freshwater fisheries by white America that she literally took matters and drum into her own hands. She marched off with her husband to the shoreline of this magnificent lake in May 1964 to chant a prayer whose theme is strikingly reminiscent of Marvin Gaye's elegiac popular protest-type song, "What's going on?" Her song-prayer lament fortunately was recorded by Margaret "Peg" Wheat, a professional geologist-cum-amateur anthropologist.[4]

Parts I and II of this article will sketch the geological and archaeological prehistory of Pyramid Lake, the affording evidence of ten thousand years of human inhabitation and continuous lakeside fishing. Part III overviews Northern Paiute traditional fishing techniques in the sense of what anthropologists

reconstruct and call the pre-European cultural "ethnographic present." That is also to say that prior to the systematic assault upon those resources by illegal white squatters (farmers) and commercial as well as sports fisherman, a set of events occurred fist-in-glove with repressive legislation by Nevada's territorial and state legislatures. These were directed against the *Kuyuidokado*, who received little if any support from their presumed caretakers, the federal government, which carved the Pyramid Lake Reservation from the vast Northern Paiute territory in 1859, largely following the Mexican-American War in 1848.

Part IV contains what might be likened to, and indeed in the Blues and popular American music in general, is called a "turn-around." It chronicles the successful struggle primarily waged by the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation Northern Paiutes against American hegemony, a struggle, which for argument's sake I say commenced in 1926. Mabel Wright's free translation of the prayer sung or chanted nearly forty years later is presented in Part V. The Conclusion is where the case is made for its powerful causal-type environmental determining effect.

The Appendix contains the author's transcription of Mabel Wright's words in her first language, followed by the translation from Northern Paiute cobbled together with the kind and able assistance of three Northern Paiute speakers.[5]

I. Pyramid Lake

> This water is my meat.
>
> —Captain Dave Numana

Pyramid Lake (*Cui-ui Pah*) is a remnant of Lake Lahontan. Named for an eighteenth-century European explorer of the American Midwest, Louis-Armand de Lom d'Arce de Lahontan, Lake Lahontan was the second-largest pluvial body of water (after Lake Bonneville east of it) found in the Great Basin during the Pleistocene, or last Ice Age. At its maximum 13,800 years ago, Lake Lahontan covered 8,665 square miles, extending from western and northwestern Nevada into a part of what today is California. Its water depth was 4,300 feet.[6] Although originally fed by seven separate drainages, Pyramid Lake today receives water only from the Truckee River, which flows out of the northwest end of Lake Tahoe in the high Sierra Nevada, and enters the southern end of this fan-shaped body of water, a hundred miles away. The lake itself is between twenty-five and thirty-one miles long by four-to-eleven miles wide, and up to three hundred sixty feet deep at its maximum.

Excess water from Pyramid Lake once spilled back into Winnemucca Lake just east of it. The latter is today more aptly named Mud Lake, but it once covered eighty square miles of Great Basin desert, with depths between sixty and eighty-seven feet. Declared a national refuge in 1936, Winnemucca Lake has been a playa or dry sink since 1962, largely because of Derby Dam, whose construction in 1905

was part of the Newlands Reclamation Project, which, as discussed in Part IV, diverted the Truckee River southwards into the Carson River for the purpose of irrigation and farmlands.[7] Like Winnemucca Lake—and an additional forty-four other Great Basin lakes known in historic times—Pyramid Lake also is an inland body of fresh water lacking outlet to the Pacific Ocean.[8]

Although the shoreline of Pyramid Lake almost everywhere is rocky and barren, a beach can be found at its southern end. And that was where Mabel Wright went to sing and pray for its very existence in May 1964. As Martha Knack and Omer Stewart characterize the area:

> Along most of the shore, desert vegetation stretches right down to the waterline. Much of the surrounding area is sagebrush flats, without trees except near springs or streams. Bunchgrass grows among the sage without forming a ground cover, and smaller or larger patches of open sand are scattered around.[9]

More important, however, the name of this magnificent body of water, shrunken today to 115,000 acres (it reportedly was 220 square miles in 1867), was originally given by the Great Pathfinder, Lieutenant John Charles Frémont of the Corps of Topographical Engineers. Frémont in 1844 noted a resemblance between the large, free-standing, eroded volcanic tuff—built up by calcium carbonate south of the center-eastern shore of Pyramid Lake—and the famous Fourth Dynasty Egyptian sarcophagi named Cheops; he named it accordingly on his second expedition.[10] Or, as its "discoverer" wrote in his diary on January 10 of that year, Pyramid Lake is a "sheet of green water, some twenty miles broad [that} broke upon our eyes like the ocean."[11]

The commanding beauty of Pyramid Lake in part derives from the interaction between sunlight and plankton and tiny crustaceans in the lake.

> [A] "gray-green landscape dominated by the muted tones of buff-colored sand, dusty green sage, and purple shadows of hills and canyon, broken only by the brilliant presence of Pyramid Lake itself, barren of outlining greening but more than compensated by its own constantly changing surface, glinting from turquoise to emerald to slate gray to foaming white."[12]

Its concentration upwards of 75 percent sodium chloride caused the noted sports reporter A.J. Liebling to comment about the water's salty taste in 1949—this while waiting out Nevada's six-week divorce requirement at a dude ranch on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation—"Like Alka Seltzer gone flat [but] soothing [to the stomach] like boric acid."[13]

Pyramid Lake today also still boasts a rookery. Anaho Island remains a stopping place for North America's largest species of (white) pelican, whose nesting colonies are part of the Great Western Flyway. Separated from the

mainland by three hundred yards on its eastern shore, some seventy-five hundred white pelicans still occupy the seven-hundred-fifty acre Anaho Island rookery, which was declared a National Wildlife Refuge by President Woodrow Wilson in 1913. Endangered as well because of Pyramid Lake's lowered water level, the birds become prone to predation, as also are double-breasted cormorants, California gulls, Caspian terns, and great blue herons, who share its nesting grounds. This danger results from a land bridge that easily attracts coyotes and other animal predators.[14]

II. Human Antiquity at Pyramid Lake and Early Evidence of Fishing

> I am and always have been opposed to the dedication of any portion of the territory of the United States to barbarism. The recognition of the tribal relations of Indians was a mistake in the beginning and is now a sham and a fraud.
> —United States Senator William Morris Stewart.[15]

Debate continues within archeology regarding the date of arrival of the Native American population encountered by John Charles Frémont at Pyramid Lake.[16] But these scholars generally agree that the oldest human remains thus far found in North America are from people who not only lived there during the Holocene or post-Glacial times, but also ate fish. Wizards Beach Man, for example, was radiocarbon dated at 9,200 years B.P. (before present). This middle-aged individual, who was found at a date comparable with the so-called Spirit Cave Mummy at Fallon, Nevada, was recovered with clear association with fishing hooks manufactured of bone. Therefore, Amy Dansie logically postulated a widespread fishing culture following the withdrawal of Lake Lahontan in Nevada.[17] More recently, Dansie and archeologists reported fishing cordage in association with Wizards Beach Man, who today has been re-dated even further back in time, circa 9,660 B.P. Indeed, a serrated harpoon (leister) manufactured of bone was also found lodged in a forty-one pound fish, consequently making this "the oldest directly dated fishing implements in the New World."[18]

Moreover, since seven hundred fifty other archaeological sites have been found at somewhat later dates along the eastern shore of Pyramid Lake, these are today thought to provide solid evidence for ten thousand years of continuous fishing history alongside hunting and gathering in the general area. Great Basin archaeologists, in any event, call such remains from these Middle and Late Holocene geological periods the Lovelock Culture. Indeed, along with noting that fishing gear were stored in caves near Pyramid Lake, they also infer that these culture-carriers obtained an estimated 90 percent of their diet from lacustrine or lakeside food resources—a "stable lifestyle on the shores of Pyramid Lake beginning at least 4,000 years ago," and one which essentially continued until the arrival of Europeans in the Great Basin.[19]

While the Truckee drainage reportedly contained as many as fifteen species of fish in recent times,[20] two of these species were essential to the diet and economy of Pyramid Lake people, both in the relatively recent "archaeological past," as well as the "ethnographic present."

Salmo henshawi, aka Lahontan or large cutthroat salmon trout, which typically weighed between five and nine pounds, could grow to twenty pounds, and emerged from Pyramid Lake in December to rush up the Truckee to spawn on sandbars near Reno, Nevada. (They also enjoyed a second spawn between April and May.) Extinct today, these so-called ancient redfish (on the basis of red slashes on their gills, just behind their heads) were eagerly sought by Indian as well as non-Indian commercial fishermen and white sportsmen. The species enjoyed its last spawning season in 1938, becoming extinct two years later. It, moreover, once existed in such abundance as to have inspired the explorer Frémont to name what today is called the Truckee River the Salmon-Trout River. Although a Northern Paiute named John Skimmerhorn reportedly caught a forty-one pound Lahontan cutthroat in December 1925, nearly one decade earlier, another Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation Northern Paiute was said to have brought in an even larger fish in 1916, one that reportedly weighed in at sixty-one pounds.[21]

Chasmistes cujus was called in Northern Paiute "*cui-ui.*" This bony lake bottom feeding species dates back at least two million years, and by contrast with salmon-trout is classified today as an endangered species. Described as "blunt" and with "stocky bodies, commonly 20-25 inches long," *cui-ui* typically weigh between three and five pounds, has a head like a sea robin, and resembles young sturgeon. Indeed, the sheer numbers of this fish species, which rushed toward Lake Tahoe in mid-April to spawn and die, was such as to give rise to the very Northern Paiute "band" (named the *Kuyuidokado*) encountered at Pyramid Lake by Frémont.[22]

III. THE *KUYUIDOKADO* AND THE PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE RESERVATION: NORTHERN PAIUTE FISHING, ILLEGAL SQUATTERS, AND WATER RIGHT VIOLATIONS

> They…unlike illegal squatters, whose farmsteads stand up like little green gems along the Truckee River…are fishermen. They are nomadic. They [Northern Paiute] are a rambling tribe. What they never had they never lost.
>
> —United States Senator Patrick A. McCarran[23]

Writing about her people, Nellie Shaw Harnar stated that "*Kuh yui Pah* (Pyramid Lake) was rightly-known for its prior abundance of the *Ku-yui* and *agai* [trout] fish."[24] Despite the fact that "fishing was a year-round activity, but with intensive fishing occurring during seasons of major runs (late fall, winter,

spring),"[25] many indigenous fishing extractive technologies employed by the Northern Paiute for subsistence on the Truckee as well as in Pyramid Lake were banned by the Nevada territorial-cum-state legislature after the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation was founded in 1859. And one of the primary reasons for this was that these Great Basin Indians had successfully retooled, as it were—that is, learned how to compete in the new white-dominated regional economy by selling fish to miners and to restaurants in Virginia City's famous Comstock Lode, as well as surrounding environs.[26]

The *Kuyuidokado*, according to Omer C. Stewart, was one of approximately two dozen Northern Paiute bands who occupied a large wedge-shaped territory in what became parts of the American states of Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, and California.[27] The size of the *Kuyuidokado* band territory itself was estimated at "about 2,000 square miles, including both Pyramid and Winnemucca lakes [and said to have ranged] from the Virginia Mountains on the west of the lakes, then south across the Truckee River to the Great Bend, with a tongue reaching as far west as the Spanish Spring Valley [before turning] south from there about 10 miles, then east to the Nightingale Mountains and beyond for 15 more miles of desert before turning north past Pyramid Lake to the edge of the barren and forbidding Black Rock Desert."[28]

Frémont in 1844 made clear the importance of fish and fishing in the Northern Paiute diet. Notwithstanding his praise of the "agricultural potential of lower Truckee Valley," a comment no doubt reflecting nineteenth century evolutionary thinking that ranked farmers as (desirably) "higher" on an imagined ladder of civilization than fishing folk, the Great Pathfinder reported on a fishing village of Northern Paiute on the northeast shore of Pyramid Lake. Along with writing about the presence of mountain sheep ("flocks of them") and horse tracks in the surrounding area, Frémont reported a "salmon-trout feast" that the members of his expedition attended. He remarked on the excellence of "their flavor"—"superior, in fact, to that of any fish I have ever known," and of "extraordinary size—about as large as the Columbia River salmon—generally from two to four feet in length." The future California senator added that members of his exploring expedition traded "brass buttons, etc." for the Northern Paiutes' "speared and boiled and fried salmon-trout," which Frémont in no uncertain terms declared "doubtless formed the subsistence of these people, who hold the fishery in exclusive possession." He also wrote that "these Indians" not only were "fat," but "appeared to live an easy and happy life."[29]

The illegal assault by white commercial fishermen on the fishery, both in and surrounding what became the Paiute Pyramid Lake Reservation, commenced almost as soon as this land was set aside by the federal government in 1859. Along with the intention of the Bureau of American Indian Affairs (BIA) to transform these foragers into farmers, two additional important reasons explain why Northern Paiute fishing rights on the Pyramid Lake Reservation weren't defended: (1) confusion surrounding the aegis of federal versus state authority over Indian fishing and hunting rights;[30] and (2) what amounted to a legal

loophole that further benefited illegal white transgressors, the question as to the original founding date of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation.

The *Kuyuidokado* were granted a federal reservation in 1859—sans a treaty—486,000 acres surrounding Pyramid Lake.In the language of that day this land was said to have been "set aside" from the "public domain" [*sic]* one decade or so following American's acquisition of "Utah Territory" from Mexico in 1848 under terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. Although the federal official assigned to the task of surveying the reservation included the "Truckee Valley and [their fishery at] Pyramid Lake,"[31] the so-called Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation was not officially surveyed until 1864-65. Even so, it was not finally declared as such for another decade, until the executive order from Ulysses S. Grant, in 1874. Non-Indian fishermen and farmers as a consequence took advantage of these ambiguities to settle on what was native land usurped by the federal government.

Ironically, the original owners of Pyramid Lake were said to have been "given [back] the[ir] land [in 1859] … in the interest of peace." The latter was surely a euphemism during what Ned Blackhawk, the Shoshone historian, has described a "cycle of violence" afflicting Great Basin Indians ever since the Euro-American conquest. Among them famously the Pyramid Lake War, dating one year after the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation's original founding date.[32] In any event, the following is from the Executive Order of 23 March 1874 that "officially" created the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation:

> It is hereby ordered that the tract of country known and occupied as the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation in Nevada, as surveyed by Eugene Moore, in January, 1865, and indicated by red lines, according to the courses and distances given in tabular form on accompanying diagrams [*sic*], be withdrawn from sale or other dispositions and set apart for the Pah-Ute and other Indians residing thereon.[33]

However, since the original survey of 1864-65 contained errors (for example, the omission of Winnemucca (Mud) Lake), the survey had to be redone in 1889. This was yet another bonus to the case made by illegal white squatters and their defenders regarding the seemingly inconclusive status of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation as federal reservation, and one which lasted for many more years before any final resolution.[34] Along with the prospect of very fertile farming soil where the Truckee flows into Pyramid Lake—the initial attraction for those white squatters—the discovery of the Comstock Lode bonanza in 1859 drew white commercial fishermen to the area. And sports fishermen were also drawn to Pyramid Lake with its abundance and the predictability of the annual run of one of those two anadromous species associated with the Truckee River. Indeed, on December 8, 1860, within one year of the reservation's founding, the Nevada territorial governor was already being petitioned by the Indian agent for help removing illegal squatters.

And those stressful and contentious conditions for indigenous Northern Paiute would only worsen when the territorial legislature ruled one year later that trout was a sport fish, "thereby asserting that fish were no longer to provide human sustenance, but to exist as a luxury for those with leisure time for recreation."[35] Since that law furthermore declared that only hooks and line might be used for their capture, it not only banned traditional fishing methods employed by the Pyramid Lake Paiute since time immemorial—traps, nets and spears—but it also outlawed methods of fishing employed by whites for commercial purposes—poisons, dynamite and grab hooks.

Yet another aspect of these dramatic changes wrought upon the Pyramid Lake Reservation population was what Martha C. Knack terms the "ethnocentric definitions" that were imposed by hegemonic America on these indigenes; that is, by defining when fish might be caught and a host of other laws against catching fish during the spawning season, which Knack also writes stemmed from "growing Anglo pressure."[36]

It is not surprising, then, that one decade after the reservation's founding, Federal Inspector Jesse M. Lee reported in 1869: "Upon my arrival at the [Pyramid Lake] reservation I was soon convinced that it was nothing more nor less than a rendezvous for white fishermen, men engaged in prospecting for mines and self-constituted fishermen and traders and others." After Lee (acting responsibly) convened a meeting of reservation Indians to discuss this situation, he recorded what might have been the first organized Northern Paiute protest against the invasion of their fisheries by illegal non-Indian fishermen: "The Indians very justly complain of interference with their fisheries by parties of white men who have been located on the reservation for some time—from one to two years—near the mouth of the river."[37]

What Lee reported was that white-owned fishing nets and lines were being strung across the Truckee River in more than twenty different places along its lower two miles; that is, *within* the boundaries of the surveyed Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation proper, which, as stated, had been surveyed five years prior, hence remained unfenced. Since fish were caught where they spawned, fewer and fewer were able to reach the deeper river pools where, according to traditional procedures employed by these Northern Paiute, they were taken. Indeed, illegal white fishermen employed some of those very same—newly-proscribed—native technologies adapted to the shallows of riverbanks and lakeshores, while in the same years generally displacing Indians from their own land.

Not surprising, too, the Pyramid Lake Reservation Northern Paiute also complained about fish escaping Anglo nets and being driven back into the lake, where they were frightened by noise from motor boats, which of course the *Numu*, or "People" were too poor to own, and where deep-water fishing incidentally had also been prohibited.

Complicating matters further was Federal Inspector Lee's additional report: The fact that two whites fishing near the mouth of the Truckee River were also

buying fish from Pyramid Reservation Indians for sale in surrounding mining camps—without required state licenses; the latter act, it should be added, was in direct violation of the Trade and Intercourse Act of 1834, which defined commerce involving Native Americans as a federal not state matter.

