The People of Bear Hunter Speak: Oral Histories of the Cache Valley Shoshones Regarding the Bear River Massacre

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THE PEOPLE OF BEAR HUNTER SPEAK:
ORAL HISTORIES OF THE CACHE VALLEY SHOSHONES
REGARDING THE BEAR RIVER MASSACRE

by

Aaron L. Crawford

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree
of
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in
American Studies
(Folklore)

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ABSTRACT

The People of Bear Hunter Speak:

Oral Histories of the Cache Valley Shoshones

Regarding the Bear River Massacre

by

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Utah State University, 2007

Major Professor: Jeannie Thomas
Department: American Studies (Folklore)

The Cache Valley Shoshone are the survivors of the Bear River Massacre, where a battle between a group of U.S. volunteer troops from California and a Shoshone village degenerated into the worst Indian massacre in U.S. history, resulting in the deaths of over 200 Shoshones. The massacre occurred due to increasing tensions over land use between the Shoshones and the Mormon settlers. Following the massacre, the Shoshones attempted settling in several different locations in Box Elder County, eventually finding a home in Washakie, Utah. However, the LDS Church sold the land where the city of Washakie sat, forcing the Shoshones to adapt quickly.

Much of our knowledge of the massacre stems from either white American sources or the oral histories that circulate among one Shoshone family group. This leaves the information incomplete. Adding the voices of more individuals expands our
knowledge of the massacre itself and the adaptations the Shoshones continue to make in order to survive.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all of those who helped me make this project a reality. I am grateful to my committee members, Drs. Jeannie Thomas, David Lewis, and David Sidwell. Without their assistance, I could not have completed this work. I am especially grateful for the patience, care, and dedication that Dr. Jeannie Thomas has given me. She truly knows what it means to be a teacher, and I can think of no higher praise than that.

I would also like to thank my family, Tirzah, Archer, and Ellie, for constantly reminding me of what really matters in life. My children have accompanied me to countless events without complaint, and Tirzah kept working even when I had given up.

Finally, I wish to thank my informants, especially Tom and Ronda Pacheco. Without them, this project would never have left the ground.

Aaron L. Crawford
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

I started working with the Shoshones in the fall of 2005. In a graduate seminar, one of the students inspired me to ask Tom Pacheco, a friend I knew from work who was active in his native Shoshone tribe, some questions about American Indians. He invited me over for a full-scale interview. I accepted, even though I had no intention of working with Indians in my academic life.

In the course of that interview, Tom shared a number of stories, mostly related to the Bear River Massacre. He said that there were many other stories, but that I would not find them in any book. My curiosity piqued, I inquired about them. He told me that the stories his mother used to tell him had never made their way into “the white record,” so few people outside the tribe had access to them. He began to expand on this, telling me of experiences when he had told interviewers about his family’s version of events, only to have them cut out of the final draft.

He introduced me to other Shoshones, including Elva Schramm. Elva is a respected tribal elder and a descendant of Chief Bear Hunter. Many Shoshones I spoke with had suffered the same experience, having their versions of events, especially regarding the Bear River Massacre, purged from the record by interviewers. Naturally, I was intrigued. What would make a person want to censor another’s history?

My question became a seminar paper. That paper became this thesis.

The memories of the massacre have passed through time, changing with the 140 years of emotion, forgetting, mixing, re-remembering, inventing, and other alterations
that stand between the witnesses and the descendants re-telling their stories. The different versions reflect the ongoing conflicts in Shoshone politics, where different people vie for control within the tribe. While this paper probably informs the reader more about modern Shoshone politics than the massacre itself, the massacre remains an important part of the study, because it was the moment when the Shoshones lost their identity, their goods, and their political power.

THE BEAR RIVER MASSACRE

On January 29, 1863, a group of volunteer soldiers from California brutally slaughtered a large number of Shoshone Indians in the southeastern corner of present-day Idaho. They were led by a general who dreamed of glorious battles with Indians. The general was encouraged by local settlers, whose interactions with the Shoshones had moved from benevolent sharing to outright murder. The massacre was one of the most significant events in Indian/white relations.

The reasonable figure of at least 250 Shoshoni deaths at Bear River makes the massacre one of the most significant Indian disasters in western American history. This seems a somewhat grisly way of assigning importance to a historical incident, but it is difficult to come up with either a more precise or compelling criterion. (Madsen 1985, 21)

One of my informants, Tom Pacheco, described the importance of the massacre in terms of its size. “You’ve heard of Sand Creek, right? And Wounded Knee? This was bigger than both of those” (Pacheco 2005).

When it occurred, the massacre was widely reported in the West, but received little coverage in the Civil War-ravaged East. As was the case with most historic massacres of indigenous Americans, whites at the time were proud of their actions. The
perpetrators were greeted as heroes. Later, locals bragged about how their small towns had helped end Indian aggression in the region by helping the soldiers, but the massacre was largely forgotten. Historians, locally and nationally, rarely mentioned it, perhaps feeling shame in their ancestors' or fellow church members' participation in such an atrocity (Madsen 1985, 22-23; Barnes 2004, 10-12).

For a time the massacre was all but forgotten to history, but it was eventually brought to light. The massacre story, as presently accepted by most scholars and other informed individuals, is the version told by the late Mae Timbimboo Parry, a Shoshone descendant of some of the massacre victims. In the late 1970s, prompted by a request given by Newell Hart, an amateur historian working on a compendium of documents related to the massacre, Parry wrote a detailed description of the massacre story. Parry also worked tirelessly to achieve recognition of the event as the “Bear River Massacre” instead of the “Battle of Bear River,” as it was then generally known. Parry’s most effective ally was Brigham Madsen, who devoted his life to researching the Shoshone. Madsen, more than any other scholar, deserves recognition for thoughtful and thorough research on the massacre. He brought the story into academic and public consciousness.

Their work, though, remains unfinished. While Parry has added a much-needed indigenous perspective to the massacre story, Shoshonean descendants of other families have elements to add to the narrative, and elements they would prefer to subtract. Adding the stories of other families alters our knowledge of the massacre event in important ways. It reveals a spiritual, politically complex group of people, and shows that each member of Shoshone society, reacted, and continues to act and react, in a different way.
The most significant of these elements, in terms of the frequency with which he is mentioned by tribal members, is the role of Sagwitch Timbimboo. The late Mae Timbimboo-Parry was one of his descendants. In her 1976 version of the massacre, the dawn of January 29, 1863, greets Sagwitch surveying the morning mist when he realized soldiers were attacking. He roused the Shoshones from their sleep to prepare them for the upcoming battle. He ordered them not to shoot first, hoping to stop the potential slaughter through peaceful means. The military began firing. Those who survived the initial onslaught begged their chief, Sagwitch, to escape. Sagwitch complied, escaping only after being wounded in the hand. He returned to find his infant daughter laying beside his deceased wife. He ordered others to put the baby in her cradleboard and hang her from a tree, hoping that white settlers would raise the girl. Sagwitch returns to the massacre site to "mournfully gaze at the scene," "stricken and sad at heart" (Parry 1976, 236). The versions that circulate among other families have him running all the way to Nevada, then returning because he felt overwhelmingly guilty, only to die soon after (Pacheco 2005, Schramm et al. 2007). Parry mentions a few other individuals by name, adding the specific way they escaped. Of the six people mentioned by name in the paragraphs about the massacre, four are relatives of Sagwitch (Parry 1976, 233-236).

In Mae Parry’s "Massacre at Boga Oi," she says she discussed the massacre with many different tribal members in order to write her document. The majority are from her family (Pacheco 2005; Parry 1976, 237-238; Schramm et al. 2007). More importantly, her work does not constitute a systematic study of the documents or the range of family memories. One could argue, correctly, that this thesis also fails to provide an accurate
representation of the whole of this groups' oral history. Instead, this thesis examines the functions of the story among those outside Parry's family and attempts to add elements that circulate in their histories to what outsiders know about the massacre.

To write the book *First Person America*, scholars interviewed many people from various minority groups throughout the United States. Ann Banks, the editor, tied identity and oral history together for these interviewees in a way that also applies to my Shoshone informants.

The people in this book describe the world they lived in and what they made of it. As Botkin realized, personal recollection is subjective, shaped by "all the distortions of time, faulty memory and hearsay." But the way people make sense of their lives, the web of meaning and identity they weave for themselves, has a significance and importance of its own. Botkin would have agreed with Studs Terkel, who wrote of the people in *Hard Times*, "In their rememberings are their truths." The portraits that emerge from these life histories - of people, of the times they lived in - add the resonance of memory to the formal record of written history. (Banks 1980, xxv)

Examining the oral histories of the Shoshones reveals their "web of meaning and identity they weave for themselves," instead of forcing one constructed by outsiders on them.

When I began the serious study of folklore at the graduate level, I argued quite vehemently with those who claimed that all legend had a basis in truth. After being in the graduate program at Utah State University for about a year, I heard one of my professors, Steve Siporin, make the same argument. I asked him about it, and he told me that they are all based in truth, just not the kind of truth I was referring to. What he meant was this: The folklore reveals the truth behind the tellers' words. The reader may agree or disagree with my informants on the leadership role of Sagwitch, but the reader must
acknowledge the deep emotion they express at their perceived exclusion from Shoshone politics.

In gathering oral histories, many members of other families, unrelated to the Timbimboos and Sagwitch, have complained that Sagwitch receives too much press. They have good reason for their complaints: Parry’s version of events remains the primary source cited by scholars and the press when they refer to the massacre, and Parry’s version inarguably centers on Sagwitch. While Parry has managed to create a fascinating and informative narrative, it lacks the voices of the remainder of the tribe.

The words of one of my informants, Tom Pacheco, reveals the importance of the story among the Shoshone,

I had the fortunate experience of growing up with an Indian grandma. As a young child, she would sit me down almost every evening and she would repeat to me story of the Bear River Massacre. I couldn’t figure out why she would tell the same story over and over, as a young child. I wanted to hear something else. She would always make sure we heard that one story. At least one, and remind us of every other one. She always said, “Remember this.” I could never figure out why I should remember the same story over and over. But, come to find out I grew up and learned later in life, there are different versions of the same story, even amongst our own tribal members there are different versions of the same story. (“Before You Were Here” 2006)

Tom’s grandmother undoubtedly hoped that the stories would be passed down from generation to generation, so that his descendants would never forget what happened to their family in January of 1863. The stories are important to those who keep them alive, and they deserve to be recorded.

In my research, I have encountered some individuals who questioned the necessity for gathering more than one viewpoint. One amateur historian who conducted a
similar project said that this group of Shoshones already have everything they want, so what could they gain from more stories being told? I presented at the Utah Folklore Society conference to a group of scholars. One would expect them to endorse a broad collection of oral history gathering. Instead, many asked, some in a rather hostile way, what I expected to gain from such a project. What more, they wonder, could we have to learn about this event? The questions asked by these researchers can be summed up in one query: Why would we need more than one spokesperson for this historical event? While I believe the value of allowing people to tell their own stories is intrinsic, I will try to explain why I feel it is important.

The Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation lives as a marginalized group. After outside powers came and settled on their traditional homeland, their power to control their lives was severely circumscribed. Along with the loss of political and economic power, they also lacked the power to create their own history and have that history be legitimately recognized by outsiders. Instead, most outsiders trusted historians and archaeologists to interpret their history for them. Things changed within the last few decades, as many people inside and outside academia have desired a more well-rounded viewpoint, seeking out the oral traditions and histories that circulate among the Shoshones. Mae Parry, officially and unofficially, became the spokesperson for this marginalized group. Most documents written about the Shoshones draw almost exclusively from Parry. While some individuals, as I mentioned earlier, have been hostile to other viewpoints, others merely fail to include them in their work on the Shoshones.
Additionally, the press lends credence to having a single spokesperson by failing to provide an adequate number of interviews from various groups.

Too many outsiders expect the Band to speak with one voice. They forget that the Band is a group of individuals, each with his or her own unique likes and dislikes, personality, abilities and disabilities, and stories. One voice could never adequately describe the rich variation within this small group. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, speaking as an indigenous individual, summarized it best: “It galls us that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that it is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us” (2006, 1).