Be that as it may, after reporting the illegal use of grab hooks by whites to rake fish ashore, Federal Inspector Lee issued a cease-and-desist/vacate-the-reservation order. Lacking the means of enforcement, however, his effort went unsuccessful. Even so, Lee subsequently joined forces with Major Henry Douglas, and reported breaking up a ring of white fish peddlers on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation one year later, in 1870.[38]

Still, because income derived from commercial fish sales was so lucrative, seven years later, Indian Agent J. A. Barnes also wrote about having—albeit temporarily—evicted several illegal white fishermen from the same area.[39] Along with the fact that these illegal fishermen were said to have returned and continued (illegally) their operations undaunted as before, Barnes added an important note: "The Indians are very much excited concerning this matter and are making complaints to me daily that these white men will supply the market with fish from the lake and thus deprive them of their only means of making a livelihood during the fishing months (commencing in October and ending in April)."[40]

One year later, the following sign was posted on the Pyramid Lake Reservation at the start of the 1878-79 fishing season: "WANTED: 100 MEN TO FISH ON PYRAMID LAKE WITH OR WITHOUT FLOATS AND FISHING TACKLE. Profits guaranteed and competing commercial fishing companies recruit."[41] As a result, seventy-five whites in forty-five boats reportedly commenced fishing on Pyramid Lake, which, along with the Truckee River, was said to have generated sales amounting to more than $5,000 in one month alone. Yet even when, in early January of 1879, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation Indian agent called on the military to evict six fishing companies, plus twenty independent-minded commercial fishermen, and confiscate 73,740 pounds of fish—with an estimated worth of more than $7,000—those criminals reportedly returned just as soon as the soldiers vacated.[42]

Nor did the 1879 arrest of nine fishermen for illegally sinking nets across the Truckee within (contested) reservation boundaries and for selling fish without a permit seem to mean much, insofar as those violators ultimately were granted a presidential pardon. This was despite their having been found guilty of illegally trespassing in what was a election year (1880); these obstructions of justice were said to be the result of the efforts of the arresting marshal, district attorney, judge, and even governor of the state.[43]

"Vagabonds, drunkards, and common poachers"—thus wrote the Pyramid Lake Reservation Indian agent in disgust. "The meanest Indian of this Pah Ute tribe has more true manhood than these hoodlum invaders, and common justice demands that his moral and legal rights should be secured to him by the strong arm of the government."[44]

Some additional sense of the amount of profits earned from (illegal) fish sales can be inferred: By 1888 and 1890, for example, an estimated one hundred tons of trout caught in Pyramid Lake (and its feeder river) were recorded being shipped throughout the United States by Wells Fargo on behalf of white fishermen. Moreover, as late as 1912, Fred M. Crosby, the owner of what technically remains the illegal white settlement of Sutcliff on the western shore of Pyramid Lake, was said to have been weekly shipping between ten and fifteen tons of trout—caught, it should be noted, by a work crew of thirty to forty Indian employees.[45]

Yet when Northern Paiute living on the Pyramid Lake Reservation attempted to enter that same economic market, not only did the Nevada territorial-cum-state legislature enact racist laws, but their presumed trustee-like protectors in the federal government refused to defend nascent Indian entrepreneurs.

In 1868, for example, these proto-capitalists sold trout at $0.10 per pound in Virginia City and surrounding environs to whites, who refused to eat *cui-ui*. Northern Paiute income nonetheless must have seemed relatively staggering in those years, for, as Knack reports, "Less than twelve years after the founding of the reservation [circa 1870], Paiutes were already selling $10,000 worth of fish annually in Reno and Virginia City."[46] Note the price: $0.03-$0.07 per pound, meaning that entrepreneurial Northern Paiute individuals were shipping between four and one hundred tons of fish annually from Pyramid Lake. "Fish sales," in any case, were said to be "far outstripping the profit from all other forms of reservation enterprise combined."[47]

It can be argued that the aforementioned legal quagmire surrounding the founding date and the issues appertaining to those surveys of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation as federal reservation were contributing factors in the Indians' failure to receive support from the BIA. All the same, when Nevada in 1861 passed its first anti-Indian fishing laws, this apparently stemmed from its legislature's understanding that territories (like states) owned control over lakes and rivers. In any event, no federal support for the Northern Paiute was forthcoming.[48]

There followed then the law listing trout as a sport fish, and regulations defining the fishing season in accord with state guidelines. Impacting these Northern Paiute particularly was the closing of all state waterways to trout fishing from January 1 to September 1. Not only did Nevada thus ignore the importance of subsistence fishing among the indigenous population of Pyramid Lake, but these rulings challenged traditional fishing methods in the name of white-defined understandings of "conservation."[49]

What followed next was a ban against the capture of trout in shallow waters, the very place where and when this otherwise staple food for Northern Paiute spawned—another supposed instance of "wasteful Indian practices" banned with support by white sports fishermen.

By 1877, commercial fishing by Indians was coming under state attack once again, this time as a result of another implicitly or explicitly racist Nevada state law that banned the sale of any fish captured at the base of "dams." And so was outlawed

yet another traditional fishing technique, the use of weirs, a method employed forever by rightful owners of Pyramid Lake in the lake and Truckee River. Alongside little-enough state or federal law enforcement on the Pyramid Lake Reservation, white sportsmen meanwhile continued to pressure the state legislature in 1885 to limit any and all sorts of commercial fishing. Although their lobbying efforts failed, an 1891 state law had dire consequences for those Northern Paiute who had become successful fishing entrepreneurs. The law made it illegal for "any railway corporation or other carrier or private parties to ship or transport for sale, or to receive for shipment, or to have in their possession for transportation" fish taken from any and all waters within Nevada, between October 1 and April 1. This law was said to have entirely devastated the new Pyramid Lake Reservation commercial fishing economy, whose sales dropped from fifty thousand pounds annually between 1870 and 1890; in some years it was reportedly more. In tribal income terms this meant the loss of between $5,000 and $8,000 annually; a tragedy in itself, but also destructive because commercial fish sales plummeted: in 1892, the only real economy on the reservation went from being 90 percent of the tribal income to zero![50]

But even if the Northern Paiute population on the Pyramid Lake Reservation were surreptitiously able to transport their own fish to consumers in surrounding areas—and they did—the state legislature, under constant pressure from white sportsmen, soon enough not only forbade "live" possession of fish by restaurants, but also banned keeping them in cold storage in warehouses. Then, in 1901, the state of Nevada entirely banned the sale of fish to individuals and restaurants in California, yet another blow after the Pyramid Lake Indians had reportedly begun traveling to new markets in the adjoining state.[51]

A 1909 state law even forbade "gifts" of fish from Indians to whites. And when these Native Americans defied those laws, pressure from sports fishermen resulted in the enactment of a racist law that defined all large fish in the state as "game fish," except *cui-ui*, which as earlier noted was never fished nor enjoyed as food except by these Great Basin Indians.

Next followed the infamous "ten game fish or ten pounds of fish on any single day of the year" ruling, defined as whether intended for personal use or sale.[52] And since the (Indian) seller also had to be the (Indian) fisherman, and sales were further restricted to single buyers, this state law was another obvious blow both to Northern Paiute entrepreneurship and to indigenous patterns of communalism. Despite the fact that this limit was soon raised from ten to twenty-five fish per person or pounds in 1925, the previous year's ban against the sale of "game fish" essentially continued in force:

> It shall be unlawful for any person or persons, company, association, or corporation in the State of Nevada to buy, sell, or offer or expose for sale, any river trout, lake trout, or brook trout, salmon, whitefish, or large-mouthed or small-mouthed black bass caught from any of the waters of the State of Nevada at any period of the law.[53]

The BIA shockingly urged compliance with state laws for their indigenous "wards" living on the federal Pyramid Lake Reservation. Thus, state game wardens could (illegally) enforce state violations against Northern Paiutes caught fishing "illegally" on their own federally controlled reservation. In 1923, in any event, after the Great Basin Indians had protested these matters by forcing closure of spawn-gathering grounds defined by Nevada (see Part IV), a revised statue passed by the state legislature demanded compliance with a law that required tagging of every fish caught, the legality of which it applied on the Pyramid Lake Reservation also went unchallenged by the BIA.

"Although this provision applied only to Indians, the law nowhere recognized fish selling as a legal or aboriginal right," Knack and Stewart write of this. "It was seen as a privilege which the benevolent state was granting to Indians."[54]

Nonetheless, because the fish-tagging rule was enforced by the Indian agent, he in effect possessed dictatorial rule over the fishing economy on the Pyramid Lake Reservation. And even though the limit on state-defined "game fish" had been raised from ten fish or ten pounds to twenty-five fish or twenty-five pounds, resentment toward any and all such interference with their new commercial fishing industry was such that the year 1925 might well be considered the aforementioned turn-around of the seeming demise of Pyramid Lake (Part IV). Before turning to various protest actions, however, mention should be made of the impact on fishing by the Newlands Reclamation Act; that singular federal legislation was passed in 1902, and its unintended consequence greatly reduced the water level of Pyramid Lake, and hence impacted the reservation's burgeoning commercial fishing industry as well as subsistence habits.

Although Congressman Francis Newlands's name will forever be linked with this legislation, credit for the goal of "reclamation" of the Great Basin desert vis-à-vis the creation of farming through the construction of massive dams and irrigation works might more deservedly go to Patrick A. McCarran, a wealthy railroad lawyer who was also a Nevada Supreme Court Justice (1913-18), president of the Truckee River Water Users' Association (1921-22), and the very first Nevada-born United States senator. He not only bragged about having fought in the Pyramid Lake War, but labored incessantly on behalf of the illegal squatters who farmed on the Pyramid Lake Reservation. A tough-minded Western lawyer, his recognition that mining had collapsed no doubt contributed the sort of dirty politics that led one historian to colorfully characterize the history of the Silver State as a "great rotten borough."[55]

Our contemporary battles regarding intellectual property rights notwithstanding, soon after Derby Dam was built in 1905 on the Truckee River, eight miles west of where it empties into Pyramid Lake, there were twelve white squatters already diverting the river for farming purposes on contested reservation land. Derby Dam itself very nearly effectively drained Pyramid Lake by rerouting much of the Truckee to the Carson River, which also originated in the Sierra Nevada of the neighboring state of California,

and emptied into a sink. The latter was part and parcel of the Newlands Reclamation Project, whose lofty goal was irrigating 232,800 acres of land for farming in the desert, but which thus far has yet to be realized.

Despite the Supreme Court's landmark Winters Doctrine—*Winters v. U.S., 207, U.S.*, 564 (1908)—which declares that Indian reservations must hold the same amount of "reserved water rights" to fulfill their "present and future purposes," a major irony of the Newlands Reclamation Act is that even though it halved the amount of Truckee River acre feet that rightly should have flowed into Pyramid Lake, Derby Dam's diversion of those waters to the Lahontan Valley not only created what today is the unanticipated 77,520-acre Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, but resulted in an otherwise profitable motor boat/water skiing/beachside recreation area. Doubly ironic insofar as the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation had been allotted in 1904, roughly a year prior to passage of the Newlands Act, yet those sixty Indian family heads who agreed to farm on privatized tracts of land were consequently denied supposedly guaranteed acre feet of Truckee River water to cultivate five-acre parcels.[56]

IV. THE TURN-AROUND

> The water goes with the land. Is that not elementary?
>
> — John Collier[57]

The headline in the *Carson City News* reads on June 15, 1915: "Indians in War Paint in Pyramid Lake!" Its accompanying story describes a night-time "assault" against the sheriff's unoccupied motor boat conducted by thirty "bucks" said to have displayed an "inclination and desire to destroy property belonging to white persons on the reservation and lake." The back story of this "militancy" on the part of understandably angry Pyramid Lake Northern Paiute, however, was that several of these young Indian men hijacked a motorboat moored in the lake and hid it in the brush as an expression of community protest, against both illegal fishing by whites and motor-engine noise; the latter, as they subsequently testified, was disturbing their fish. Yet when the state sheriff was called in from Reno, and the Indian agent surprisingly challenged his jurisdiction, the local law enforcement officer defiantly went fishing with the motor-boat owner after having helped the latter safely retrieve his launch.[58]

Although the year 1915 saw indigenous activism that ultimately led to the preservation of Pyramid Lake, both at its original level and in terms of preserving historic fishing rights, two years earlier, in 1913, these indigenous people wrote the BIA requesting the installation of one of them as a "captain" or "chief," someone who in turn would consequently be vested with the political backing to travel to the nation's capitol and represent their fishing interests.[59] Then, seven years later, in 1920, during May, twelve Pyramid Lake Paiutes attempted to form a council with an elected chair to continue pressing those

hitherto unsuccessful issues. These Native Americans' fundamental democratic rights of freedom of speech, and the right of assembly under the Constitution notwithstanding, the BIA would not allow them to form the council.[60]

Arbitrary as all this might be, 1923 was another important year for the turn-around that has occurred. In that year, these indigenous people effectively challenged the repressive state regulation that otherwise might have "completed the destruction of Paiute commercial fishing" and which stemmed from the aforementioned 1915 ban against commercial fishing.[61] Indeed, several Pyramid Lake Reservation Northern Paiute took direct action in that same year to block the attempt made by Nevada state officials to artificially spawn trout in what was a state hatchery illegally constructed on the federal reservation. Although the "forced closure of the spawn-gathering operation in 1923" was accompanied by the Indian agent's intervention on behalf of the state in reopening the dam, the Nevada legislature attempted to mollify tensions by raising the number of tagged fish Northern Paiute were allowed to catch for personal use and/or sale on the open market (from ten to twenty-five per person/per pound).

Whichever date ultimately is more heuristic, 1926 seems as good as any for the year of that turn-around which lead to what can also be argued was Mabel Wright's decisive 1964 prayer. Her prayer followed her people's historic struggle to save Pyramid Lake from illegal squatters, from state laws direly affecting their fishing rights and fishing commercial business, and from a bevy of seeming unsupportive federally appointed Indian agents —a concatenation of forces and players that worked hand-in-glove to protect illegal fishing rather than protect the Northern Paiute's fundamental cultural and legal rights. A perfect illustration of what these indigenous people faced was the following:

"Indians who violate the regulation [tagging fish] will not be allowed to fish at all, or to sell fish; and their names will be posted at the Agency as law-violators, in addition to such other penalties as may be imposed."[62] So wrote Lorenzo D. Creel, a Pyramid Lake Indian agent, who at least recognized the importance of fishing to the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation economy (see Conclusion). However, his paternalistic control of indigenous fishing at the lake involved the issuance of the above regulation. Another Indian agent, J. D. Oliver, "habitually accommodated white sportsmen with passes to fish on the reservation."[63] A police state type of mentality existed on the Pyramid Lake Reservation during those years, and even involved rewards for informing on family members, as implied by this ukase issued by Lorenzo Creel (an Episcopal minister incidentally):

> In other words, if the Indians are disposed to be "square" and help carry out the new law in the right spirit, assisting the [state game warden] officers to prosecute offenders, etc., they will have no trouble; but if they are disposed to cover up law violations, do not report violations of the law, night fishing, improper sales, etc., they cannot expect to carry on a business which, properly observed, will mean so much to them and their future prosperity.[64]

The year 1926, in any event, was the "tentative truce between the Paiutes and the state of Nevada," according to Knack, "was broken."[65] After seeing dead fish clustered at the mouth of the Truckee River because, as a result of the shallowness of the water, those spawning creatures were unable to swim across the delta to lay their eggs and die, a group of Pyramid Lake Paiute protested the state's ultimately unsuccessful attempt to spawn trout and *cui-ui* in a hatchery. Their dramatic and salutary letter dated January 20, 1926, read: "Must have the water to save fish; that is our water and should be turned down to us. We are under the Government and Government should protect our rights to this water, and not allow the water taken away from us."[66]

Among those less-than-total victories won by Northern Paiutes since 1926 are:

(1) "Most of the men" on a council on October 26, 1926, were said to have voted down the Spring Project, a proposal for water control for the Truckee River.[67]

(2) Then came the formation of a traditional type of council on the reservation; among their first actions was turning down the request from a white man in Reno to lease a portion of the lakeshore to build a hotel in that same year.[68]

(3) In 1934, after the Northern Paiute voted to become the federally recognized Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe (by accepting the Wheeler-Howard Bill aka the Indian Reorganization Act), several letters were written by tribal members to Indian Commissioner John Collier on July 26 complaining that the amount of water allowed to flow in the Truckee River beyond Derby Dam amounted to little more than one-third of that "legally allocated to Pyramid Lake." They also complained about the ten Italian squatters who still lived on their reservation, and who continued to restrict the flow of the river by the ten makeshift dams that the illegal squatters had constructed across the Truckee River.[69]

(4) Then in 1936 came the creation of the Pyramid Lake Tribe's Fish and Game Committee, a subsidiary tribal entity. On behalf of the tribe it not only sought to wrest control from the state of the issuance of fishing licenses on the reservation, but in fact sought total control of their fishery.

(5) There followed efforts to secure the right to hire an attorney to represent tribal interests; this right was part and parcel of their federally charted sovereignty as a result of having voted in favor of the Wheeler-Howard Act.[70]

(6) They also sought the right to an attorney's help in their continued struggle to evict those illegal white squatters, this in the face of nine separate bills introduced on the latter's behalf by Nevada's powerful Senator McCarran.[71]

(7) Then there was the opening of a second round in the Indians' battle to obtain additional water from the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District (TCID). This instance stemmed from a lawsuit originally initiated by the federal government in 1913 that sought to obtain otherwise alienated water rights for Indian irrigation on the reservation as a result of the Newlands Project—a suit that incidentally was not finally settled until *United States v. Orr Water Ditch Company* [Equity No. A-3] D. Nevada]. That 1944 decision, controversial in itself, was one that in fact awarded so few additional acre feet of water for the irrigation of

fifty-eight hundred farm acres on the Pyramid Lake Reservation that no doubt simultaneously frustrated and heightened tribal resolve to continue their long-standing fight for additional water rights to save Pyramid Lake, as evidenced by the subsequent battles outlined below.

(8) The Pyramid Lake Tribe's decision to grant permission to the state of Nevada to declare *cui-ui* a game fish in 1948—a vote said to have inaugurated a "new era of cooperation with the state," was yet one that contained the explicit concession that sports fishing would become an economic reality in the future.