Just as the Northwestern Band is a marginalized group within the United States, there is differential access to outside scholars within the band itself. A review of news articles, scholarly papers, and other documents related to the Shoshones reveals that nearly all of the information outsiders use regarding them comes from the descendants of Chief Sagwitch, including Mae Parry. Others with different ancestry are seldom quoted in the articles and papers. Tom Pacheco puts it more succinctly: “If you go and say ‘Northwestern Band Shoshone Nation’ they’re gonna say, ‘Parrys, Timbimboos,’ and that’s it” (2006, 22 January).

It is important to note some of the reasons the stories that circulate among other families are not more readily available. Many of them have, in the past, shared their stories with various people. Tom recalls a woman, a university scholar, coming to his house regularly and interviewing his mother. He has told me many times that the stories I have been gathering have already been told to this woman by his mother. He believed
that she came from Utah State University, but there is no record of her there. I contacted all of the special collections departments in Utah and Southern Idaho, and no one has a record of these interviews. The stories were also collected by a folklore class at the Intermountain Indian School taught by Hal Reeder. His students, many of them massacre descendants themselves, gathered the stories that circulated in their families. The project, Reeder recalls, was given to a professor and never seen again. He would not give me the professor's name (Reeder 2005). Additionally, many of my informants tell me they have told the story to other researchers, only to discover later that many parts, especially those regarding Sagwitch, were edited out.

These Shoshones also have an understandable distrust of outsiders. Many outsiders have come in attempts to help the Shoshones, but they have harmed them or treated them in a paternalistic way. It is important to remember that outsiders came, settled on the area where they gathered food, took their land on at least four specific occasions, massacred their people, and edited their history. They have continued to share their stories with many outsiders in spite of all of this.

Additionally, my informants often lack knowledge regarding white political and academic structure. Tom tells about trying to tell his story to the then-governor of Utah, Mike Leavitt. In 1994, he visited Governor Leavitt in an attempt to ensure that history books would include the Bear River Massacre. He remains puzzled as to why the history books do not include more mention of the Shoshones (“Before You Were Here” 2006). He has tried to tell his story to the top officials that he knows, not realizing that many of them lack the power to enact the changes he encourages. This is an important point: The
Shoshones do not have the background necessary to distinguish between scholars. While they can name researchers who have come into their lives, they do not have the academic background necessary to know the difference between a folklorist and a historian, or a professor and a videographer. They tend to lump all people looking for information about the tribe into one group: Outsiders. This project is as much about the Shoshones relationship with outsiders as it is a consideration of politics within the tribe itself.

Brigham Madsen, the most well-known and well-respected historian on the Shoshones, included in one of his prefaces the words, “Distinguishing between myths and facts about Indian and white massacres is one of the objectives of this study” (Madsen 1985, xiii). The word “myth,” to a folklorist, refers to a sacred narrative. And while “sacred narrative” is definitely not what Madsen had in mind when he wrote those words, I feel that I should point out that these stories are sacred narratives to the families who tell them. For this reason, I will not address the question of “Who is right?” so much as “How are they different and why?” Most importantly, I will examine what that difference means – why the differences in the stories are significant to the modern Shoshones.

My argument in this paper is simply that multiple viewpoints need to be gathered of Shoshone history. While history reflects the past, it is written in the present. The politics within the Shoshone tribe today influence what we believe happened over one hundred years ago. Since their traditional political structure is based on family groups (Heaton 1993, 11-13), it is logical to look to family groups in gathering additional viewpoints. Too many people expect a great and wise chief to act as the spokesman for the tribe. Such a person, even if he did exist, could only share with us from the
perspective of the tribal leadership. But in social research, scholars hope to also see the life of the other members. We hope the mother will share her story, and the child his games, so that we can better understand the group as a whole.

In considering different versions of the Bear River Massacre specifically, and other events generally, one must remember that "history is mostly about power" (Smith 2006, 34). Stories, especially historical stories, hold their own power. They carry people into the past, making modern people witness events that occurred generations ago. Stories evoke the memory of these events, stirring emotion and prompting the listeners and the tellers to action. The stories that members of the Northwestern Band tell reflect their own access to power. I have come to realize that it affects/reflects three important aspects of power: identity, political, and spiritual.

First, the stories carry the power of identity, including authenticity. The Cache Valley Shoshones are all from the same band, and yet they come from different families who have had very different reactions to white colonialism. The fact that they carry the massacre story at all indicates their identity as members of the Northwestern Shoshones. The different segments within the story they share tie them to one section of the tribe or the other. Whether those sections are defined familiarily, by power within the tribe, or by some other means, they can recognize where they belong within the tribe by the stories they share.

Secondly, the stories reflect the political power of the tellers. The stories create and magnify contention within the tribe, where some members feel that they do not have
the ability to share their stories with outsiders, especially scholars, and have them be recognized as legitimate.

Third, the stories carry spiritual power. Many members of the tribe long ago chose to align themselves with the LDS Church. They define themselves and each other by the way they fit their native beliefs and practices in with those of the church. Not all Shoshones’ spiritual power comes from a Western Judeo-Christian tradition. Some also stems from long-held Shoshone beliefs and traditions. Each of these, and their interrelationship with each other, are important when considering the modern Shoshones. I will examine additions and contentions regarding massacre narratives in light of how they reflect the tellers’ power.

Much has been done recently to gather the memories of people involved in significant historical events. Much has been written about saving the memories of those who were eyewitnesses to World War II or the horrors of the Holocaust. Few argue with the necessity of recording these memories. We must record them or they will be lost to us forever. Imagine for a moment all that has been said or written about one historical event: the assassination of John F. Kennedy. When I ask any member of my parents’ generation, they can tell me exactly what they were doing when they heard that Kennedy had been shot.

Now imagine that we recorded the recollections of the Kennedy family about that day. Jacqueline, Caroline, John and Patrick spoke and recorded their views. Experts declare that this is sufficient. The opinions, feelings and memories of other families regarding that fateful day are of such lower importance that recording them is a waste of
time. It is hard to imagine narrowing the significance of that event by privileging the experiences of the few over the experiences of the many.

The Bear River Massacre was a watershed event for the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone. This single event shaped their world more than any other event in the last few centuries. In terms of its importance to the Shoshones, it is directly comparable with the American Civil War. Both this massacre and the Civil War served to decimate their respective nations and forced them to rethink their basic approaches to traditional lifeways. Certainly the memories of one small segment of Shoshones, no matter how important, can never give the full view that multiple versions can. Moreover, telling the story is not done until those who own it—the full body of descendants of those massacred—decides it is done. No outsider, and no group of insiders, has the right to circumscribe their history for them.

Many people see history is a collection of events. In their view, history is simply what happened, the truth of events that occurred in the past. Thus, once the story of a historical event is told, these people consider the matter closed. They believe that they know what happened, therefore there is nothing else to add to a discussion of the past. Those who engage in a more thorough or scholarly study of history quickly discover that history is not merely a reporting of what really happened, but an analysis of what we know about the past. True history moves past simple reporting and takes into account the context, not only of the era in which the event occurred, but also the era in which it was evaluated.
Looking at an event that occurred in the past is more complex, even, than simply looking at what happened, the context in which it happened, and the context in which it was evaluated. Different people simply remember things differently. In examining the Bear River Massacre, one must realize that each individual present at the massacre witnessed something different, simply by being at different places at different times. One individual saw the troops galloping down the hill, others were in a different part of the village engaged with different enemies. No single individual present witnessed the entire course of the massacre from every viewpoint. These differences in perspective were passed down to their children, and their children’s children. To gain a full account, each of them must give their full historical memory. Such an extensive collection and analysis is certainly important, but is unfortunately beyond the scope of a thesis. Instead, I will examine the oral memories of some families and analyze the differences. I hope someday the entire tribe can feel their oral histories are adequately transcribed.

METHODS & RESEARCH

Initially, I hoped to get different Shoshones to tell me their stories of the massacre from beginning to end. Then, I intended to compare each of the stories in neatly-defined, linear chart form. The resulting document would make it clear that Parry’s story skipped some important sections. Unfortunately, the Shoshones do not tend to tell neatly-packaged stories from beginning to end. I would ask about the Bear River Massacre and they would begin telling me about the Korean war or the LDS Church’s seizure of their land. At first, I was frustrated. As my project progressed, however, I came to realize that history is not a divergent set of events, but a whole in which all the different parts are
related. The Shoshones understand this, and will tell about whatever comes to mind. While I could not create my neat chart from it, I believe that what I do have will serve better at helping us understand the Shoshones as they really are.

I have tried very hard to find a balance in my research. I realized that Mae Parry was a respected community member who worked tirelessly to disseminate her history. The academic community respected her, and I believe wholeheartedly that she deserves that respect. She has earned it. At the same time, I wanted to accurately reproduce the feelings of my informants, and give a fair hearing to the claims they make. Even now, I am not sure that doing both is possible. Giving too much press to the Timbimboo family would damage the relationship with my informants, leaving me unable to complete my research. Not giving the existing histories the respect they deserve could be construed as personal attacks on the Timbimboo family in general or Mae Parry in particular, situations with which I would hate to be associated. I have therefore tried to give my informants' opinions as thorough an examination I can while not minimizing their impact on the prevalent stories. The reader should know that calls and e-mails I made to members of the Timbimboo family were left unreturned. I largely ignore the white versions of events, many of which still circulate among those who inherit the story from the soldiers and settlers. These are available elsewhere (I suggest searching Barnes' bibliography for them).

I hope the reader will understand that the accounts taken together represent a rich tapestry of oral history. I especially ask that they will not dismiss every aspect of Parry's work, or mine, simply because one disagrees with the other. While certain parts are
absolutely contradictory, the most important parts of the stories, the parts that paint the massacre as an atrocity and tie this group of Shoshones together as descendants of massacre victims, remain consistent.

For their part, many members of the Timbimboo family are willing to accept that there are other versions. Speaking about Parry, his relative, Curtis Warner said, “She might even argue that there is no other story, that this is the way it happened. I don’t agree with that” (Fleisher 2004, 226). Warner recognized that the version of events that currently has prominence paints his family as the most important.

[Warner] would prefer to see a collection of stories providing multiple perspectives of the event. When oral culture flourished, this is how it operated. “Every family’s going to have a different story of what took place, and over time things are going to change, and you’re going to put it your own way and glorify your family over others. Of course you’re going to do that. But I think there are things in the stories that are the same, and if we work together somehow – you’d have a whole other story, with whole other heroes.” (Fleisher 2004, 227)

It is time that some of those heroes’ stories were brought to light.
INTRODUCTION

A review of basic Shoshone history is necessary in order to understand the variation within the group. The Shoshones are a collection of Rocky Mountain Indian tribes that ranged from eastern Oregon and northeastern Nevada on the west to Montana and Wyoming on the east, and from the Great Salt Lake up into present-day Montana. They are divided into individual bands, each having wielded control of a smaller geographic area (Madsen 1980, 13; Schramm et al. 2007). Some adopted buffalo hunting, others went on foot (Smoak 2007, 33). The Northwestern Shoshones controlled what is currently Northern Utah and Southeastern Idaho, from the Great Salt Lake up into the Malad Valley, and from the eastern shore of the Great Salt Lake to Bear Lake (Madsen 1985, 6; Neaman 1979, 1). They called themselves the Newe, Neme, or Numu, depending on the dialect. Each means “the people” (Smoak 2007, 34).

The bands functioned autonomously until the 1880s, when most of them settled at the Fort Hall reservation near Pocatello, Idaho. A small group, consisting of about 150 people, settled on land granted to them by the LDS Church just south of Portage, Utah. They named their village Washakie. They “remained a separate and distinct band until they became absorbed into the neighboring white population during the years after World War II” (Madsen 1980, 13). It is this smaller group that this paper concerns. For clarity, I must use a more specific name in order to differentiate them from the larger Shoshone populations. Heaton (1993) called them the “Cache Valley Shoshones,” out of deference
to the importance the valley held in their subsistence patterns. Because they placed great
importance on their land, because the Cache Valley held a special spiritual significance to
them, and because the Bear River Massacre occurred within the confines of the valley, I
will use Heaton’s designation of “Cache Valley Shoshones” to refer to the sub-band in
question. This sub-band has also been called the Pengwidika or “fish eaters,” and the
Hukandika or “rabbit eaters” (Heaton 1993, 1), after the Shoshone tradition (“Before You
Were Here” 2006).