(9) In return, the state of Nevada in 1950 allowed the Pyramid Lake Tribal Council to control the sale of fishing licenses, both to Northern Paiute residents on Pyramid Lake and to other Native Americans and whites. This in turn allowed Pyramid Lake Reservation Indian wardens to arrest Indians and non-Indians for fishing as well as for violating game rules on the reservation.

(10) The Tribe won a clear-cut victory in 1955 in convincing the state to repeal the odious Indian-tagging law.[72]

(11) The Tribe's opposition to the Washoe Project was successful. Yet another reclamation project, this one was designed to irrigate fifty thousand acres with water diverted from the Truckee River. In 1963, the Pyramid Lake Tribe ultimately gained additional water concessions after its tribal council reversed a previous stand; it obtained an additional sixty-five thousand acre feet of water per year in a deal engineered by Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall.

(12) In what has been called an "historic defeat" (meaning a Northern Paiute victory), Pyramid Lake tribal officials, including Wilfred Shaw, James Vidovich, Allen Alleck, Teddie James, and Dora Garcia, joined forces with their tribal attorney, Robert Leland (and his successor, Robert Stitser), as well as with environmental groups in 1967 and 1968, and defeated the California-Nevada Interstate Water Compact. Their coalition's victory was abetted by the investigative reporting of Tom Arden of the *Sacramento Bee*, whose articles inspired a KOVR-TV series entitled "Must Pyramid Lake Die."[73]

(13) They mounted effective opposition to the aforementioned Reagan-Laxalt-Hickel attempt in 1969 to "stabilize" (*sic*) Pyramid Lake by draining it altogether in order to redirect water from the Truckee River back toward its homeland in Lake Tahoe for commercial development, a scheme that prompted even the responsible Republican scholar Alvin M. Josephy, Jr. to term it a "weird proposal."[74]

(14) A relatively successful suit was initiated by the Native American Rights Fund (NARF), which itself was the creation of the Ford Foundation. The suite was litigated in 1970, on behalf of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation Paiute Tribe against Secretary of Interior Rogers Morton for negligence of office in failing to defend the tribe's fishing rights. Two years later, this led to a court ruling in the tribe's favor (*Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe of Indians v. Rogers C.B. Morton et al.*, Civil Action 2506-70, U.S. District Court, District of Columbia),[75]

(15) Also in the early 1970s, there was the Pyramid Lake Tribe's use of the Endangered Species Act to gain additional water stored in the Stampede

Reservoir, which was built in 1970 by the Bureau of Reclamation as part of the Newlands Reclamation Act. They gained 226,500 additional acre feet which, significantly, was defined to benefit exclusively the reservation's fisheries.[76]

(16) Successful construction of the Dunn Fish Hatchery on Hardscrabble Creek was begun in 1974 and completed in 1975 above "The Willows," near the (illegal) white settlement called Sutcliffe, which is located on the western shore of Pyramid Lake. The fishery resulted from a grant for $500,000 from the BIA, and today it not only raises one million salmon-trout and *cui-ui* annually, but is entirely administrated by an arm of the Pyramid Lake Tribe called the Pyramid Lake Indian Tribal Enterprise (PLITE).[77]

(17) Receipt of 8 million dollars on July 23, 1975, under the Indian Claims Commission Act, Docket 87-B (ICCA), meant to compensate for the loss of Pyramid Lake water.

(18) One year later, in 1976, the Pyramid Lake Tribe refused one year later in 1976 to renew its contract with the Nevada State fish hatchery.

(19) On June 3, 1983, a second fish hatchery on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation, the Captain Dave Numana Hupa-Agai Hatchery opened. Constructed at the cost of $1.78 million, it was located on a portion of the lower Truckee River that flows into Pyramid Lake eight miles north of Wadsworth; it was entirely devoted to propagating 1.2 million cutthroat trout from a related species obtained from lakes in Oregon. intended to replace Pyramid Lake's extinct Lahontan trout.

(20) One final example of the record of successes that followed the remarkable turn-around (which this article argues was prompted by Mabel Wright's prayer) was the tribal participation in the 1990 Truckee-Carson-Pyramid Lake Water Rights Settlement Act (PPL 101-618). It not only ensures that 90 percent of Truckee River waters will remain in the state of Nevada, but also involves separate lump-sum figures of $25 million and $40 million, respectively, to the Pyramid Lake Tribe, intended for enhancement of its fisheries as well as for tribal development.[78]

V. Mabel Wright and the Prayer That Saved Pyramid Lake

From an interview conducted by Margaret "Peg" Wheat in the late 1950s (Tape #48) we learn the following about Mabel Wright Paulina's life.

Wright's maternal grandparents lived in Virginia City, and Mabel's mother's mother was born in what became the Central Pacific Railroad depot of Wadsworth at the southern terminus of Pyramid Lake on land alienated from the Pyramid Lake Reservation. Commenting about her life there as a child she stated: "Pretty poor. Government never look after the Indians them days." Her maternal grandmother consequently was said to have been forced to seek employment near the mines in Virginia City's Comstock, surviving during those

Mabel Wright, participating in "Admissions Day" in Carson City, ca. 1964. Photographer unknown. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

hard times on refuse and by begging food from men coming out of the mines. Miners not only fed them but, according to this brief oral biography, shared their coffee by pouring it into salvaged cans. "Gave us meat, and lots of good things," she stated. "Make a living that way."

Mabel Wright's parents were Johnny and Annie Wright, and she and her two brothers grew up on the Pyramid Lake Reservation. Mabel recalled being gathered up by Captain Dave Numana with other children and taken by this Northern Paiute federal employee by wagon to the Stewart Institute, a boarding school in Carson City named for the United States senator who introduced legislation to do away with the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation. She recalled crying while being hauled off to the school, but she learned to read and write there. A photo of Mabel and her siblings and parents taken by the peripatetic Indian agent Lorenzo D. Creel ("Career Photographs") is now available online courtesy of Special Collections, University of Nevada Library (Reno, UNRS-P2710 #200). She was married to Paul Paulina, a Northern Paiute from the Klamath Reservation; they had no children.

Ms. Wheat in turn had this to say about her valued consultant, who helped the geologist-cum-amateur anthropologist with a remarkable photo essay about Northern Paiute traditional technology, and of course recited the song or prayer that, it is here argued, ultimately saved Pyramid Lake:

> Mabel Wright, a Cui-ui-eater, cherished the Old Ways and the old songs. She told of the wonderful dream that had sustained her all her life. She sang of beautiful Pyramid Lake, that now was going dry because white people needed so much water elsewhere.[79]

Along with demonstrating for her camera how to build a *kanee* or "grass house," Wheat wrote that Mabel "wrapped herself in the rabbit skin blanket she had woven from the fur cordage made by her grandfather fifty years before. Then she sat for a picture on the sunny side of the grass house with her hair falling loose like the Old People's."[80]

A. J. Liebling added this information about the photograph of Mabel Wright (purchased from the Nevada Historical Society in Reno): The "traditional buckskin garment" was sewn for her participation in "Admissions Day," celebrating the centennial of Nevada's admission to the Union on 31 October 1864. Pyramid Reservation Indians were paid to participate in a drama written by a Hollywood director which featured supposedly "traditional" dances choreographed (*sic*) by a Hungarian dancer. "All Indians in the parade in costume will get fifteen dollars, with five dollars extra for a papoose and the same if mounted on a horse," Liebling wrote.[81]

Here, in any event, are the poetics-cum-politics of Mabel Wright's elegiac song/prayer, chanted in 1964 about the critically threatened Pyramid Lake. The English translation is here, about which she says, "Pretty hard to interpret in English…I'm singing about this, My Lake, here:"

"My beautiful Lake —
Used to be full,
Just plumb full!
Long time ago
Lots of fishes…
Lots of *cui-ui* in it.
People never get hungry,
In Early Days.
Now, my poor Lake is getting dry!
Every year, my poor Lake getting dry!
We, Indians, now can't take fish like we used to,
Trouts—big Trouts—my father used to catch
Out of this Lake.
Oh, we never get hungry [back then]
We have plenty fishes to eat.
Dry 'em up,
Save 'em for wintertime.
Now I feel sorry, I feel bad,
When I see my Lake going down…
Oh, make me feel so sad,
I feel like to cry.
Sometimes when I see the rocks under the water,
Coming out, sticking out all around the Lake."
That's what I was singing about.
And it was so pitiful!
[So that's why] I sit around over there by the Lake, and sing…
I take my drum, sing away, about this Lake.
And I say:
"My beautiful Lake,
That God made for us,
Is going down.
Everything's going down,
My poor Lake…
I feel like to cry all the time,
When I don't eat no fish any more,
Like used to be."
And,
What's wrong?
What's happening to my Lake?
Where the Water goes to?
Which way the Water goes to?
White people —
White people —

They turn the water to their side.
They use it for themselves,
They forget about us!
They forget about our Lake,
To fill 'em up again.
That's why *cui-ui* is so scarce now.
Big trout are scarce.
Now, I hungry for fish.
Never get no fish for how many years?
And [so] I'm singing away by the Lake,
Sitting down on a rock, sticking out, singing about this Lake,
Which my Old-Timer People say,
The Old-Timer [who] died a long time ago,
The Old People,
They say:
"Don't give this Lake up!
Don't give it up!
Hang onto it as long as you live!
Don't sell it to White man!
Keep it for yourself!
For your generation!
You got *lots* of generation coming yet…
Save it for them!"
Now, the Law stops it!
The Law says:
"Don't fish!
Don't waste no fish no more!"
[So] Now, what we gonna do, we, Indians?
What we gonna do?
We gonna go hungry, I suppose?

CONCLUSION

"From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he has."[82]

The central paragraph of an historical marker at Pyramid Lake reads: "The Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation was created in 1859. The history of the Paiute people living here has been one of contention with the white man." Despite the fact that the National Park Service has called Pyramid Lake "the most beautiful desert lake in the United States … perhaps the most beautiful of its kind in North America,"[83] more than a century elapsed following white occupation of Northern Paiute territory. During that time those who lived on the Pyramid Lake

Reservation struggled to get rid of illegal white squatters and to save and restore the level of the lake, as well as protect and control its fisheries. Our nation's "from sea to shining sea" expressed the expansionist and imperialistic goal of Manifest Destiny, with its Jeffersonian ideal of yeoman-type farming vaunted at its core during the nineteenth century. This idea was, in large part, responsible for the assaults against Pyramid Lake and its resources on the federal reservation that grew up surrounding it.

"Free mining" in the West, not unlike the notion of riparian water rights, not only allowed illegal (white) squatters to farm, but also to take fish from the Pyramid Lake Reservation. Yet somehow these Great Basin Indians, who (even by the most conservative of reckoning were certainly fishing the waters of Pyramid Lake and the Truckee River fourteen years prior to the 1859 founding of the reservation) saw their willingness to farm defeated by a federal reclamation project—otherwise touted to promote farming—that ultimately just stole more Indian lands. These Northern Paiute ironically also saw their creative efforts to compete with whites as commercial fishermen systematically impinged upon by racist legislation.

Today, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation Tribe controls the destiny of Pyramid Lake. Although blame is surely always the easier game to play than the quest to understand causation, the question remains: How best to understand the seeming Pyramid Lake success story?

My field, anthropology, has historically enjoyed a long-standing—and unresolved—debate regarding the notion of "prime mover" in culture change. On one side, there are those championing "superorganic/culturological" causes, that is, the view most succinctly articulated as such by the French sociologist Émile Durkheim: "Every time you explain a social fact by a psychological fact, you are wrong!" On the other side of this larger philosophical issue are proponents of "free will"—those who, for example, remind us that "Culture doesn't brush its teeth, individuals do!"[84]

Here, it is necessary to weigh in and argue (err?) on the side of the "great man,"[85] who in this instance of course happens to be a woman, a Northern Paiute named Mabel Wright, whose prayer-song, for reasons discussed below, can be believed responsible for saving Pyramid Lake. Before "proving" this, however, since the argument is tendered in terms of the individual-making culture, rather than the other way around, it seems only seems logical (if not fair) to enumerate other individuals, Northern Paiute as well as *taivos*, or "whites," who rightly deserve some modicum of the type of credit otherwise here attributed wholly to Mable Wright.

Major Henry Dodge, for example, the Pyramid Lake Reservation's first Indian agent, demonstrated a keen understanding that the rise of so-called "predatory [*sic*] bands" had everything to do the formation of the defensive kin-based self-protective groups that were created in reaction to the Conquest under the aegis of what Alvin Josephy aptly termed "patriot chiefs."[86] Dodge wrote:

"They must therefore steal or starve!" He was also prescient in recognizing—and proposing early on—that the Northern Paiute under his purview ought to be allowed to fish for livelihoods on the lower Truckee Valley and in Pyramid Lake, rather than be exclusively made to farm and herd livestock on the Pyramid Lake Reservation established in 1859.[87]

The Reverend Calvin A. Bateman was another important early (white) player in this important saga that played out for so many years before its recent Northern Paiute triumph. As the Pyramid Lake Reservation Indian agent, Bateman opposed the Central Pacific's desire to own land on the federal reservation. His defiance inspired two authorities one century later to comment: "Had it not been for Agent Bateman's determination in forcing the issue with every passing inspector and Washington official, in negotiating directly with the Central Pacific Board of Directors, and in pressing for a solicitor's opinion, the results might easily have been the loss of both the agricultural land and the lake."[88]

Still another early hero in the environmental struggle to save Pyramid Lake was the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation agent A.J. Barnes. Writing in 1877 about the illegal presence of white commercial fishermen on the federal reservation under his watch, Barnes stated that they constituted a "nuisance almost beyond endurance." Yet when, lacking military backing, he bravely stepped up to the plate and attempted to give them twenty days notice to vacate, this white Indian agent pro-activist faced personal abuse that subsequently forced him to resign official duties.[89]

Lorenzo Creel might be cited as another early important player. For all his previously stated undemocratic actions (see Part IV), this former Pyramid Lake Reservation Indian agent, when lured out of retirement during the Depression, echoed Dodge by advocating what essentially has become the policy or praxis of the Pyramid Lake Tribe today—an understanding that since farming is difficult, in lieu of other available forms of wage work, economic prosperity might be easier to achieve were whites allowed to fish as sportsmen on Pyramid Lake—with licensing fees of course collected by the Tribe. Indeed, Creel's recommendation was that the Northern Paiute should also be granted full control over its fishery.[90]

Moving higher up on the non-Indian bureaucratic hegemonic chain, how about some consideration for the contributions of Alida C. Bowler? This first woman superintendent of any BIA agency (the Nevada Agency) hired Stanford University fisheries expert F. H. Sumner in 1938, after becoming suspicious about a study that completely devaluated fishing on the Pyramid Lake Reservation. Sumner, in turn, then made the following comment about the impending fate of Pyramid Lake. Pointing out that the average size of trout caught was increasing, and arguing what that meant to Bowler, he wrote, "Delighted with their record-breaking fish, sportsmen did not understand that this indicated a remnant [waning] population."[91]

John Collier, Brawler's boss, also merits credit in all this. The commissioner of Indian affairs gave testimony on behalf of Pyramid Lake's Northern Paiute

owners against the "rights" of illegal white squatters proclaimed by a powerful western senator. There are also several seeming unlikely though otherwise powerful national politicians who should be noted as important pro-Indian players in the Pyramid Lake story:

Minnesota's Senator Hubert Humphrey, whose vote in 1949, for example, proved decisive in defeating at least one of those nine pro-squatter bills that were seemingly annually introduced into the Congress by his xenophobic colleague from Nevada, Pat McCarran.[92] Also important was John Tunney, the mostly forgotten son of Gene Tunney, the world's heavyweight boxing champion. As Democratic Senator from California, John Tunney presided over a congressional investigation about Pyramid Lake in January 1972 (with Senator Ted Kennedy), and uttered these words:

> In short, the Federal Government has reneged in its fiduciary relationship with the Indians by not protecting their rights, and the Indians have continued to go unrepresented or underrepresented, many times deliberately, when their rights were being adjudicated … I feel that Pyramid Lake probably stands as one of the most flagrant examples of the disregard of Indian property rights and misuse of a great natural resource."[93]

Moving forward, today's Democratic senate majority leader, Nevada's Senator Harry Reid, surely also deserves some praise for saving Pyramid Lake, if only because he introduced PL-101, a congressional bill authorizing the Bureau of Reclamation to streamline the amount of water legislated for Newlands Reclamation Project farmers in the Lahontan Valley—meaning, hence, that Pyramid Lake Reservation Indians would receive additional acre feet of water for their lake from what otherwise is called "excess water."

Before naming some of the many Pyramid Lake Reservation Northern Paiute who also fought on behalf of their lake and its fishery, mention must be made of the attorneys employed by the Tribe: James E. Curry, an influential Washington, D.C., attorney, whose good works were such that they prompted powerful white politicians to cabal and ultimately force his resignation[94]; Judge E. P. Carvell from Elko, Nevada, who assumed responsibility for Curry's twenty-six separate tribal contracts after working with him, and then pressed forward with thirty separate claims on behalf of the Tribe;[95] and the Tribe's longtime attorney, Robert S. Pelcyger, as well as Robert Leland and Robert Stitser, who succeeded him.

The list should also include the two anthropologists upon whose invaluable ethnohistory of Pyramid Lake this article has greatly relied. Martha C. Knack and Omer C. Stewart deserve some modicum of credit for having "saved Pyramid Lake," if not belatedly, by documenting verities about its sordid recent history, as does Elmer R. Rusco, keenly observing political scientist

who documented Northern Paiute injustices at Pyramid Lake, along with his wife, the archaeologist Mary Rusco, both of whom were members of Friends of Pyramid Lake.