The Cache Valley Shoshones are not, and have never been, the core of Shoshone
political or cultural power. I would argue with Madsen’s use of the word “absorbed,” as
it is my experience that they retain many elements of their culture, including some
ceremonies, spiritual beliefs, and social practices. They remain a proud people who
celebrate their cultural traditions. The history of other branches of the Shoshone nation
are well-documented and outside the scope of my research. Detailed histories have been
written of the other groups while the Cache Valley Shoshones have been largely ignored.
Detailed histories that include the Cache Valley Shoshones specifically were written by

Before Spanish exploration, the Shoshones “lived and traveled in relatively small
extended family groups” (Wells 1980, 17). They organized into larger bands with the
introduction of the horse to the plains and Snake River Shoshone cultures (Wells 1980,
17-18; Smoak 2007, 35-37). For purposes of hunting and protection, the Shoshones
temporarily assembled into larger bands (Neaman 1979, 1). These bands, by necessity,
only included those who had the horses necessary to keep up with them. While some
Shoshones relied on horses completely, the Northwestern band lived a semi-equestrian existence (Smoak 2007, 35). One section of a Shoshone extended family might join a larger band, leaving their horseless relatives behind. In the end, however, the family relationship trumped all other loyalties. Shoshone politics have always revolved around the family (Wells 1980, 23-25; Smoak 2007, 37; Heaton 1993, 11-12).

The Northwestern Band of the Shoshone gathered their food from seeds, roots, fish, and small game. They had horses, although their horse herds were smaller than the other Shoshones. Their subsistence strategies were a mix between those of the plains and Great Basin Indians (Madsen 1985, 6-7; Smoak 2007, 35).

Like most American Indian tribes, the Cache Valley Shoshones were controlled politically by a complex network of family groups and temporary chiefs, chosen as occasion warranted by the population. Traders from Europe and the United States, expecting a single individual to act as spokesman for the tribe, regularly established or assumed that leadership roles were more permanent and powerful than they were (Smoak 2007, 40). Although a man named Washakie acted as chief in the mid-1800s, several commentators noted that he was beginning to lose power near the beginning of the Civil War, partly due to his willingness to associate with whites.

According to Madsen (1985, 6), the Northwestern Band also had a series of chiefs that watched over the tribe. Madsen listed the chiefs of ten different groups within the Northwestern Band as Pocatello, Toomontso, Sanpitch, Tosowitz, Yahnoway, Weetahsoop, Pahragoosahd, Tahkueatoonah, Omrshee, and Sagwitch. Smoak, in contrast, argued that chiefs as most whites envision them simply did not exist (2007, 40-41). Still,
many people within and outside the tribe persist in claiming that Sagwitch was at least a semi-permanent chief. Examples include newspaper articles, and most notably Scott Christensen’s *Sagwitch: Shoshone Chieftain, Mormon Elder*. Their evidence consists primarily of eyewitness documents and the testimony of his descendants. The eyewitness documents, like most primary sources of the era, were written by white outsiders – those who were directly responsible for assigning the Shoshones an artificial political structure of hereditary position. Sagwitch’s descendants have profited from his status as leader, quoting it whenever they wished to add legitimacy in a news article or political position.

While his real status in the tribe may never be known, the oral histories of remaining tribal members is enough to give historians and non-academics alike pause in readily accepting Sagwitch’s status as undisputed leader. Furthermore, the ease with which individual Shoshone families slid in and out of the various bands (Smoak 2007, 38) lends credence to those who claim Sagwitch was not *their* leader. Winter camps, like the one fatefully attacked by Connor, contained many different families that came together solely for the seasonal camp. Furthermore, it was common for the same family to choose to camp in different locations year after year (Smoak 2007, 38). Perhaps their families simply chose to winter with him (or, conversely, perhaps he and his family simply chose to winter with the others), and history has recorded them with one voice because they were in the same place at the same time. There is a more thorough discussion of Sagwitch, including a discussion of winter camps, in the analysis section of this thesis.
INTERACTIONS WITH OUTSIDERS

Shoshone interaction with non-indigenous people began with the fur trade. Cache Valley was an important rendezvous area for fur trappers (Heaton 1993, 32). Heaton (1993, 41) notes that the Shoshones were especially interested in trading for ammunition. In spite of their ongoing contact with whites, they managed to avoid the major diseases of the era (Heaton 1993, 46). Those who grew up relying on the increased wealth afforded by the fur trade had difficulty adapting when the fur trade stopped in the early 1840s and sank into an economic depression (Heaton 1993, 66-68).

A clash between the Shoshones and incoming whites was likely, simply because the Shoshones “lived adjacent to the main paths of travel” (Madsen 1985, 3). Making their home along the Oregon Trail, they could not avoid being affected by the hunting habits of the whites, or the natural destruction that stems from overland travel (Madsen 1985, 35-36). Nevertheless, the Shoshones reacted to the initial overland foreign travelers of the 1840s with good humor. For the most part, the travelers, Indian agents, and settlers of the decade were generally well-behaved toward the Shoshones. Occasionally, however, some of the travelers kidnapped Shoshones to serve as guides. It was not until the latter part of the decade, when the flood of visitors began having a appreciable impact on the available food and some whites began killing Shoshones, that the Shoshones began fighting the settlers (Madsen 1985, 25-28).

The largest group that settled in the Shoshone homeland came in the mid-1850s. Popularly known as the Mormons, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints settled in the Intermountain West when persecution in Illinois and Missouri
became too much for them to bear. To the good fortune of all the parties involved, the Salt Lake Valley was not heavily populated at the time. The Shoshones did have some arguments with the Utes, both groups claiming the valley and the rights to trade with the Mormons (Madsen 1985, 28).