Fortunately, we do know the names of many, though not all, of the Pyramid Lake Reservation Northern Paiute individuals who fought the good fight to save Pyramid Lake over the years: Wilfred Shaw, "Chief" Abraham Mawee, James Vidovich, Teddy James, Dora Garcia, Robert Dodd, Frank Northrup, Dave Gibson, Gilbert Natches, and Tom Henry. Also of note are Avery Winnemucca and Allen Alleck, two Northern Paiute who in 1937 represented the newly formed Pyramid Lake Indian Tribe by providing invaluable congressional testimony in Washington, D.C.[96] Billy Williams was another important player. He was the first Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation tribal chairman under the Indian Reorganization Act and, as a thirty-two-year-old, complained before the Hoover Institute's important Merriam Hearings, in 1931, about the threat to the reservation's fisheries caused by Derby Dam's diversion of Truckee River water from Pyramid Lake. Politically active in the early 1970s as well, he attempted then to overturn the infamous Orr Ditch Decision, the 1944 ruling which ignored Pyramid Lake's constitutional water rights under the Supreme Court's Winters Doctrine.[97]

Without meaning to disparage any of their—or any other individual and collective efforts—the following explanation outlines why Mabel Wright and her prayer song, chanted in May 1964, should be credited for having saved Pyramid Lake. Our Western scientific skepticism would—and no doubt rightly should—force us to question how some few words, whether plainly spoken, let alone beautifully sung and chanted, might literally affect the very course of nature and history. Therefore, a brief discussion about the nature of belief in the very power of words in Northern Paiute culture, as well as in Great Basin Indian traditional religions, generally speaking, is in order.

Writing about the culturally and linguistically closely related Southern Paiute, two authorities, for example, have delineated, in an overview sort of way, the importance of a certain type of speech act among indigenous people in this culture area: "`Talk to it' is one of the first normative instructions given when [Southern Paiute] tribal elders tell children how to interact with plants, animals, and physical elements," thus Richard Stoffle and Michael Evans wrote.[98] And this same point was also made for the Shoshone by a leading ethnomusicologist, Judith Vander, who wrote that the Wind River Shoshone in Wyoming believed songs as well as prayers continue to be essential, both for human health as well as the growth of plants and animals in nature.[99]

Moreover, another leading contemporary scholar has generalized as follows about the power of the spoken word in Great Basin Indian traditional religions: "Any individual could seek power for purposes such as hunting or gambling, but only shamans (*puhagum'i*) acquired it in sufficient strength to call upon it to do good, and on occasion, harm to others."[100]

Turning now specifically to the Northern Paiute, the Great Basin linguist Sven Liljeblad, a life long student of the closely related Bannock language, wrote: "A notable exception is the shamanistic songs for health and weather control that were sometimes passed on to a child or grandchild."[101] Although it is not claimed that Mabel Wright Paulina possessed shamanistic "power," still in relation to the prayer she chanted on the beach line of Pyramid Lake in May 1964, she deserves credit for having saved the day. Here's the reason why.

"Individuals other than shamans maintained highly personal and individualist relationships with power sources, if indeed they had them," for example, writes Liljeblad of her people. "The details of these relationships [however] were often unknown to friends and family."[102] Moreover (and as this author has on at least one occasion personally experienced), *any* individual, be they Northern Paiute or *taivo*, is believed capable of effecting harm to persons, places and things, as well as doing wondrously good deeds, through the sheer power of words, not to mention their actions.[103]

Mabel Wright seemingly took matters into her own hands by taking hold of her drum; as a result of her great angst regarding the lake's future, she decided to use the drum one day in 1964 to do good in the midst of that environmental crisis by marching out to Pyramid Lake to chant her prayer-song. The fact, of course, was that she lacked the sort of *booha* possessed by the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet, whose weather-control power allowed Wovoka to prophesy and cause rain to fall on the nearby Walker River Reservation during a drought in 1889, thereby benefiting the closely related Northern Paiute kinsmen who had opted to farm. (At least that is the account according to Northern Paiute belief.)[104]

So, the question is why, according to Northern Paiute cultural rules, couldn't Mabel Wright's elegiac words theoretically at least also have had a similar effect with regard to saving Pyramid Lake? Denying her that power by saying it flies in the face of Western science privileges Western science over Northern Paiute epistemology and belief. And it surely represents the very sort of ethnocentric bias warned against by the founding father of modern anthropology, Franz Boas, he who of course seemingly also contradictorily critiqued the notion of "pre-logical mentality" said to be characteristic of the thinking of "primitives" in a separate breathe while otherwise always espousing cultural relativism.[105] At least, then, in the same spirit of a feminist colleague who chastised that most famous of all Great Basin cultural anthropologists for ignoring the contributions of women in Julian Steward's great study of Great Basin Indian cultural ecology, I paraphrase the title of Alice Kehoe's article by inquiring; Where is Mabel Wright in all of the literature about Pyramid Lake and in our attempt to understand the Tribe's water- and fishing-rights struggles?[106]

Believe what you will about the power of the word, whether spoken or chanted as song. And whatever your view regarding the "power of positive thinking," with its folkloristic corollary of "sticks and stones," not words, harming people, just don't try convincing the average skier today not to "think snow!"

In returning, however, to the larger philosophical issue while at the same time concluding, even if you are inclined to accept the possibility that Mabel Wright's chanted prayer saved Pyramid Lake on the basis of "multiculturalism" and its undeniable critique of the bias of prioritizing Western science over Northern Paiute indigenous cultural beliefs,[107] there is still this parallel plot, as it were, to consider:

The Pyramid Lake Reservation Tribe today can boast controlling the destiny of fishing and boating and hunting and camping at both marinas on the lake—for public enjoyment, though with the payment of fees to the Tribe, of course. This economic enterprise, the issuing of fishing and hunting licenses, generates much needed tribal income in the face of chronic reservation unemployment. Indeed, the Tribe even employs its own Northern Paiute game wardens, who possess the authority to arrest non-Indian as well as Indian offenders, for breaching rules clearly articulated in tribal brochures. So far, so good. But how can it be that those same outstanding anthropologists, upon whose study this essay is largely based, can, in seeming violation of their professional training with its teaching about the dangers of anything other than a value free frame of reference toward understanding cultural things, nonetheless pass evaluative judgments about the sort of commercial developments possibly coming to the Pyramid Lake Reservation?

The allusion here of course is to the study by Knack and Stewart, professional anthropologists and colleagues, who knew full well about the fate of Owens Lake, and no doubt also about the dire state of Walker Lake at the time of their research; yet nonetheless they ended their otherwise masterful and objective study of the American assault against Pyramid Lake Reservation's resources with the following value-laden observations about possible future commercial developments on Pyramid Lake, which this author publically now admits to harboring:

> …[the Pyramid Lake Tribe] want[s] to establish control of the entire reproduction cycle of the native cutthroat trout and the *cuiui* completely within the reservation. They want to reestablish the fish populations while the salinity level in the lake is still tolerable. They want to build the lake into a recreation center, not for commercial exploitation but as a haven for Anglo fishermen. The tribe would direct controlled economic growth motels, restaurants, boat rentals, guide services, and grocery stores. The lake would be the core of a new resort-oriented economy. It would provide a viable economic base for Paiutes for the first time in this century and become a foundation for their children.[108]

Needless to say, the present day is the "New Age of the Buffalo," an historical moment when most Native American sovereignties not only are desirous of earning millions (billions) through gaming casinos, but also vote in their tribal councils to sustain their fragile-enough economies through the sale of cancer in

tribally owned and operated Smoke Shops. Aren't anthropologists then guilty of the same sort of romanticism they have been accused of practicing toward Native Americans in the past when they today cringe and protest against the above sort of "development"? The same anthropology that for good reason has after all been rightly critiqued as the "step-child of colonialism."[109]

So, in conclusion, lest this modern version of the same be perpetuated, or at least a similar kind of ethnocentric bias be wrought upon the very people so many anthropologists feel truly privileged to have been allowed to study, by continuing to romanticize them by versions of this "contemporary ethnographic present," it is better that we should remember the fact that Native Americans in our capitalistic society should be able to enjoy the same fundamental democratic right to determine their own economic futures as the majority of the rest of us would demand. Stated somewhat differently, paraphrasing the titular lyrics Billie Holiday sang in her rendition of the Bessie Smith blues hit, the Pyramid Lake Reservation Tribe can also damn right "take a notion to jump in the ocean," so to speak, if it wants to. This right is theirs even if it ultimately means transforming their "jewel in the mountains" into something as dreadful as a profit-making water-amusement-type theme fun park, insofar as it "Taint nobody else's business what they might choose to do!"[110]

APPENDIX

Mabel Wright's Prayer (Northern Paiute transcription)

1. Eeshoo tammee panin^da
2. Mino-o manna panina
3. Oogaho nahobeeya
4. N^zo ogaho hoobee ya-maiyoosee
5. N^ t^neekw^h^-eena kar^ manim^na
6. Pan^n^r^ma man^ee tooneesa-ya
7. Pasameena
8. Kar^ maneem^na
9. Pasameena
10. So, t^bee heebee par^hagwet
11. Poowana tig^nap^nee
12. Hoon^gweeta t^pee yipee
13. Gigimaiye, gigimaiye
14. So, t^bee yoobeena
15. Pasatigw^nap^nee
16. Mee-a nanineemeeyadi
17. Eeshoo hoobeeyabee
18. Oitoo nitina n^sooname-ya
19. N^ onna meehoo eenawe-yoo
20. T^neekwe hoona kapani nar^meene
21. Tooneesha yamee?a
22. Tammee panin^da esho pasa-kena
23. Pasatigw^nap^nee
24. Teebee nanaita
25. Mee-ee eeshoo hoobeeya na?nineemee-ya
26. N^ oitu titiha sooname?yoo pan^n^d^
27. Maho pasameena
28. Taivo tspas^gw^meena
29. Hanosee eepa-a mee-a
30. Tomochowe pasameene
31. Kar^ manimeene
32. N^ oitu t^t^nan^ sooname-yoo
33. Otno nanameeyo
34. Otno ?^nnu
35. ^n^qima t^r^kwena
36. Keeyana tames^tmeeya n^zo bia
37. N^ga hoobeeyamai-^na
38. Poohabbe puhaabeena soonameeya

39. ^n^m^neemeya
40. Poohasoonaya oitu poohag^ma ^nenmeemeeya
41. Eeshoo t^bizeedee poohasoonameee ^ninee
42. So, tammee meeyow
43. Toge-yoo tooweep
44. Poohasooname-yoo otno mee?ee ^neemp^ne
45. Oitoo tooneeshame-yoo
46. Oitoo t^t^hasoonane
47. Estray-ka eepa-a
48. Qari manimeea
49. Meeyahoo ^n^me
50. Oo-ootnoo manadi hachai
51. Taivo? Osh^tameeya

Mabel Wright's Prayer (Interlineal translation)

1. This is our lake:
2. Now, it is still standing here [water remains] —
3. And here is my song,
4. My song that I found.
5. I found that song while sitting by the lake,
6. Just sitting there, by the lake, reminiscing, and so I began making "noise."
7. [Singing/praying:] "Our Lake is drying up, very slowly
8. Is disappearing little-by-little
9. Drying up!
10. Rocks that used to be deep under the water
11. They're not at the bottom any longer—the jagged rocks all along the lakeshore are now in plain sight, jutting up, exposed, and showing.
12. Yes, the water is down, and the rocks are showing
13. All along the shore they're showing
14. The rocks are practically jumping out at you!
15. Yes, things are so dry, the rocks are showing."
16. So, this what my song is about
17. This song I'm singing,
18. Because of what's over there [shrinking water level], and which is why I'm feeling so sorry, that deep within myself I think: "Dear me!"
19. And I'm also there pointing this out, saying
20. Singing and feeling sad.
21. Yes, because I'm singing, crying out for my lake, wanting to shake things up!
22. My song was: "Our lake is drying up
23. And all along the shore, rocks are sticking up.
24. Rocks are showing."

25. So this is what my song says.
26. And I feel so sorry that our lake is drying up.
27. Drying up,
28. [Because] The white man turns the water away [for his purposes].
29. "Where is my water going?" I ask.
30. So, [because] every year, year-by-year it's drying up,
31. It's disappearing slowly…
32. And I feel sad about this —
33. Why I'm singing,
34. Singing about what I just said.
35. Yes, so, this is what I was singing about
36. While I sat over there, where I sat, getting upset, shaking, talking to myself, scolding them…
37. Which is why I originally found this song
38. A song that is like a powerful Indian doctor's thoughts, or so I'm thinking.
39. About the content of what I'm singing and praying about.
40. While sitting there, wishing in fact that I, too, had shamanic power!
41. Now, mind you, this Pyramid Lake Indian situation is real … Makes me want to ask: "How shall I ask for *booha* [supernatural power]?"
42. To remediate our Lake … This really belongs to us Indians.
43. You bet! Because that's the way things really are around here.
44. Which is why my only wish is that my prayer and my song would be powerful enough to change things for the better, don't I wish?
45. While I was sitting there, feeling so bad,
46. Sitting over there also feeling sad.

Notes

[1]This article was originally presented at a special session of the annual meetings of the Ethnohistory Society, on 24 October 1999, to commemorate the grand opening of the Mashantucket Indian Pequot Museum and Research Center in Foxwoods, Connecticut. The author would also like to thank Yvonne Dunn for supplying biographical information about Mabel Wright. Yvonne's husband is from the Pyramid Lake Reservation, and last-minute questions to her arguably make our text messaging the first of this kind in the history ethnographic field work.

[2]Martha C. Knack and Omer C. Stewart, *As Long as the River Shall Run: An Ethnohistory of Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 342-43.

[3]Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., "`Here in Nevada a Terrible Crime. …'," *American Heritage*, 71 (1970), 93-100. The terrible story of Owens Lake is told by Marc Reisner in *Cadillac Desert: The American West And Its Disappearing Water* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1986), 59-86, and more chillingly portrayed in Roman Polanski's cinematic masterpiece "Chinatown" (1974).

[4]"Mabel Wright Paulina" (May 1964), Margaret Wheat Papers (#83-24, Tape 48), Special Collections, University of Nevada Libraries, Reno.

[5]I acknowledge here the invaluable help I received with the transcription and translation of Mabel Wright's prayer-song from my late adopted *bia* (`mother'), Ida Mae Valdez, and her sister, "Auntie" Lillus Richardson of the Yerington Paiute Tribe, as well as from Ralph Burns of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation. Dr. Alex Ruuska was kind enough to read and criticize an earlier version of this essay. Any errors of course remain my own.

[6]Donald K. Grayson, *The Desert's Past: A Natural Prehistory of the Great Basin* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 95.

[7]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 7-8. On the Truckee River, see Robert Dawson, Peter Goin, and Mary Webb, *A Doubtful River* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000).

[8]Grayson, *Desert's Past*, 77-113.

[9]*As Long as the River*, 7.

[10]Another large tufa rock formation in Pyramid Lake is called by the Northern Paiute "Stone Mother." It arguably would better serve as the name of the reservation as well as the lake, the latter making up one half of the size of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation. in any event, Joe Ely, former tribal chair, recounts this version of the Northern Paiute creation story featuring Stone Mother:

> The First Mother and First Father originally lived in the area now occupied by Pyramid Lake, and there raised a family. The sons became heads of the Tribes and eventually began to war with one another. When Father could no longer tolerate the fighting, he sent the sons away. The Mother, overcome by her sadness at the loss of her sons, knelt with her basket while gathering food, and could not get up. As she wept, her tears filled the valley and created what we now know as Pyramid Lake. In time she was turned to stone, but the Lake her tears created continues to fill the valley. The Tribe's belief that as long as the Great Stone Mother guards the lake, its waters will continue and her children will have a home near its shores under her protection (in Dawson *et al*., *Doubtful River*, 94; see Plate 92 for a photograph of Stone Mother).

[11]John Charles Frémont, *Report on the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842 and to Oregon and Northern California in the Years 1843-1844* (Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1845), 216. The fuller account from Frémont reads:

> Beyond, a defile between the mountains descended rapidly about two thousand feet; and, filling up all the lower space, was a sheet of green water, some twenty miles broad. It broke upon our eyes like the ocean. The neighboring peaks rose high above us, and we ascended one of them to obtain a better view. The waves were curling in the breeze, and their dark-green color showed it to be a body of deep water … It was set like a gem in the mountains.

Yet another poetic description of Pyramid Lake was written by Mary Webb, and reproduced in Elmer R. Rusco, "Introduction," *Reporter-At Large at Pyramid Lake, A. J. Liebling* (Reno: University

of Nevada Press, 2000), ix-xxx, which collects these four essays about the long-standing squatter controversy on the Pyramid Lake Reservation, originally commissioned for *The New Yorker* in 1955:

> The lake seems to wear a different shade of blue each time I see it … from summer azure to the slate gray and emerald green that often presage a winter storm. In the early light of morning, the lake glitters with excitement, while late afternoon deepens the teal water into a calm expanse. With each season, each hour, Pyramid Lake changes.

[12]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River,* 8.

[13]A. J. Liebling, "Lake of the Cui-ui Eaters," Part I, *The New Yorker* (1 January 1955), 25.

[14]See Sessions Wheeler, *The Desert Lake: The Story of Nevada's Pyramid Lake* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd, 1969).

[15]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 211.

[16]The "Lamb Hypothesis," which was named for the historical linguist Sydney Lamb, purports that, with the exception of the Washoe, all other Great Basin Indians encountered by Europeans at "Contact," that is, the Northern and Southern Paiute, Shoshone, and Ute, spread to their present homelands around 1,000 B.P., from in or near Death Valley, California. See David B. Madsen and David Rhode, eds., *Across the West: Human Population Movement and the Expansion of the Numa*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994). Not all archeologists, however, agree with the Lamb Hypothesis: See, for example, Richard E. Hughes, "Methodological Observations on Great Basin Prehistory," 67-70, in Madsen and Rhode, *Across the West*, Great Basin Indians, needless to say, typically demur and say they were created *in situ.*

[17]Amy J. Dansie, "Early Holocene Burials in Nevada: Overview of Localities, Research, and Legal Issues," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 40:1 (Winter 1997), 8; see also Donald Tuohy and Amy J. Dansie, "New Information Regarding Early Holocene Manifestations in the Western Great Basin, *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 40:1 (Winter 1997), 24-53. Also see Amy J. Dansie and William Jerry Jerrems, "More Bits and Pieces: A New Look at Lahontan Chronology and Human Occupation," in Robson Bonnishsen, Bradley T. Lepper, Dennis Stanford and Michael R. Waters, eds. *PaleoAmerican Origins: Beyond Clovis*, (Texas A & M University Publication: Department of Anthropology, 2005), 68.

[18]Writing about these and other ancient fishing cultures found near Pyramid Lake, Steven R. Simms, (*Ancient Peoples of the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast Press, 2008), 128, stated: "Dried human feces (coprolites) of Paleoindian age from Spirit cave in western Nevada indicate the consumption of small fish."