Brigham Young, the Mormons’ religious and political leader, instructed his followers that it was far easier to feed the Indians than fight them (Young 1855, 169). This policy made Young a sought-after ally among the Indians, especially since a significant reduction in the buffalo population was noted as early as 1840 (Heaton 1993, 62). While the Northwestern Band had to counsel with him because he was building settlements on their land, other groups like the Eastern Shoshone also sought him out. Unfortunately, Young did not appropriate enough money for his feed and clothe the Indians strategy, which led to numerous complaints from the Indians. It is also important to note that Young’s philosophy was not heartily endorsed by all of his followers, nor does it adequate describe the complexity of Mormon doctrine with regards to indigenous Americans (Madsen 19800, 30-31; Heaton 1993, 80-81). Heber C. Kimball, who had a leadership role under Young, suggested that all the lands belonged to God and were ripe for the taking (Young 1850).

In spite of their initial friendly relationship, the influx of settlers began to strain relations between the Shoshones and the settlers. While a short review of the frustrations that led to the massacre is certainly necessary here, that is not the primary focus of this work and some details must therefore go unstated. For a detailed account of events
leading up to the massacre, see Brigham Madsen’s *Shoshone Frontier and the Bear River Massacre* or Heaton’s “No Place to Pitch Their Teepees.”

The money that Indian agents pledged and the food that Brigham Young promised were often in short supply. When the whites failed to provide for the Indians, the Indians felt justified in raiding the Mormon settlements for food and other goods (Madsen 1985, 7). As time passed, these raids became increasingly violent (Heaton 1993, 71). These attacks angered the Mormon settlers in Cache Valley, who retaliated with violence or reduced food sharing. The Shoshone residents of Southern Idaho also found it difficult to understand why the Indians of Utah were receiving gifts from Brigham Young while they had to deal with an Indian agent in Oregon. Trouble between Indians and whites flared in the area around Fort Hall because of its proximity to the white immigration trails (Madsen 1985, 43-44).

The Shoshones were especially angered by the extraordinary number of whites crossing their lands to the Gold Rush (Madsen 1985, 30-39). It was between the Indians and the gold seekers that conflict on the trails west became commonplace. Frustrated by the never-ending stream of whites moving West, some Shoshones near Fort Hall began to attack immigrant trains (Madsen 1980, 34). Many attacks on immigrants were perpetuated by Northwestern Shoshones (Smoak 2007, 51), although my informants place the blame squarely on Pocatello’s band, which had more access to the travelers. Still, the effects of Indian attacks on overland travelers can easily be overemphasized. Indigenous Americans only caused about four percent of immigrant deaths between 1840
and 1860 (Smoak 2007, 50). However, the impact of these deaths was likely exaggerated as travelers spread tales of Indian attacks.

The valleys that are now known as the Wasatch Front were once covered with lush, tall grasses. The Shoshones subsisted on the grass seed; their horses ate the grass—until the Mormons’ settlements came, building houses over the land where the grass once grew. Mormon cattle grazed on the grass, until it vanished. The whites failed to see the loss of the grasses as a problem, judging a hunting/gathering-based subsistence pattern as degraded (Madsen 1985, 13-14).

The Indians, initially friendly with the Mormons, were dismayed when Brigham Young began sending parties out to settle other valleys. Young, understandably, chose the most fertile areas to place his new settlements (Madsen 1985, 46-47). Shoshone land began to dwindle and disappear under a flood of settlers. This must have been especially troublesome to the Shoshones, who defined themselves based on the ties to their “native land,” or debia. Shoshone would not ask who other Shoshones were related to, but instead what land they were tied to and what the land was called (Smoak 2007, 41). As the Mormons settlers claimed more Shoshone land, they would not only have feared for the loss of their food sources but for the loss of their identity. Cache Valley was especially important to the Shoshones, who called it “The House of the Great Spirit” (Neaman 1979, 4), indicating the special spiritual importance they assigned to the valley.

Relations between the Shoshones and the Mormons stretched almost to breaking when the Mormons began settling Cache Valley in 1857 (Madsen 1985, 84-86; Heaton 1993, 75-76). Many residents of Cache Valley left in 1858. Later that year, Young
ordered forty men to return to the valley, instructing them to build a strong fort as a base from which to herd livestock. Anger between the whites and the Indians, already near the breaking point, exploded after the Mormons settlers in Cache Valley killed Chief Pagunap in Smithfield. In revenge, the Indians killed two Mormon settlers. Violence escalated between the two parties, until both Shoshones and settlers posted guards and interracial skirmishes became commonplace (Madsen 1985, 154-155).

By 1862, Congress had appropriated money and appointed a commission to make treaties with the Shoshone bands. The government representatives opted to wait until 1863 due to the oncoming winter (Madsen 1980, 35). The confrontation was building, fueled by an increasing number of Mormons farms, the desire for the Indians to retain their traditional lifestyle as their customary food supplies dwindled, and the failure of government officials to recognize the intensity of the tension (Madsen 1985, 73).

Colonel Patrick E. Connor led a group of volunteers from the California 2nd Cavalry and 3rd Infantry into Salt Lake City to protect the transcontinental rail lines from the ever-increasing number of Indian attacks and to keep the Mormons under control (Madsen 1985, 153). They had come with dreams of glory, hoping to join the raging Civil War in the East. Connor requested transfers to the East, but his superiors declined, stranding Connor and his troops in Salt Lake. They were not wanted: Governor Stephen S. Harding greeted them by informing them how sorry he was to see them come to the city (Madsen 1980, 35-36). Twenty-one percent of Connor's volunteers opted for simple desertion, feeling they had joined the militia to fight "traitors" in the East (Madsen 1985, 165-166).
In September of 1862, Indians attacked emigrants near Gravelly Ford on the Humboldt River. Major Edward McGarry, Colonel Connor's right-hand man, was assigned to deal with the problem. Connor gave him specific instructions to assassinate every male Indian in the vicinity of the massacre. McGarry tracked down some Indians, who were either shot while trying to escape or executed (Madsen 1985, 166-169).