[19]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as The River*, 13. See also Simms (*Ancient Peoples*, 168), who also writes about "famous equipment caches from Lovelock Cave and other caves" found near Pyramid Lake, which contained "exquisite duck decoys and snares … hidden below a false bottom … [and which were] covered with dried fish to make it look like an innocuous food cache." Those prehistoric duck decoys famously found in assemblages in Lovelock Cave in 1924 are today dated by accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) 14C radiocarbon technology between 2,080 (plus or minus 330) and 2,250 (plus or minus 230) years ago. The original study of this Middle Holocene lakeside cave site was by L. L. Loud and Mark Harrington, "Lovelock Cave" (*University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology*, 25, Berkeley, 1929).

[20]According to Catherine S. Fowler and Joyce E. Bath ("Pyramid Lake Northern Paiute Fishing: The Ethnographic Record," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*, 3 (1981), 176-86), there were four other species of fish partaken by Northern Paiute (*Numu*) in the Truckee River and at Pyramid Lake: Tahoe sucker (*Castostomus tahoensis*), Lahontan tui chub (*Gila bicolor*), Lahontan redside (*Richardsonius egregious*), and Lahontan speckled dace (*Rhinicchtys osculus robustus*). Combined with the other two discussed in the essay, these six fish species were said to be "vitally important in the economic systems of several Northern Paiute groups" found at Pyramid Lake (176-77).

[21]See photos in Wheeler, *Desert Lake*. A Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation Northern Paiute named Captain Truckee guided Frémont through Hennessy Pass, and then across the Sierra Nevada and down into Alta California on the American explorer's second expedition, in 1845; Truckee is identified as the father-in-law of Chief Winnemucca and grandfather of the more famous "Piute Princess," Sarah Winnemucca (see Gae Whitney Canfield, *Sarah Winnemucca of the Northern Paiutes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983). The name Truckee, according to Brady Emm, a

Yerington Paiute Indian Colony consultant, sounded like *togetyou*, which Mr. Emm translated from his Uto-Aztecan language into English as the colloquialism "That's alright!"

[22]Catherine S. Fowler ("Subsistence," in *Indians of the Great Basin*, vol. 11 of Warren L. d'Azevedo, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, William C. Sturtevant, general editor (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1986),64-97, 88. also wrote about the abundance of *cui-ui* in historic times, with catches said to be "stacked like cordwood" and tied in bundles with twine before being eaten or cached in pits (or sacks) near homes as winter food because this fish species was easily preserved. Along with being pulverized and added to soup, *cui-ui* fish were baked whole wrapped in leaves and roasted over open fires.

[23]Quoted from testimony given in 1937 at congressional hearings regarding Pyramid Lake squatters (in Liebling, "Lake of the Cui-ui Eaters," Part II, *The New Yorker*, (8 January 1955), 46-47).

[24]Nellie Shaw Harnar, *Indians of Coo-yu-ee Pah (Pyramid Lake): The History of the Pyramid Lake Indians in Nevada* (Sparks: Western Printing and Publishing Company, 1974), 13.

[25]Catherine S. Fowler and Sven Liljeblad, "Northern Paiute," in *Great Basin*, vol. 11, *Handbook of North American Indians*, 441.

[26]For example, platforms were constructed at river banks from which men and women could scoop out fish with the use of large dip nets during spawn runs; fish were also caught through the use of cone-shaped traps placed at the openings of willow weirs and pointed basketry traps staked in shallow waters. There also was the reported practice of damming streams with rocks or brush fences as part of the vast and vastly efficient Northern Paiute fishing technology (Fowler and Liljblad, "Northern Paiute.")

[27]Omer C. Stewart, "Northern Paiute Bands," *University of California Anthropological Records*, vol. 2 (1939).

[28]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 16. On the other hand, Major Frederick Dodge (*Report to the Secretary of the Interior: Indians of Western Paiute of Utah Territory*, U.S. 36th Cong., 1st sess., S. Ex. Doc. no. 2, Part 1, Congress Serial no. 1023, Washington, D.C., 741-45) listed five separate "bands" in 1859, consisting of fifteen hundred Northern Paiutes living along the Truckee River and the lower Truckee Basin, some three hundred and twenty of whom were said to also reside "along the shores of Pyramid Lake" under "*Wat-se-que-ordo* (`Four Crows');" while yet another grouping of 300 reportedly occupied "the shores of lower Mud Lake (Winnemucca Lake) under "*Wun-a-muc-a* (The Second)" aka Chief Winnemucca.

Despite the fact that these "bands" are viewed today by most anthropologists as collective reaction-type sociopolitical groupings that formed as defensive multi-family alliances under charismatic military leaders in response to Euro-American invasions of their territory, I employ the term throughout.(See Elman R. Service, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective* (New York, Random House, 1962).

[29]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 39-41.

[30]Martha C. Knack, "The Effects of Nevada State Fishing Laws on the Northern Paiutes of Pyramid Lake," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 25:4 (Winter 1982), 251-53.

[31]Major Dodge, who was one the first Indian agents in the Great Basin, replied to a request from the superintendent of Indian affairs for Utah territory, made on 6 October 1858, for "some geographical explorations with a view of selecting suitable reservations for agriculture + herding purposes for the [Northern Paiute] Indians in your Agency" as follows: "I respectfully suggest that the North West part of the Valley of the Truckee River including Pyramid Lake, and the north east part of the Valley of Walker River including the lake of the same, be reserved for them … These are isolated spots, embracing large fisheries … and will have the advantage of being their home from choice" (Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 89-90).

[32]Ned Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 33. Blackhawk writes about these assaults against the indigenous peoples of the Great Basin, commencing with the slaughter of 30-40 Northern Paiute in 1833. Joseph Rediford Walker, in the first of these regrettable incidents, retaliated because of thefts against his beaver-traps along the Humboldt River, on or close to what became that tortuous forty-mile desert highway through Central Nevada used by emigrants headed to the goldfields of California.

As for the Pyramid Lake War, its tinder was the abduction of two adolescent Indian girls, whom it was soon enough discovered were raped. Thus a militia of understandably vengeful Pyramid Lake Reservation Northern Paiute routed the ragtag army from Virginia City that had assembled

seeking revenge for the murder of unscrupulous whites at Williams Station on the Carson River by killing forty-three "soldiers." These Northern Paiute, however, were subsequently defeated by a real army that converged from diverse locations three months later in May of that same year. Ferol Egan, *Sand in a Whirlwind: The Paiute Indian War of 1860* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1972).

It is also not surprising the sort of violence Great Basin Indians experienced following American hegemony discussed by this Western Shoshone scholar, continued long after the Pyramid Lake War. This is, for example, evidenced by the angry letter written by Sarah Winnemucca to the commanding officer of Camp (Fort) McDermitt, in which the "Piute Princess" complains about the death of thirty family members camped at Winnemucca Lake in an incident that occurred in 1865: "I do not think my Father, will ever come in [Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation] with his own consent on account of the Brutal Murder by Capt. Wells, then of the Nevada Calvary … of all my sisters, and my father's three wives…." (Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, p. 79).

Continuing, Knack and Stewart also quote (p. 150) from an early white settler from central Nevada who clearly saw the tragic connection between America's occupation of the Great Basin and the Pyramid Lake War. Wrote John Reese in 1862:

> … in laying out these reserves he [Dodge] assured the Indians that the Whites should not come upon them either to graze their stock[,] to mine or for any other purpose. The Whites did go there [to Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation] to graze and to dig for gold, the Indians demanded protection . . . the Indians killed and eat [*sic*] several head of cattle belonging to the Whites, and said it was done to get their pay for the use of their lands because the white have driven their game away and were eating up their fish. The Whites shot some of the Indians, and the Indians retaliated which brought on the war.

[33]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 92.

[34]Most reservations of course derived from treaties. Recognition thus of the legality of the Pyramid Lake Reservation by what, in fact, was one of America's first reservations created by executive order, resulted in a legal conundrum that wasn't officially resolved until Felix Cohen's brief in 1924 (Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 92).

Yet another important aspect of the legal battle against squatters on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation stemmed from definitions of water rights. Derived from English common law, this seemingly tautological (though impactful) definition "states that a person must be a riparian landowner to have a riparian right;" that is, the one who owns the land also owns the water, as in or on a first-come-first-serve basis (Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 265). Or, as state Supreme Court Justice T. P. Hawley wrote about this important decision in *Jones v. Adams* (19 Nev. 78), whose relevance to the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation and its fisheries remains palpable: "What is meant is that no one can absolutely divert the whole stream, but must use it in such manner as not to injure those below him" (John W. Bird, "The End of the `Monster' of Riparianism in Nevada," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 22:4 (Fall 1979), 271-77, 276.) "Riparian water rights" in Nevada, however, would give way to "appropriation rights" in 1885. (Also see John W. Bird, "A History of Water Rights in Nevada," Parts I, II, *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 18:1 (Spring 1976), 27-32; 19:1 (Spring 1977), 27-34).

[35]Knack, "The Effects," 256.

[36]*Ibid*. That law, of course, effectively ended Northern Paiute shallow-water techniques. Even so, when the number of fish intended for the market increased, catch limits were imposed. And since "Nevada laws required fish ladders on dams and forbade anyone to fish at the base of these Anglo-introduced obstructions," as Knack (p. 157) also points out, the state legislature's uncertainty regarding its authority over Indians did not prevent it from applying that ruling to off- as well as on-reservation fishing.

[37]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 160.

[38]*Ibid*., 164.

[39]*Ibid.*

[40]*Ibid*., 165.

[41]*Ibid*., 167.

[42]*Ibid*.

[43]Knack, "The Effects," 255. See also Martha C. Knack, "A Short Resource History of Pyramid Lake, Nevada," *Ethnohistory*, 24 (1977), 47-63.

[44]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 172.

[45]Wheeler, *Desert Lake*, 94.

[46]Knack, "The Effects," 255.

[47]*Ibid*.

[48]Summarized in Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 300-309.

[49]See Richard O. Clemmer, "Pristine Aborigines or Victims of Progress? The Western Shoshones in the Anthropological Imagination," *Current Anthropology*, 50 (2009), 849-81.

[50]This resulted from a suggestion by a BIA inspector that a test case challenging the legality of the state law regulating fish taken by Indians be made. Although adjudicated, not only did the BIA refuse to support the decision, but the secretary of interior, who of course had authority over this federal bureau, ordered Indian compliance with state law in 1890 (Knack, "The Effects," 258).

[51]*Ibid*.

[52]*Ibid*., 260. Knack here also wrote about another test case that failed. It involved the Pyramid Lake Reservation's (licensed) trader's pre-arranged acceptance of ten fish from several individual Indian fishermen in the spring of 1914, thus prompting his arrest by the state game warden. Although he argued that reservations did not fall under state law, the trader nonetheless was found guilty and fined.

[53]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 307. This sort of prejudice against Indian commercial fishing is further evidenced by the following editorial culled from the *Reno Evening Gazette*, Dated 10 July 1879:

> The decision of the United States courts, that the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation is valid and binding, is of great importance to Reno and the whole coast. It ties up the lake from all but the few lazy Indians who will have a monopoly of the fine fish which have hitherto been shipped to all parts of Nevada and California, with the reach of the railroads. This will not only deprive people everywhere of a real luxury, but, what is of more importance to us, it will kill a valuable industry, which would in time add materially to our resources. It is simply monstrous, that such a vast tract of land, enclosing the largest sheet of water in four states, where the largest ships could run easily, should be held in reserve for a couple of hundred Indians, who do not have use for a thousandth part of it. If the matter were put in is [*sic*] proper light before the department, we have no doubt but that it would be cut down at once.

[54]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 311.

[55]Liebling, "Lake of the Cui-ui Eaters," Part IV, *The New Yorker* (22 January 1955), pp. 37-73; Gilman M. Ostrander, *Nevada: The Great Rotten Borough, 1859-1964* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966).

[56]Two additional factors that made matters worse for the Pyramid Lake Reservation Northern Paiute might be cited: (1) The coming of the Central Pacific, which in 1875 prompted a land rush by whites to the southern end of the reservation in the town of what came to be called Wadsworth, six hundred and thirty acres of prime land subsequently alienated from the Pyramid Lake Reservation (Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 134-38, 181-3); and (2) a dead zone in the Truckee River where fish could not breathe. The latter, according to Donald J. Pisani ("The Polluted Truckee: A Study in Interstate Water Quality, 1870-1934," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 20:1 (Spring 1979), 151-66, 153), was caused by the Floriston Pulp and Paper Mill, which dumped sawdust into the Truckee River and consequently fatally coated fish eggs with fungi. It caused human illness as well—until this practice was finally outlawed by federal law. But along with garbage tossed into the water by white citizens of Reno (Knack, "The Effects," 259), the dead zone was exacerbated by sewage emptying into the Truckee River. As Pisani ("Polluted Truckee," 164) summarizes this environmental disaster: "In the 1870s, the great cutthroat trout of Pyramid Lake migrated upstream in such numbers that the river itself seemed alive. By 1930 they had all but disappeared and pollution undoubtedly contributed to their demise."

Indeed, the above scholar does not hesitate to pull punches when he writes this about Pyramid Lake Reservation's Indian Agent Bateman, stating that his "ready force of [Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation] Indian fishermen, to supplement his regular income … exploit[ed] Pyramid Lake and their stretch of the Truckee River in a more systematic, sustained way than [white] fishermen … {Hence, because of their exemption from state law allowing them legally to capture fish with nets and grappling

hooks, otherwise banned to white commercial fishermen,] they contributed to the destruction of the cutthroat trout as much as polluters upstream" (Pisani, "Polluted Truckee," 165, no. 7).

Despite all this, it might be noted that Wells Fargo in those early years reported the extraordinary facts that daily shipments made through company offices in Wadsworth on the Pyramid Lake Reservation (as well as in the cities of Reno, Nevada, and Truckee, California) amounted to 5.5 tons of fish in 1872; 7.5 tons in 1873; and 8 tons in 1874 (Pisani, "Polluted Truckee," 153).

[57]In Liebling, "Lake of the Cui-ui Eaters," Part II, 46-47. Collier therein also disclosed that his own research into this vexing matter uncovered the fact that Indian Agent Dodge's 25 November 1859 letter was "concurred" by the commissioner of indian affairs on November 26 of that same year. Those two separate actions then led to the issuance of a proclamation from the counselor for the General Land Office, which was approved by the secretary of Indian affairs several weeks later (8 December 1859), establishing the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation. Collier also testified that after the Monroe land survey had been completed in 1864-65, notices were posted in May 1866 against illegal squatters, whose eviction he testified was attempted by Territorial Governor James W. Nye as early as 1861. For all of the seeming confusion surrounding the founding date, hence the "legality" of the Pyramid Lake Reservation, those events all took place prior to the Executive Order confirming its existence in 1874.

[58]Knack, "The Effects," 261.

[59]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 232. That year was also significant in the long struggle waged by the Pyramid Lake Reservation Northern Paiute people to maintain water and fishing rights, insofar as the Supreme Court in 1983 used the 1913 court ruling that defined (only) twenty-four thousand acre-feet per annum as rightfully belonging to the Tribe—the same amount of water originally deeded for irrigation purposes, albeit not as entitlements for fishing. This judicial ruling, according to David Yardas ("Water Transfers, Paper Rights, and the Truckee-Carson Settlement," in *Indian Water in the West*, Thomas R. McGuire, ed. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993), 194-203, 194), was celebrated by Nevada as well as by the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District (TCID), each of which was otherwise opposed to the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation Tribe's desire to "convert…unused irrigation rights into dual purpose irrigation/fishery entitlements" consisting of 8,000-15,000 annual acre feet irrigation demands [meaning that] "anywhere from 15,000 to 22,000 acre-feet of decreed irrigation rights remain unused."

[60]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 231-3. The state of Nevada in 1920 not only made the shipment of fish for sale illegal in winter, but year-round as well. Retaliation by the Pyramid Lake Reservation Indian agent in closing off Pyramid Lake to Anglo sport fishing led to his firing. Even so, alongside the outraged general public, which sought the "closing" of Pyramid Lake, those calling for the allotment of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation urged another way of reducing Indian land.

"Indians who violate the regulations will not be allowed to fish at all, or to sell fish," a succeeding Indian agent (James Jenkins) (as already indicated) then ordered the tribal police to enforce state fishing laws on the reservation. This in turn led to the infamous limits of ten fish or ten pounds per person, which was more than doubled when the limits were increased to twenty-five two years later. Even so, fish had to be caught by hook and line, and had to be sold directly to consumers in season (Knack, "The Effects," 261).

[61]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 307.

[62]*Ibid*., 309-10. "You must discourage `meetings' of Indians that take them from their work and do nothing but unduly excite them." James Jenkins's infamous ukase was issued after a delegation of Northern Paiute from the Pyramid Lake Reservation had traveled to the state capital in Carson City to protest interference against fish laws in 1923. Writing on March 14 of that year, this Indian agent thus further attempted to curb free speech, when he declared the "talk habit must be stopped wherever possible."

[63]Knack, "The Effects," 260. Oliver also urged that Pyramid Lake be opened to white commercial fisherman, while at the same time allowing the State Fish and Game Commission to gather spawn to make happy the sportsmen whose lobby had been seminal in the passage of anti-Indian restrictive legislation in the first place.

[64]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 310.

[65]Knack, "The Effects," 262.

[66]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 294.

[67]Elmer R. Rusco, "Formation of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council, 1934-1936," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*, 10 (1988), 187-208, 191.

[68]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 231.

[69]Rusco ("Formation," 201) quotes from the latter source, which also contains the Northern Paiute request of "rebuying this land from them," thereby "protecting us permanently from inavoidable [*sic*] water loss." in this request these Great Basin Indians also sought restoration of the "ample land all around us which we could put into cultivation."

[70]See Rusco, "Formation."

[71]Congress in 1924 passed a bill allowing all twelve illegal original squatters to purchase what they'd in effect stolen from the Northern Paiute owners of Pyramid Lake Reservation, and at a ridiculously low price arbitrarily set without any prior consultation. Only five squatters, however, paid up. With passage of the so-called New Deal for Indians, however, Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes insisted defaulters pay up—albeit at higher prices. And when they didn't, and subsequently were evicted, Patrick McCarran initiated legislation to protect what Liebling quipped was the "Pre-eminent Right of the First Trespasser."

[72]In a decade during which the federal government sought to "terminate" all reservations, thus intending to turn over historically defined sacred-trust responsibilities toward Native American sovereignties to the individual states, Northern Paiute living on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation were declared "not ready to go" in a survey discussing the degree of such readiness. (Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 324-35).

[73]Timothy G. Haller, "The Legislative Battle over the California-Nevada Interstate Water Compact: A Question of Might Versus Native American Right," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 32:3 (Fall 1989), 198-221. This battle not only gave rise to the "Save Pyramid Lake" campaign, but also inspired the following resolution adopted by the Pyramid Lake Tribal Council on 3 November 1967: "Pyramid Lake cannot ever get more water than the 30,000 acre-feet for which the tribe has a `paper' right under the Orr Ditch Decree."

[74]As reported by President Nixon's advisor (if not agonist), Alvin Josephy, scholar of the Nez Perce, who also wrote about that meeting in the middle of Lake Tahoe that it grew out of a long-standing water battle between California and Nevada (resulting from the post-World War II growth of gaming and recreation industries in the Lake-Tahoe/Reno area, as well as the fact that the rivers in the one state (California) flowed (eastward) in the direction of the other (Nevada)). The attempted "resolution" of this issue, in 1969, also grew out a fourteen-year interstate quarrel between those two western states, one that originated in 1955, when both California and Nevada hired a researcher to employ the Commerce Clause of the American Constitution to negotiate what in time became a bi-state compact. President Eisenhower on August 4 of that same year, according to Josephy, signed legislation authorizing representatives from California and Nevada to proceed with such negotiations. But since nothing came of it, Republican governors Reagan and Laxalt decided to meet and signed off on that agreement, which was intended to diminish the flow of the Truckee River into Pyramid Lake by "only" a hundred and fifty-two feet—one-half its present depth—a decision that, according to Josephy, would have left Pyramid Lake a "salt lake in a huge basin of mudflats," while otherwise earmarking 90 percent of previously disputed water for recreation purposes in California. This "agreement" led the Lakota activist-lawyer-scholar Vine DeLoria, Jr., finally, to sarcastically comment: "It naturally followed that the only way to save Pyramid Lake was to drain it." Happily for the Pyramid Lake Reservation Northern Paiute Tribe, their heroic protest, and the ensuing public outcry, helped defeat those power brokers.

[75]"For the first time in history, the United States government was to be held responsible for the proper administration of its trust obligations to Indian tribes," wrote Knack and Stewart (*As Long as the River*, 337) about this landmark decision. It followed a four-day trial, after which Judge Bruce Gesell ruled on November 8 in favor of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe that an "abuse of discretion," and one, "not in accordance with law," had occurred that involved violations of secretarial trust toward the Pyramid Lake Reservation Paiute Tribe as well as malfeasance of office due to the Newlands Reclamation Act of 1902. "Not only did it direct the delivery of adequate water to stabilize Pyramid Lake until the Paiutes' full water rights could be ruled upon in the Winters Doctrine case," wrote Alvin M. Josephy, Jr. in an excellent discussion of the Pyramid Lake water case, wrote "but set a legal precedent for all other American Indian tribes in their conflicts with the federal government as trustee of their property." ("Like Giving Heroin To An Addict," in *Now That*

the Buffalo's Gone (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 151-76, 171).

[76]Leah J. Wilds, Danny A. Gonzales, and Glen S. Krutz ("Reclamation and the Politics of Change: Rights Settlement Act of 1990," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 37:3 (Fall 1994), 173-98, 182) also wrote about the quarrel between the Pyramid Lake Indian Tribe and the TCID for Newlands Reclamation water, a battle in which the courts terminated the contract that had resulted in subsequent tribal suits. Ultimately the Northern Paiute netted eighty thousand additional acre feet in Pyramid Lake.

[77]James Sutcliffe fenced off thirty acres near the road that led to Reno, and established a hostelry and commercial fishing area in 1886. Subsequently taken to federal district court as a result of this illegal squatter-type action, Sutcliffe lost in 1918, and was ordered to leave. Yet the property remains in non-Indian hands, largely due to a ruling by the secretary of interior who vetted permission so that the white settlers might remain. Knack and Stewart (*As Long as the River*, 192), call attention to Sutcliff's marina as being "probably the most valuable piece of property on the reservation."

[78]Provided, however, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe drop any and all water liens against the national government (see Wilds, Gonzales and Krutz, "Reclamation," 187). Credit for passage of this agreement, which contains a second title dealing with water-rights issues for the Fallon Tribe of Nevada, generally is given to Nevada's Senator Harry Reid. It was submitted to Congress on August 4, 1989, was passed by Congress and signed into law by President George H. Bush on November 16, 1990. The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council (with support from public-interest groups) initially rejected this "iron triangle" before reversing itself. About the mercurial history of this settlement, Elmer Rusco ("Introduction," xxv-xxvi) writes that nearly one decade later, "it was not absolutely certain, but extremely likely, that the Negotiated Settlement, as it is called, would go into effect."

Finally, David Yardas, water resources analyst for the Environmental Defense Fund based in Oakland, California, reminds us ("Water Transfers," 194) that the diversion of 750,000 acre feet of decreed water from the Truckee and Carson rivers originally intended to irrigate 60,000 acres of alfalfa and grains under the Newlands Act—three-fourths of its intended capacity—a diversion of what amounts to nearly 50 percent of the Truckee River, has on the other hand resulted in the "permanent loss of wetlands at the now vanished Winnemucca Lake National Wildlife Refuge adjacent to Pyramid Lake."

[79]Margaret M. Wheat, *Survival Arts of the Primitive Paiutes* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1967), 20.

[80]*Ibid.*, 21

[81]Liebling, "Lake of the Cui-ui Eaters," Part III, *The New Yorker*, (15 January 1955), pp. 32-66, p. 50.

[82]This Biblical quotation was included in a letter to Indian Commissioner Cato Sells from Washington J. Endicott, Inspector, dated September 3, 1920, and expressed the pain experienced by the Northern Paiute about Pyramid Lake in a way reminiscent of the prayer Mabel Wright chanted.

[83]This quotation from the National Park Service is found in the article by Alvin Josephy ("`Here in Nevada,'," 95). Josephy also quotes Thomas J. Trelease, an official from the Nevada Fish and Game Commission who wrote about the Pyramid Lake saga in 1967, calling it "one of the blackest pages in the history of American fisheries and representing what must be close to the ultimate in greed and lack of foresight."

[84]See A. L. Kroeber ("The Superorganic," *American Anthropologist*, 19 (1917), 163-213), and Leslie White ("Man's Control over Civilization: An Anthropocentric Illusion," in *The Science of Culture: A Study of Man and Civilization*, (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1969), 330-59, for the two famous articles on the one side of this equation. See also Edward A. Sapir's rejoinder ("Do We Need a Superorganic?" *American Anthropologist*, 19 (1917), 441-47).

[85]See Michael Hittman ("Hope and Dope," mss.) on the other hand for a critique of the "great man" hypothesis employed by Omer Stewart, who explained the (initial) success, yet (ultimate) failure of Chief Gray Horse (aka Ben Lancaster), in spreading peyote among Northern Paiute and Washoe communities in western Nevada during the 1930s to the proselytizer's "pecuniary motives."

[86]Alvin M. Josephy, *The Patriot Chiefs: A Chronicle of American Indian Resistance* (New York: Viking Press, 1961).

[87]Indeed, Dodge not only also bravely risked his own neck by chasing illegal white fishermen from Pyramid Lake in the 1860s, but he opposed the territory-cum-state of Nevada's desire to terminate the reservation, the latter, a twenty-year campaign beginning within a year of the Pyramid Lake Reservation's establishment, in 1859.

[88]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 138.

[89]*Ibid*., 164-67.

[90]*Ibid*., 277-8. Creel even backed up his reasoning with empirical research—a census of forty families taken on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation. He learned that five families wanted to fish full-time and nineteen part-time, whereas all espoused the desire to sell fish on the market while continuing to consume some of their catch as part of their daily diet.

[91]See, for example, the photograph of the late movie actor Clark Gable holding a large trout taken in Pyramid Lake (Wheeler, *Desert Lake*). The picture was taken during the filming of John Huston's "The Misfits," which deals with the capture of wild horses for dog food, and was filmed in Dayton, Nevada, near the Pyramid Lake Reservation. As for Ms. Bowler, she not only claimed to have lost her job because Senator McCarran wanted her head because she championed Indian rights over and against those of the illegal white squatters on the Truckee River, but the former Nevada agency superintendent also told A. J. Liebling ("Lake of the Cui-ui Eaters," Part IV, p. 66), who had tracked her down for an interview in her home in Glendale, California, "As if you could be too prejudiced in favor of the people it is your duty to protect." Bowler, on the other hand, was no friend to the Native American Church, as evidenced by her (arguably successful) campaign to defeat the Washoe proselytizer Chief Gray Horse/Ben Lancaster (see Omer Stewart, "Washo-Northern Paiute Peyotism: A Study in Acculturation," *Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology*, 40 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1944) 63-141.

Finally, kudos should also be given to the protective stance toward Pyramid Lake and its fisheries, hence its people, by Ralph Gelvin and E. Reeseman Fryer, Alida C. Bowler's successors (Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 248). According to Liebling (page 60), however, Fryer, like Bowler, got the boot because of having antagonized the all-powerful McCarran, albeit in Fryer's case, it was for advocating the installation of an irrigation system for Northern Paiute farmers on the Pyramid Lake Reservation.

[92]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 262.

[93]*Ibid*., 320-21.

[94]Curry was hired by the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe in 1948. But since, as the aphorism goes, "no good deed goes unpunished"—or should one say "go unpublished"?—Curry was fired in 1951, by the right-wing commissioner of Indian affairs, Dillon Myer, fresh from his stint as head of the Japanese relocation camps, then and a political confederate of Senator Patrick McCarran (Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 238-41; 260-61).

[95]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 241.

[96]Liebling, "Lake of the Cui-ui Eaters," Part II, p. 56.

[97]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 196. Elmer Rusco ("Introduction," xxii), for example, wrote that in the fall of 1951, Avery Winnemucca led a delegation to Washington, D.C., to lobby on behalf of tribal interests with regard to those matters, and that Warren Tobey "played an important role in restoring the Lahontan cutthroat trout fishery and saving the *cui-ui* from extinction."

It might also be noted that the reluctant leader of the Pyramid Lake War, Numaga aka Young Winnemucca, not only spoke out against the nineteenth-century assault on groves of piñion-pine by Virginia City miners (who cut down this source of a traditional food to use instead for fuel), but also wrote the following petition. As quoted in Knack and Stewart (*As Long as the River*, 201), this document, sent by the younger brother of Chief Winnemucca to the nation's capital on June 19, 1905, arrived shortly before the chief's death:

> The Indians have not much left—and it makes my heart sick, when I see the injustice done my people. If the land in question had been held by white people, and white people were the intruders,—How long would it have been kept out of the courts? The White man would call for some kind of settlement, and would get it.—but the Indian—no—Friend Commissioner I am an old man, my hair is gray with age, maybe I will not live long, (nobody can tell), I respectfully ask you to help us people to get the land unlawfully held by the Whites, and either eject them from the Reservation, (which the Agent here ought to do, according to law), or give us settlement for the land of which we are being robbed with the full consent of the Govt. officials in charge.

Moreover, Numaga's (older) brother protested damage done to wildlife by white-owned horses and cattle along the Humboldt River, while also complaining to the federal government about not being paid compensation for three thousand head of white-owned cattle that grazed illegally at Pyramid Lake on land his father claimed he owned (Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 65-66; 149).

For a list of Native American environmental protests lodged in the Silver State during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Jack Forbes, *Nevada Indians Speak,*(Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1966).

[98]Richard W. Stoffle and Michael J. Evans, "Resource Competition and Population Change: A Kaibab Paiute Ethnohistorical Case," *Ethnohistory*, 23 (1976), 173-97, 94.

[99]Judith Vander, *Songprints: The Musical Experience of Five Shoshone Women* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996). In her other important book about Great Basin Indian music, Vander writes that Wind River Reservation Shoshone continue to believe that their *naraya* songs exemplify the same efficacy between the power of song and prayer in impacting nature as beliefs associated during their origins in the 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance religions. (Judith Vander, *Shoshone Ghost Dance Religion* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997)

[100]Fowler and Liljeblad, "Northern Paiute," 451.

[101]Sven Liljeblad, "Oral Tradition: Content and Style of Verbal Arts," in *Great Basin*, vol**.** 11, 1986; *Handbook of North American Indians*, 1986, p. 641.

[102]*Ibid*.

[103]The allusion here is to a flood I was ambiguously teased for having supposedly caused in Pine Grove, Nevada, a few weeks after I was taken to the approximate area where the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet experienced his Great Revelation, on New Year's Day 1889, and photographed the site. See note 109.

[104]James Mooney, "The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890," *Fourteenth Annual Report (Part 2) of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Smithsonian Institution, 1892-1893,* J. W. Powell, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896), 772. See also Michael Hittman, *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance*, 2[d] ed., (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 66-67.

[105]As illustrated by another important debate in the history of anthropology, this one ostensibly pitting Paul Radin (*Primitive Man, the Philosopher* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1927)), Claude Lévi-Strauss (*The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1962)), and Stanley Diamond ("Civilization and Progress," in *In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 1–48) for examples, on one side, versus A. L. Kroeber (*Anthropology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1948), 296-304) on the other. Kroeber (on page 299, for example, compellingly, if not controversially, stated the orthodoxy of anthropological thinking by asserting a "progression of belief" over time: "It is clear that in these ["backward and lower"] societies there is complete social and cultural acceptance of spirits and their ability to talk and aid [as well as the] acceptance also of the power of the shaman who is so aided, and of the place of shaman in the community. But in our culture a person who … communicates with shadows … is inevitably classed as deranged."

[106]See Alice B. Kehoe, "Where Were Wovoka and Wuzzie George?" in *Julian Steward and the Great Basin: The Making of an Anthropologist*, Richard O. Clemmer, L. Daniel Myers, and Mary Elizabeth Rudden, eds. (Salt Lake City: Utah of Utah Press, 1999). 164-69. Interesting as well here is what Alida C. Bowler also told Liebling ("Lake of the Cui-ui Eaters," Part IV, p. 64) in 1953: "Being a woman, I imagine I felt under a greater obligation to show them [re both the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation Indians who doubted her competence, and males in general]."

[107]What an inversion (perversion?) of the epistemological belief regarding the power of spoken words in the Northern Paiute oral tradition, then, was the opposition expressed by an Indian agent to what should have been these Pyramid Lake Reservation Northern Paiutes' constitutional right of free speech. This opposition was contained in James Jenkin's aforementioned letter calling for the repression of their "talking habit," which was written after their protest against the state fish-tagging invocation, in 1924, the same year in which Native Americans universally gained American citizenship. And if there is any question whether those totalitarian-like conditions prevailed on the Pyramid Lake Reservation, the following report from an Indian agent submitted in those years should prove this allegation:

> Indians who violate the regulations will not be allowed to fish at all, or to sell fish; and their names will be posted at the Agency as law violators, in addition to such other penalties as may be imposed.…In other words, if the Indians are disposed to be 'square' and help carry out the new law in the right spirit [*sic*], assisting their officers to prosecute offenders, etc., they will have no trouble; but if they are disposed to cover up law violations, do not report violations of the law, night fishing, improper sales, etc, they cannot expect to carry on a business which properly observed will mean so much to them and their future prosperity (Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 309-10).

Despite ambivalence regarding the fundamental validity of Western science, I published a listing of several really freaky things I called "Extraordinary Personal Experiences" (or EPEs for short) that happened to me while researching the life and times of the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet (see Michael Hittman, "The Father Says `NO!'" *American Indian Journal of Culture and Research*, 33 (2009), 119-30). In this same vein, I was more recently pleased to come across this Great Basin Indian example regarding the "power of words." It involved the great Swedish-born linguist Sven Liljeblad. As recounted by his friend, William E. Davis ("A Swedish Gem in the Shining Mountains: Portrait of a Scholar," in *Languages and Cultures of Western North American: Essays in Honor of Sven S. Liljeblad*, Earl H. Swanson, Jr., ed. (Pocatello: Idaho State University Press, 1970), 1-14)) we read that soon after Pearl Harbor, while Liljeblad was riding with a Bannock friend, Eddie Edmo, he made the familiar cultural mistake of pointing; in this instance at Mount Borah, the highest peak in Idaho. Chided then by his consultant, who shouted "SEVEN! (as the Bannock apparently called Sven), the Swedish Doubting Thomas dismissively replied, "Hogwash!" At that precise moment apparently, "the car started sputtering and ground to a stop. The water pump reportedly broke!"

[108]Knack and Stewart, *As Long as the River*, 342. Gunard Solberg in his long-anticipated book about the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet (*Wovoka*: *Tales of Power* (Reno: Nevada Historical Society, 2012)), also reported the vision experienced by Raymond Hoeffer was clearly inspired by the Walker Lake crisis and that Northern Paiute's attempt to revive the Ghost Dance in 2008.

To rehearse the dismal statistics regarding the poverty level on the Pyramid Lake Reservation around the time Mabel Wright took matters into her own hands: 70 percent unemployment, with 52 percent of families having incomes under $2,000 per annum, and 75 percent of all tribal income in 1967 generated "through the sale of fishing and boating permits to Whites" (see Josephy, "`Like Giving Heroin,'" 160).

[109]George C. Stocking, ed., *Colonial Encounters: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge*, History of Anthropology, vol. 7 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).