Chief Bear Hunter and his followers were involved in a skirmish with McGarry's troops on November 22, 1862. McGarry and his troops accompanied Zachias Van Orman, the uncle of a ten-year-old white boy taken by Indians two years before, in an effort to free the boy. They were successful, although the Shoshones claimed that the blond-haired, blue-eyed youth was the son of a French mountain man and Chief Washakie's sister. The Shoshone version was supported by the fact that the boy spoke no English and was considered a full member of the tribe. In retaliation for taking the boy, Bear Hunter and some of his followers harassed local settlers, saying they were cowards for not helping him keep the boy. Bear Hunter challenged Connor to come north with some troops. The local settlers gave the Shoshones food in an attempt to calm them (Madsen 1985, 172-173; Schramm et al. 2007).

Further trouble occurred when Connor heard that some Shoshones were holding stolen supplies near the Bear River Ferry northwest of Brigham City. The Shoshones, warned of a coming attack, cut the ferry's rope. McGarry and his men were able to cross, but had to leave their horses behind. They captured four Indian men, threatening to execute them unless the Indians turned over the stolen goods. Instead of acquiescing, the
Shoshones moved to Cache Valley. The California volunteers pumped fifty-one shots into the four captives (Madsen 1985, 174).

THE BEAR RIVER MASSACRE

The Cache Valley Shoshones regularly wintered in a small valley in southern Idaho near the town of Preston. The valley has a section of hot springs that provide liquid drinking water and geothermal heat. As a result, the valley retains higher temperatures even through cold winters.

On the night of January 28, 1863, Connor led his troops to the Shoshone camp to serve warrants on chiefs Bear Hunter, Sanpitch, and Sagwitch. He led his volunteers to a bluff overlooking the Shoshones' little valley before dawn. Connor's intentions were clear: He stated that he would bring back no prisoners. In his mind, the Indians were attacking whites, an action that only served to convince him that nothing short of total eradication would make the whites safe (Orton 1890, 8).

The Indians, warned by friendly whites of the imminent attack (Neaman 1979, 5), were prepared for the onslaught. The military record (Orton 1890, 8) relates that the Indian chiefs were unconcerned and went about their business, but nevertheless ordered their warriors to prepare. Lee Neaman's oral tradition maintains that the Shoshones were unconcerned because "the Mormons, as white men, liked to parade to show off their prowess and bravery by making big noises in their marches. Surely, they would only parade around and go home" (1979, 5). The military also claimed that the Shoshones attacked first (Orton 1890, 9). The Shoshones fought the first wave of attackers back.
Connor, undeterred, ordered his men to surround the camp. Each group attacked from a different direction.

The Shoshones, outnumbered and outgunned, were thoroughly routed. The only means of escape was to float down the semi-frozen river, hoping to reach the other side and safety before hypothermia sapped their strength. Some women left their children hanging in trees, hoping that friendly settlers would find and raise them. Soldiers raped, tortured, and killed the women left behind. Surviving children were summarily massacred. Beach, a white participant in the massacre, described the Shoshones crying for "quarters but no quarters were given that day" (Schindler 1999, 307). The only chance for survival was escape.

The leaders of the tribe reacted very differently to the battle. Bear Hunter fought valiantly to the end. Connor’s troops attempted to kill him, but they failed to cause his death with every technique they tried. Finally, a soldier heated his bayonet in a fire and plunged it through Bear Hunter’s skull. Bear Hunter remains a hero in tribal memory.

Sagwitch took a different approach. Wounded in the hand, he raced on horseback to escape the carnage (Pacheco 2005; Parry 1976, 234; Parry 2000, 38). The California Volunteers had twenty-two deaths. According to Connor, 224 Shoshones were killed. Indian Superintendent Doty placed the number at 255. James W. Hill, a Mormon missionary to the Indians, visited the site the day after the massacre and placed the number at 368. Hill noted the bodies of almost 90 women and children. Seventy teepees were destroyed, 175 horses captured, and over 1,000 bushels of grain were taken. These numbers serve to demonstrate the "ruthlessness of the troops" (Madsen 1980, 36).
That the event can properly be labeled as a massacre is unquestionable. While it began as a battle between two opponents, it quickly degenerated into a full-scale massacre. The event was marked by the *Deseret News* shortly after it occurred. "Col. Connor and the Volunteers who went north last week to look after the Indians on Bear River have, in a very short space of time, done a larger amount of Indian killing than ever fell to the lot of any single expedition of which we have any knowledge" (*Deseret News* [Salt Lake City], 4 February 1863).

One version of the massacre is an account of Californian Civil War era soldiers written by Brigadier-General Richard G. Orton in 1869. Orton reveals the pride that the whites initially felt in their massacre, describing how the California volunteers, "avenging the helpless emigrants, the women and children whose blood had been unatoned, and the fresh flowing blood of his comrade lying at his feet," used their "keen eye" to stop the Shoshones (Orton 1890, 11). In reward for the Shoshone decimation, Patrick Connor was promoted to Brigadier-General of Volunteers (Hance and Warr 1962, 69). The soldiers, initially hated and feared by the local Mormons, were now greeted as heroes who redeemed the settlers from Indian depredations (Barnes 2004, 12-14).

**THE SHOSHONES AFTER THE MASSACRE**

While many writers paint the Shoshones as being whipped into submission by the massacre, Madsen (1980, 36) points out the substantial increase in Indian attacks that occurred following the massacre. The Shoshones were not beaten into submission; they were beaten into rage.
That summer, Indian Affairs Superintendent James Doty met with representatives of the Northwestern Band, including those who would become the Cache Valley Shoshones. Together, they signed the Treaty of Box Elder. The treaty guaranteed them an annual payment of $5,000, to be shared by the Northwestern Shoshones and some other, less organized bands. The government failed to honor the payments they had promised (Madsen 1980, 37-40).

The federal government established the Fort Hall Reservation in 1869. They urged the Northwestern Band, including the Cache Valley Shoshones, to settle on the reservation. Most did, including a number of the Cache Valley Shoshones’ relatives (Madsen 1985, 8). George W. Hill, a Mormon missionary sent by Brigham Young to work with the Shoshones, attempted to establish a Shoshone settlement in Franklin and Oneida counties in Idaho in 1874 (Hill 1875, 1). The eventual settlement of Washakie came as a result of these early missionary calls from the heads of the LDS Church to establish such a settlement.