[110]On the danger of romanticism implied by real or imagined "ethnographic present," Talal Asad ("Afterword: From the History of Colonial Anthropology to the Anthropology of Western Hegemony," in *Colonial Encounters*, Stocking, ed., 314-24, 316) reminds us: "Much of what appears ancient, integrated, and in need of preservation against the disruptive impact of modern social change is itself recently invented." Finally, the Pyramid Lake Reservation's website (*http://www.plpt.nss.us/newspaper*) reports that on September 6, 2008, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council signed the Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA), which, along with the Truckee-Carson-Pyramid Lake Water Rights Negotiated Settlement Act signed into law in 1990, should, according to the tribal blogger, represent "one of the final chapters" of the ninety-year "Truckee River-Pyramid Lake water wars." Lest the reader remain unconvinced about the ability of an ordinary person's eco-friendly chanted prayer to change history, see Matthew S. Makley and Michael J. Makley's *Cave Rock: Climbers, Courts and a Washoe Indian Sacred Place* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2010), 10. They write about a success story comparable to that of Pyramid Lake, this one involving a Washoe shaman named Mike Dick (aka Blind Mike), who stood on a rock in the water near Daowaga Lake (Tahoe) in the 1950s, and, accompanied by his wife, "began reciting a song given to him through dreams." When this long-contested rock/Washoe sacred site, which carried interstate traffic between California and Nevada through its two tunnels, started to sink, his wife reportedly screamed, thereby disrupting her husband's seemingly vengeful efforts. Yet, a half century later, on August 27, 2007, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled on behalf of these Great Basin Indians' objections to spelunking on the sacred place where shamans since time immemorial have gone into caves to obtain supernatural power.

Wovoka and the 1890 Ghost Dance Religion
Q & A with Gunard Solberg

Michael Hittman

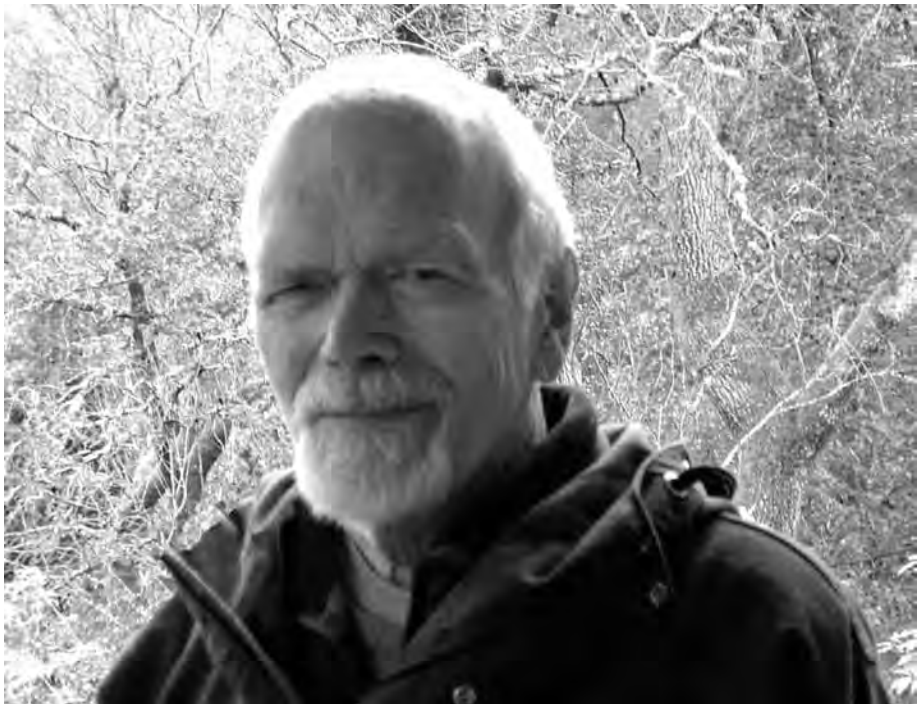
Introduction

I had the opportunity to catch up—again—with Gunard Solberg on the occasion of the publication of his long-anticipated book. Paraphrasing what I wrote about Solberg in the Introduction to *Tales of Wovoka* (Reno: Nevada Historical Society, 2012). No one alive or dead knows more about the life and times of the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet Wovoka/Jack Wilson and his religion. Here, though, a few explanatory words are in order for our Q & A conversation, if only because of Solberg's untimely death.

We met in 1971 or 1972 at Campbell Ranch, a Northern Paiute reservation in Mason Valley, Nevada, where I was living in the new HUD house belonging

Michael Hittman is the author of numerous articles about Great Basin Indians and these books: *Wovoka & The Ghost Dance*, *Corbett Mack*, and most recently, *Great Basin Indians: An Encyclopedic History*. A lifer in Great Indian studies, along with his on-going collaborative works and studies of one community of Northern Paiutes (Yerington, Nevada) since 1965, he calls Jazz his "second tribe." Dr. Hittman in that regard has hosted nearly 200 NPR jazz radio interviews, as well as performed as a guitarist. (See the website michaelhittman.com). Recently retired, Long Island University Professor Emeritus Michael Hittman's current projects include directing the Brooklyn Paramount Museum. Books-in-progress include *Four Northern Paiute Religions*, and *Campbell Ranch: The Early Years of a New Deal Federal Reservation in Nevada.*

Gunard Solberg taught and worked in Nevada, California, Singapore and Borneo. In addition to *Tales of Wovoka*, he wrote a novel, *Shelia*, and numerous screenplays and short stories. Until his death in March 2010, he lived in the San Francisco Bay Area with his wife, the cartoonist and painter M. K. Brown.



Gunard Solberg. Photo by M. K. Brown. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

to Ida Mae and Rafael Valdez. At the time, Solberg was teaching English at Terra Linda High School in California and using proceeds from a successful first novel (*Shelia*) that had been turned into a Hollywood film (*Honky*) in order to fund a documentary about the Wounded Knee massacre and its origins in the 1890 Ghost Dance. By contrast, I was completing a doctorate in anthropology at the University of New Mexico, writing an ethnohistorical study about the relationship between the destruction, as a result of opium addiction, of nearly the entire cohort born after the 1890 Ghost Dance and Wovoka/Jack Wilson's religion.

Told of my study, Solberg came a-knocking. The passage of years regrettably leads to hoariness of details, but I do vividly recall that while our initial conversation was pleasant enough, it nonetheless was spiked with the sort of disagreements regarding the nature and meaning of the 1890 Ghost Dance—but especially as to the identity and intentions of its prophet—that marked our forty-year friendship. No doubt ethnic and religious, as well as generational and educational, differences in our respective backgrounds factored into our essentially different views. We were an agnostic Jewish Hippie from the Lower

East Side of Manhattan laboring then (if not now) under academic rigor mortis and a free-thinking midwestern-born Norwegian Lutheran-*cum*-Beatnik and screenplay and fiction writer-*cum*-independent Wovoka researcher.

Even so, we corresponded with each other, primarily on the telephone, between our West and East Coast homes; read each other's writings about the 1890 Ghost Dance; enjoyed gabfests in his home in Fairfax, California; and collaborated on "The Wovoka Centennial," a project I conceived for the Yerington Paiute Tribe in 1989, and in which he movingly read Wovoka/Jack Wilson's "Great Revelation." At the same time—or, more accurately, diachronically (across time)—like our mutual research interest, which was subject to reinterpretation (and distortion) after the 1890 Ghost Dance spread from its Nevada homeland to the Plains and into Canada, Solberg and I eventually enjoyed how some of the positions initially defended by one of us comically seemed to have been traded to the other at the end!

That said, I turn to the real reason for what follows. This Q & A stemmed from my anger following Solberg's intemperate reaction to a talk I gave at the thirtieth Great Basin Anthropological Conference in October 2006. "'Our' Pauline Christianity and 'Their' 1890 Ghost Dance: Epistemological Heavens and Hells," was its title. "Don't read that!" he wrote, seemingly angered by my thesis that Wovoka's entirely peaceful "get-along" religion (with its Protestant-type ethic of future reward in Heaven), stood inversely in relation to the anti-white, end-time apocalyptic spin that Kicking Bear, Short Bull, and other Native Americans put on it when compared to Jesus' militant apocalyptic religion, vis-à-vis the Apostle Paul's rationalization of delays in the anticipated resurrection of the dead and Second Coming of the Christ. Solberg's over-the-top response, consequently, led me to issue what (alas) will be our final debate about "our Jack," my challenge for him to answer these eleven questions, which I have reordered and slightly edited for publication.

Question 1. Why don't we just start at the—your—beginning: How did you first get involved with the story of Wovoka a.k.a. Jack Wilson?

Answer 1. The first time I stood before his grave, I was appalled. The site wasn't anything like today with a big steel fence and a handsome granite headstone which call attention to the resting place of an important man. It was desolate and bleak, and nowhere was the name Wovoka to be seen. The cemetery was Christian, and Paiute names were verboten. A weathered board sticking up out of the desert floor was all that marked the grave of the most important Native American religious leader of modern times. I was familiar with the bleak assessment of history in *Ecclesiastes*: "There is no remembrance of former times; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after." I knew that ultimately this was true, but Wovoka hadn't yet been dead for thirty years! It became my job to remember him.

Wovoka/Jack Wilson's grave marker in Shurz, Nevada. Photographer unknown. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

Question 2: All right, since today so much is still made, both in your former field and in my current profession, about Post-Modernism, which curiously enough originated in your original passion, architecture, and in derivative issues such as translation and "narrative voices," let's turn now to the only two published interviews with the prophet of the 1890 Ghost Dance: Arthur Chapman's in early December of 1890, and James Mooney's on New Year's Day 1892. What is your view regarding the possibility of distortion(s)? That is to say, issues stemming from the fact that Wovoka/Jack Wilson spoke to them in Northern Paiute and his words were translated into English by interpreters?

Answer 2: Probably there were fewer distortions than what resulted from using sign language to instruct the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho delegates who came to hear his message. Actually, I don't think there were significant misrepresentations in the Chapman and Mooney translations. Captain Ben, a Walker River policeman, did the honors for Chapman; Edward Dyer, a white storekeeper, and Wovoka's uncle, Charley Sheep, translated for Mooney. In one sense they were interrogations. Chapman was there as an official Army

investigator, and Mooney also represented the government in Washington. I think Wovoka must have chosen his words carefully. He was more expansive *before* Wounded Knee with Chapman, more cautious *after* Wounded Knee with Mooney. But he remained fully in control during both interviews, even cutting Chapman off with, "That's all I care to say."

My reason for believing that the translations were close to what he actually said is the deliberate way the Paiutes traditionally engaged in translation. The interviewer's question had to be repeated word-for-word and sentence-by-sentence by the translator, and then repeated in the same fashion by the person being interviewed to check for accuracy before answering. At the same time, mistakes could be made. Mooney's celebrated account, for example, has Wovoka saying his father had died when he was about twelve, at which time he was taken into the family of a Mason Valley white farmer, David Wilson, which we now know—thanks largely to you, Michael—was way off. Wovoka's father was alive for at least two decades after Mooney's visit.

No, I believe that what Wovoka had to say about his Great Vision was remarkably consistent over the years. As late as 1924, the actor Tim McCoy, one of the few white men in the country to know sign language, communicated Wovoka's nephew's English translation of his Paiute into signs for his Arapaho friends [former disciples]. Wovoka provided much the same information about his religion as he did thirty years before: God had taken him to Heaven and given him a message to take back to the Indian people. They must be good, live in peace, work hard, love each other and the white man, and dance at regular intervals. Don't tell lies, steal, or be mean. And if they followed these instructions, the vanished game and dead Indians would return to life.

Question 3: On this important subject of the resurrection of the dead, about which we still fundamentally disagree, what is your view today about 1890 Ghost Dance eschatology? Or, more specifically, do you still believe Wovoka/ Jack Wilson was talking about rewards for Indian followers in a restored life or what I still think was Olam Ha-ba [in Hebrew], the World-to-Come, and why?

Answer 3: The reward in Heaven or on a regenerated earth is certainly the unsettled eschatological issue. Chapman recorded Policeman Ben's translation as, "God told him that when people died on this earth, if they were good, *they come to Heaven,* where they were to be made young again and never grow old afterwards." Mooney, relying on Dyer, says if the Indians faithfully followed his instructions, "they would at last be reunited with their friends *in this other world,* where there would be no more death, sickness, or old age." So that's two votes for Heaven above.

Chapman, however, in a newspaper interview given one month later in Spokane, Washington, added that Wovoka told him that in the morning after his Great Vision, he called all the Indians of the camp to his tent and instructed

them that God had given him control over the weather, and that he would destroy the earth when the time comes, and with it the heavens. "Then I will make the earth larger, without mountains or snow, and take all the people out of heaven *and make the new earth a heaven."*

And Mooney, in 1910, in a speech before the Nebraska Historical Society, also remembered it differently: The old world would be done away with, and "instead of it there would be a new world which was being prepared for them with their dead children, relatives, vanished game and the Old Indian life in its entirety. The new world was already advancing from the west, and when it came, it would push the white people before it to their own proper country across the ocean, and leave this country to the Indians, the original owners."

Not to be forgotten, either, is that Porcupine, the Cheyenne disciple, explained that if there wasn't enough room on earth to accommodate the returned dead, the Christ would make it bigger. So that's three votes for Heaven on a regenerated earth.

Question 4: The 1890 Ghost Dance prophet would have been around fourteen years old at the time Wodziwob, a.k.a. Fish Lake Joe, began to proselytize for what inarguably was an anti-white, apocalyptic-time religion on the Walker River Reservation in May 1869 that bespoke the resurrection of the dead. If we logically assume that because of its proximity with Mason and Smith valleys, Nevada, where Wovoka/Jack Wilson lived, he had to have known about the 1870 Ghost Dance—indeed, possibly attended ceremonies?—tell me in what ways, if any, you think the first of Ghost Dance religion had an impact on the second?

Answer 4: Despite the fact that Wovoka never acknowledged to Chapman or Mooney that his religion was an extension of the 1870 Ghost Dance, I think that's the key place where to look. Mooney, even though he visited Walker Lake and Mason Valley for only a few days, collected enough information from Paiutes and local whites to satisfy himself that the 1870 Ghost Dance was the foundation on which Wovoka "built the structure of the present messiah religion." We also have the authority of Cora Du Bois's highly detailed study of the 1870 Ghost Dance that establishes Wovoka's father, Numataivo, as the principal disciple of Wodziwob in Smith and Mason valleys. (Not to mention your own contribution reconstructing this religion, Mike.)

And what was the core of the antecedent religion? In 1872, Farmer-in-Charge at Walker Lake Frank Campbell saw Wodziwob (*Waugh-zee-waugh-ber*) in a trance. The Paiutes gathered around him and sang a song that would guide the soul back to the body. Upon awakening, he described his visit with the Supreme Ruler, "who was then on his way to earth with all the spirits of the departed dead *to again reside upon this earth and change it into a paradise.* Life was to be eternal, and no distinction was to exist between the races."

Jack Wilson in Yerington, Nevada, ca. 1908. Photographer unknown.
(*Nevada Historical Society*)

Question 5: Focusing now exclusively on the 1890 Ghost religion, I want to hear your view on Wovoka/Jack Wilson's seemingly contradictory pacific and militant teachings that I would argue is evident in the four canonical Gospel's rendering of Jesus Christ?

Answer 5: I don't see an issue here. Neither Wovoka nor his followers ever endorsed militancy. Jack Wilson preached peace to all who came to see him, and the tragedy that befell the Sioux at Wounded Knee had nothing to do with what he taught. The Miniconjou, Teton, and Brule were living in desperate fear of the troops and wore the Ghost Shirts for protection. The only ones who talked about militancy on the part of the Indians were newspapermen responding to their editors' clamor for sensational news and from certain white communities that saw economic advantage in having the military build a fort to protect them from the crazed Ghost Dancers.

The ridiculous idea that persists to this day that Wovoka told the Sioux the "ghost shirts" were bulletproof is based on complete unawareness of the Paiute tradition of *nabagappi maraid*, "the power (trick) to deflect or remain invulnerable to weapons." The really helpful first question that should be asked about Wovoka's demonstrations of his personal invulnerability is: Would a practicing magician share his shamanic secrets with thousands of others? I'll leave out our divergent views of Jesus.

Question 6: Then what about Mormonism? I mean, we agree or know, of course, that the Zionistic Church of the Latter-day Saints established itself in the West in the 1840s, and that Wovoka's youngest daughter (Alice) and her husband (Andy Vidovich) attended (if were not baptized at?) Mormon services during their mature years. So, how (if at all) can you argue for such a decisive role played by Mormonism in the 1890 Ghost Dance?

Answer 6: "The Mormon solution" is, in my estimation, the key to understanding Ghost Dance theology and provides another vote for the Heaven-on-earth argument.

The Mormons were the first *invaders*—as our old acquaintance from the Walker River Reservation, Ed Johnson, used to call white settlers. They formed the first communities of whites in the Great Basin. And they, of course, had a special relationship with the Indians, whom they regarded as the descendants of one of the Lost Tribes of Israel. According to their doctrine, it was necessary for the tribes to become baptized in the LDS church before Christ would return, as they understood that Jesus Christ visited the Americas hours after his crucifixion, and promised the descendants of the Tribe of Joseph that they were the rightful owners of the continent, and that the New Jerusalem would be built here.

After, however, the Lamanite branch became wicked and slaughtered the righteous Nephites, God cursed them not only with dark skins, but with the invasions of the Gentiles, who were to rule over them for four hundred years and administer "a sore cursing." Based on one of Joseph Smith's many predictions, Christ would return to earth in 1890, which was only a click away from the date when the four-hundred—year-old curse (1492-1892) would be removed, and the Indians restored to their kingdom.

All the tribes proselytized by the Mormons knew about this prophecy. At the Fort Hall Reservation in Idaho, for example, through which the Union Pacific Railroad ran, and on which the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho delegates traveled in search of Wovoka, there was a strong Mormon presence among the Bannock and Western Shoshone. To make it all the more compelling, the 1870 Ghost Dance was still practiced there. And in Salt Lake City, as some wag noted, the only place in the world where a Jew was a Gentile, a vocal minority—subsequently ex-communicated—actually championed the belief that 1890 was the year Christ would return.

Question 7: But how could Mormon beliefs possibly have influenced Wovoka/Jack Wilson during his formative years, when LDS church members were summoned back from western Nevada in 1857 to defend Salt Lake City in their anticipated war with the American government?

Answer 7: Let me point out here first that the Southern Paiute, Ute, Bannock, and Western Shoshone continued to be baptized in the LDS Church, and remain faithful Mormons to this day. Would not the Northern Paiute have been informed about their fellow Great Basin tribes' utterly amazing conversionary beliefs? How could they not have? Wouldn't they have also heard and talked about the alleged bulletproof nature of the Mormon Endowment Garment? Quite a subject for conversation!

Also, impeccable evidence from 1875 reveals that there was a spiritual movement "among the remnants of Jacob, in the western deserts, in the northwest and the southwest." So it's not necessary to say, as Paul Bailey foolishly wrote, that Jack Wilson met a flesh and blood Mormon missionary, and had his uncle steal an Endowment Garment from a clothesline. The holy underwear in those days resembled a one-piece union suit, and because it fit too tightly, Wovoka allegedly cut it off just below the waist, thereby creating the first Ghost Shirt.

No, the clincher to my argument that Jack Wilson knew about the Mormon belief that Christ would return in 1890 and the white (Gentile) occupation would come to an end is that he set the same date as Joseph Smith for the end of the white (Gentile) domination and the return of the Indian dead. I cannot imagine this is simply coincidental. As I see it, in a heightened visionary state, it all came together and (Wovoka) convinced himself that the Mormons knew what they were talking about.

Question 8: Based on your original interviews with the descendants of David and Abigail Wilson, two of the white pioneer settlers of Mason Valley, and in whose house the future Northern Paiute prophet not only was documented as having dined with their three sons, but was afterwards exposed to their Bible readings, I've always wanted to ask you which New and/or Old Testament writings you think they focused on, and also how what those Methodists also believed might have influenced Wovoka/Jack Wilson's wholly syncretic religion?

Answer 8: I regret that I don't have chapter and verse. What we do know is that Ed Dyer said Abigail Wilson, the matriarch and first white woman in Mason Valley, took special pains to teach Jack popular Bible stories. Her son Joe said [told me] that when itinerant preachers came around, Jack attended with the family, and though very interested and respectful, never knelt when the others did. And Billy Wilson's daughter, Beth, told me that Jack, as a boy and a young man, was always with them at the daily Bible reading and prayer. She said, "I firmly believe that this experience was where he got the idea of being the messiah to the Indians."

I think *Revelations* must have contributed to his End-Time thinking. And, of course, the morality of the Gospels supported the ethical message at the heart of both the 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dances.

Question 9: We know from Mooney—as well as subsequent scholars—that Wovoka often was called the "Red Christ" by Native American disciples around the country. Indeed, the "Messiah Letter," which supposedly was dictated by him to a Plains Indian visitor has the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet allegedly calling himself that. Right? So, then, what do you make of all this?

Answer 9: I have never found a shred of evidence to think so, and the way you persist in using the "Messiah Letter" as an indication that he claimed to be Jesus suggests the depth of confusion that surrounds this issue. Certainly many of his visitors thought they were in the presence of Jesus Christ, and spread that idea when they returned home; but imagine the problems that the limitations of sign language would impose on the translation of Christian theology—especially when his listeners were primed to sit at "Jesus'" feet.

The letter which you refer to was dictated by Wovoka in August of 1891, when he was visited by a group of Cheyenne, Southern Arapaho, and Navaho. He taught them his sacred dance, some of the songs, and sent a letter back to their tribes. It was shown to Mooney that fall, and proves that the Ghost Dance was entirely peaceful. The "genuine official statement of the Ghost Dance doctrine given by the messiah himself" is how Mooney describes what covers procedural information and the prophet's central message: "You must not hurt anybody or do harm to anyone. You must not fight. Do right always. It will give you satisfaction in life."

How anyone can think that the prophet was claiming to be Jesus in this letter, however, is beyond me. In the Cheyenne version, "Jesus is on the ground, he just like a cloud. Everybody is alive again. I don't know when he will be here, may be will be this fall or in spring." The Arapaho version says, "Jesus was on ground, he just like a cloud. Everybody is alive again. I don't know when they will [be] here, may be this fall or in spring." Mooney made his "free translation" from those two, and came up with the following: "Jesus is now upon the earth. He appears as a cloud. The dead are all alive again. I do not know when they will be here, maybe this fall or in the spring."

Clearly, Wovoka isn't talking about himself. The "he" he refers to is in the third person.

There is also a letter to the commissioner of Indian affairs from John S. Mayhugh, who spent several weeks at Walker Lake taking the 1890 Census. He wrote that most of the Walker River Paiutes believed in the coming of the Messiah in the spring, and that "Jack Wilson taught that Jesus was coming back and would put the Indians back in possession of the country again." Here again, "Jack Wilson taught that Jesus was coming back," refers to two people.

The only situation that could be read as evidence that Jack Wilson said that he was Jesus isn't supported by the context in which it was spoken. Just two weeks after Wounded Knee, a young Kiowa, Apiatan, came on a pilgrimage looking for the "Red Christ." In the U.S. Army report that describes the visit, it's plain that Wovoka didn't want visitors. He was lying on his back with a blanket pulled up over his face. Through an interpreter he asked what Apiatan wanted. This made Apiatan immediately suspicious as he had been told the Christ could speak all languages and would know what he wanted. He said he wanted to see some of his dead relatives, but was told that they were not to be seen. Apiatan then looked for the marks of the crucifixion on Wovoka's hands and, not seeing them, wondered if he had come to the right place? Then "the prophet told him to look no further," that "he was the only Jesus there was." Wovoka also said he'd given the Sioux the dance, and that they'd twisted things after they left, so a great many people had been killed as a consequence. He advised Apiatan to "go home and tell his people to stop dancing" or it might lead them into trouble also. What he meant by saying he was the "only Jesus there was" certainly indicates that he knew he was rumored to be the Christian savior; but given the situation, I take it to have been intended as a splash of cold water on Apiatan's enthusiasm. Apiatan, in any event, went home, and told his tribe the messiah was a fake.

But the true nugget of historical interest in the "Messiah Letter" is the final instruction from Wovoka: "Do not tell white people about this." Unfortunately, we have no additional information as to why he didn't want the white community to know that he had anything to say on the subject of Jesus' return. Shamans, as you well know, are notoriously secretive characters.

Question 10: Look, it's easy enough to blame Paul Bailey for serendipitously having sabotaged our independent subsequent efforts to interview Alice Wilson Vidovich. And I certainly can still vividly recall her feeling of betrayal with what Bailey wrote after she granted him an interview…But separate from that Western popular writer's characterization of her father as a "fake," Claude Levi-Strauss, the famous structuralist anthropologist, stated as much about all "sorcerers," i.e., legerdemain as part and parcel of the shaman's craft, as it were. So here's my next-to-last question: Where do you stand today on the issue of the 1890 Ghost prophet as a "fake" vis-à-vis or versus Mooney's (controversial at the time) elevation of Wovoka/Jack Wilson into the rank of founders of world religions, such as Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed?

Answer 10: No one can try to understand Jack Wilson before facing this moral quagmire. From our cultural perspective, his motives aren't clear. The first time he was mentioned in the local paper, the writer summed him up by saying, "White men admit he is clever, but are unable to determine if he is a prophet or a trickster." And there are too many anecdotes in which Wovoka deliberately attempted to trick an audience. The morality of this issue threads through most of his recorded public performances, and presents us with the main obstacle in understanding Jack Wilson, or so I believe. In fact, I struggled with this problem for years because from everything else I knew about him, I felt he wasn't just a con man. Finally, I realized the question itself was the problem by implying that he could be only one or the other.

But it's a necessary starting point to recognize that the deceptions he is credited with were not shameful scams Wovoka invented on his own to take advantage of others. Since he was a traditional shaman, "pulling the wool over people's eyes" to demonstrate his power was part of what a shaman did. And I'm sure it still is in those parts of the world where the shaman continues to practice traditional "doctoring." By our cultural standards, though, some of those practices are viewed as shameless hoaxes, but to hunter-gathering people they are perfectly acceptable sacred mysteries.

The bulletproof shirt is the most notorious example of this, but it needs to be understood as a piece of deception practiced for time immemorial by Paiute shamans—including, according to the Wovoka in the Mooney interview, his own father.

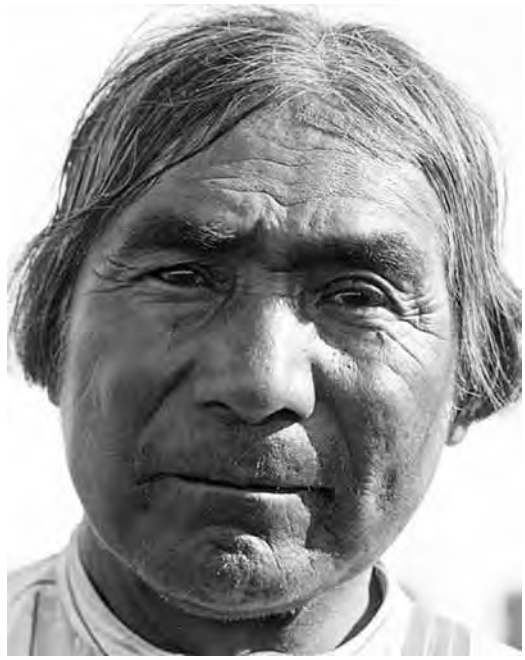
As for the ice miracles to support or advertise his claim that God had given him power of the weather—Wovoka, remember, first gained notice as a rainmaker on the Walker River Reservation—it's clear his white pals, Joe and Billy Wilson [two of the sons of David and Abigail Wilson], well-known practical jokers, assisted Jack in pulling it off. And the very novelty of the stunt suggests that the idea may even have come from them. The mail order medicine business developed thanks to the United States Post Office, which

gave Wovoka's followers the opportunity to send a money gift and request a shirt he'd worn. Or, a hat, paint, sage tea, bottles of Thompson's Eye Wash, or just to solicit advice from him. Jack was also happy when out-of-state followers from various western reservations slipped presents of money while shaking his hand. These practices, too, were an extension of the shaman's prerogative, and offered those who had benefited from his power [an opportunity] to show their appreciation. The shaman, remember, is the original professional. They charged exorbitant amounts of payment for their house calls because they were believed to possess healing power not granted others—including power over death. Their real power, though, lay in convincing those who needed help that they could be healed. And very often they were.

I find no contradiction, then, in believing Wovoka was a performer of magic and a genuine moral leader. He was both, simultaneously. But his great contribution was to introduce a new morality that went beyond tribal identities, a major cause today for war and violence in Africa, the Middle East, and other parts of the globe that threaten the continued existence of life. "Harm no one" was Wovoka's great message. He taught non-violence to a warrior culture, and that must be pretty hard to do without a little magic.

Question 11: So many other questions I want to ask … For example: How do you think Wovoka really saw himself? Strictly as a shaman? Like a Biblical prophet of old? A traveling evangelist? Co-president of these United States of America? Which of course was part and parcel of the Great Revelation as recorded by Mooney. But if only for my own edification, allow me to finish up—for now!—by asking this final question: After all your years of painstaking research and soul-searching about Wovoka/Jack Wilson and his religion, can you leave us with something personal about your deepest understanding of the man?

Answer 11: Thank you! And I also want to thank you, Michael, for the opportunity to clarify, or at least attempt to clarify, some of our knotty issues. You and I have had a wonderful ride. I remember when I first heard that an anthropology graduate student from Brooklyn was interviewing people at Campbell Ranch about Wovoka, I was somewhat, to put it mildly, upset. I already had several years into the project by then, and felt like someone was coming after my stuff, invading my territory. When we finally met, it didn't take long to realize I was talking to a compadre—probably the only other person alive who cared as much as I did to get Jack Wilson's story straight. There were no Native American scholars then with any interest in the subject, and the 1890 Ghost Dance and the "Red Christ" were largely fodder for sensational magazines and the Westernlore Press. We were truth-squad guys, and knew we had a lot of work to do. So, thank you, Michael, for all those wonderful



Wovoka, ca. 1914. Photograph by Samuel Barrett. (*Milwaukee Public Museum*)

years. Your invaluable book *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance* saved contemporary tribal memories from going down the rat hole of time. Much as I hope [my work] will clarify some of the issues, or at least stimulate discussion. But after reading over my answers, I'm reminded of Brigham Young's line on the musings of intellectuals: "Oh, dear Granny, what a long tail our puss has got!"

The memories that were shared with me by those who had known Wovoka contain mundane details that inform the kind of man he was beyond his medicine-man persona. My favorite is an interview with Isabelle Creighton, who had known Jack Wilson when she was a child. She lived in Mason between 1912 and 1915. Jack had moved there, a few miles down the Walker River from Nordyke, after his forty-year association with the Wilson family came largely to an end. She wrote:

> "I was a little girl when the two Indian camps were on each side of the small acreage we owned in Mason, Nevada. I played with (Jack's) daughter Alice and his son Dennis [actually, the prophet's grandson through his other daughter], and we had great times together—up until the government made the Indian children go over to Stewart.

We purchased property in the summer of 1912, as I was six years old, and my grandparents moved down from the Mason Valley Mine to put me in school. My grandparents were running a café in town proper at that time. An old brickyard, or the remains, I should say, was on the south of us, and that's where Jack lived. There was a big Indian camp on the north side of us as well. Jack must have come either in the latter part of 1912 or the year 1913, and, when we got burnt out in October, 1915, they were still there. They [Paiutes] got water from our well, as did all the other Indians. Grandmother used to write his letters for him and read the answers that came back. She said some came from as far away as South Dakota.

Each time Jack went off in reply to one of the letters, all the guns and anything they had of value reposed in our big kitchen until they returned. We never actually knew where they went for the pow-wows, or why, except that Jack was supposed to be a great medicine man.

I was often in their tent, and to my knowledge there was no one but Jack and his wife, and Alice and Dennis. Dennis was snow-blind and never had much sight. He died before they sent the children off to school. In 1915 before we were burnt out, Jack came up complaining to grandmother about Alice wanting a bed and dresser and about not willing to have a tent unless it had a floor in it. He couldn't see why she wasn't satisfied with the ground same as he always had been. But grandmother tried to make him see that if Alice was to accept the white man's way, she should have these things. So Jack gave in and got them for her.

Jack was a bright man, and if he had any chance for an education in the white man's language and ways would have gone far. And also, might I say, he was a grand person and neighbor.

And poor as they were, no Indian ever touched any of my grandmother's chickens or one thing around our place. Same as when we were not there, they watched out for everything. No person dared to have set foot on our place that was not supposed to be there; in fact, they once ran one white man off who the folks had told he could go and sleep in the house, but then had forgotten to tell Jack about it. He was an honest man in the days when the word *honest* meant something.

Jack seemed to have control over both the camps and would always inform grandmother who he thought it was proper I should play with and who not. They loved the funny papers, and I spent many a Sunday afternoon on our front porch, which was just a big flat platform in those days, with all the Indian children gathered around, reading them the funnies.

Jack would smile and could laugh, but I can also remember that a great deal of the time it was a sad and discouraged smile. A look of resignation, shall we say? To us children though he was always kind and gentle, but, boy, if he told us to mind, we minded.

> You see, I remember all of them, when times were not so complicated, when they could hold their heads up high, when they were free. I can also remember how bitter it was for them to have their children put in the Indian school. To be forced onto reservations, for their young men to become drunk on the white man's brew, for their women to be unfairly treated when they went to work for the women of the town. Here's an example so you will understand what I mean:
>
> When the Indian ladies would go to wash or iron or clean house for the white folks, there were those among us (I am ashamed to say) that would give them scraps for lunch, cold meals, instead of a good hot dinner. Or make them eat outside in the cold. Treated them like dirt, shall we say? I am not boasting, but it got so bad in Mason that there were only about three white families they would work for. But they knew we were their friends, and they would tell grandmother all about how certain ones did. And how they wouldn't work for them anymore. The older ones of the tribe knew, too; knew they could always come to our house, and grandmother would take the time to fix them a good meal. Poor Judy was always *haugh-ity* (hungry). She was old and could not work anymore.
>
> And Jack could see all this coming. And I am sure it made him very sad. He used to sit in our kitchen by the table and talk a great deal to grandmother, granddad, and the other men around the house—Uncle John and Roxie, my mother's brother with whom I was raised.

Isabelle's description of Jack's benevolent nature also reminds me of how Beth Ellis Wilson, who grew up at Pine Grove and Nordyke with Jack as part of her extended family, remembered him:

"He was a kind man. He never spoke loud, never. I don't think he ever got agitated. I don't think he ever said a harsh word to anyone. He was always kind."

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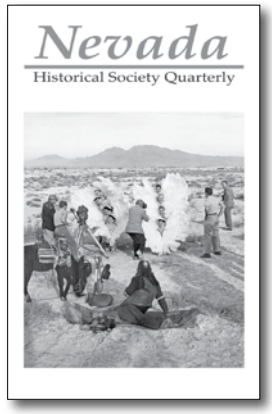

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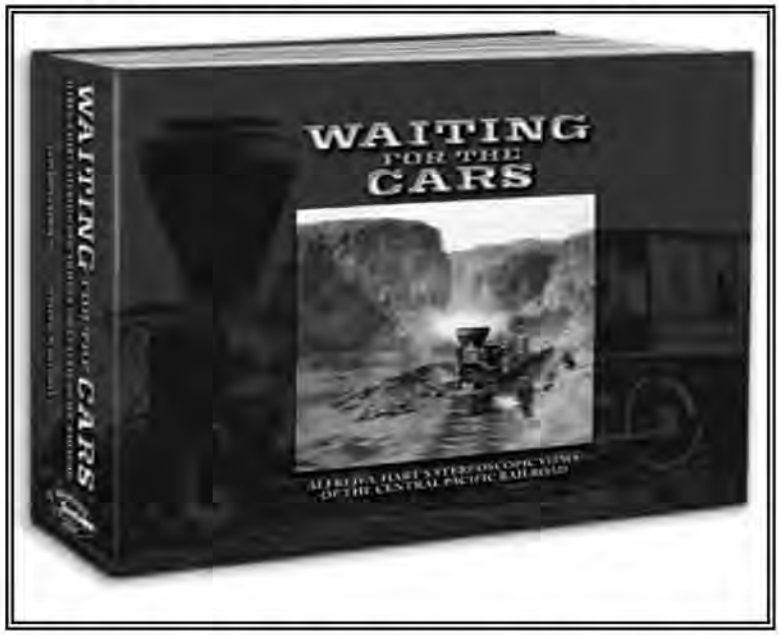

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