The beleaguered survivors made their way to one of their traditional summer camps on the banks of the Bear River, near the city of Corinne. Here, they attempted to settle down and raise crops (Parry 2000, 45), assisted by George W. Hill (Andersen et al. 1948, 2). The white residents of Corinne did not want the Indians settling nearby, and before long rumors began to circulate that the small band was on the warpath. Citizens of Corinne contacted the military, who sent several individuals to investigate (Parry 2000, 46).
These troops, led by Captain Kennington, met with several Indian chiefs. The chiefs reported that the rumor was false. Continued questioning failed to reveal either the large body of Indians spoken of in the rumor or any other indication of a potential attack. Hill, notified of the troops arrival by a Shoshone named Jim Brown (Hill 1978, 11), reportedly told Kennington:

If you will go out on the farm, you will see the Indians hard at work harvesting, with many of the squaws and papooses gleaning, and others scattered all over the camp, while the Indian horses are grazing in every direction over the prairie as far as you can see. Did you ever, Captain, hear of Indians going to war under such circumstances? (Hill 1875)

Unswayed by Hill's arguments, the military ordered the Indians out of the area. The Shoshones, unwilling to be victims of another massacre, obeyed, leaving behind many items due to the speed of their migrations. These items were taken by area whites (Hill 1875). Hill (1875) reports that those responsible were non-Mormons, leading to the question of whether the Indians were merely pawns in the ongoing struggle between Mormons and other whites. Other factors could include a lust for the land the Shoshones occupied or the ongoing racism Indians faced. Hill, who argued that the Shoshones only wanted to become agriculturalists and citizens of the United States, said that the forced move was an injustice, but both he and the Shoshones knew they had no choice but to obey (Hill 1878, 11-14).

While residing near Corinne, LDS missionaries baptized this branch of the Shoshones, almost as a whole group. The Shoshones regularly share their version of the event. They say that all but one of them was baptized in a single day, and that one only refrained because he was afraid of water. Hill's record spreads these baptisms out
through the summer of 1875, adding more in 1878. Nevertheless, the baptisms Hill recorded in his journal on August 1, 1875 fill 3 ½ pages with three columns of names on each page. In all, more than seven pages of Hill’s autobiographical history are filled with names of Shoshones who were baptized (Hill 1878, 1-8). Surely this is the day that lives in the Shoshone oral histories.

Following their ejection from Corinne, the Shoshones were once again left without a place to live. The LDS Church gave a 500-acre tract of land in northern Box Elder County to the Indians for a permanent settlement. Church officials encouraged the Shoshones to move there “where they were told they would be free from land grabbing pioneers” (Neaman 1979, 3). Additionally, the church hoped to fight the problems with alcohol and hunger that plagued the tribe since their settlement in Corinne (Heaton 1993, 79) and hoped to teach them to live as modern whites lived (Heaton 1993, 81-82). Each family lived on about 30 acres. All of it remained the property of the LDS Church; only 13 Indians had homestead lands (Kreitzer 2000, 227). The land is near present-day Thatcher, Utah, west of Tremonton and Garland, and was accurately described as a “barren, stony wilderness” (Neaman 1979, 6). The church promised that the land would remain the Indians’ forever, as long as they built homes and maintained it. The Shoshones moved in, naming their city Washakie, after the influential Shoshone from Wyoming. They established some successful dry farms in the area (Kreitzer 2000, 227; Neaman 1979, 6).

While at Washakie, the Indians remained under white control. In 1932, residents of Franklin, Idaho, near the Bear River Massacre site decided to erect a monument
honoring the soldiers who fought there. Joseph Parry, the LDS Bishop of Washakie, insisted the Indians attend the dedication of the monument in full regalia (Neaman 1979). Residents in the massacre area were obviously proud of the massacre for a long period of time, even adjusting their own version of events into one where the soldiers saved them from a menace. This is in contrast with the Mormon settlers’ feelings prior to the massacre, which regarded the California volunteers as a menace (Barnes 2004, 10-12).

Meanwhile, the LDS Church, the U.S. government, and the Shoshone people had different ideas of what was in the best interest of the Indians. Officials from the LDS Church and Utah State Agricultural College sent a Mr. Allred, a graduate of Utah State Agricultural College, to serve as an Indian agent at Washakie in 1938 (Neaman 1979, 7). Allred had the ability to hire and fire workers. Many Indians, including some who had worked the land for years, left Washakie penniless after Allred decided they were no longer profitable workers (Neaman 1979, 8-9). To further complicate matters, many Shoshones continued their migratory patterns. Even after building homes, many would leave temporarily in search of work, going into Nevada, Idaho, or elsewhere to earn money. As they left, the Indian agent would report that they had abandoned their property. Such “abandoned” homes were subsequently burned (Neaman 1979, 9-10; Pacheco 2005).

Washakie lost a great many more citizens during the 1940s. World War II caused military-related businesses to boom, especially in the Ogden area. A short drive allowed the Shoshones to earn much higher wages than they could get dry farming. Many residents of Washakie left their homes, temporarily or permanently, to seek war-related
employment or serve in the military. It was not the first time they left their homes. Willy Ottogary (Krietzer 2000) reports many occasions when residents would go on extended trips to visit relatives, gather pine nuts, or hunt. Others joined the military directly, leaving behind loved ones and homes. At the end of the war, many Shoshones chose to remain in higher-paying metropolitan areas (Pacheco 2006, 22 January).

Meanwhile, area whites were adjusting their own versions of Shoshone history. In 1948, three residents of Bear River City collected the stories of local residents in relation to the Shoshones. Many residents had begun to deny that Indians had lived there or that the experience had ever happened (Andersen et al. 1948, 1). The whites had begun, perhaps intentionally, to erase the memory of their dealings with the Shoshones. Such a forgetting paved the way for the final dissolution of Washakie.

As time passed, the Indians not only lost semi-abandoned houses, but also houses that were indisputably occupied. In the 1960s, representatives of the LDS Church asked the final residents for the deeds to their houses. The threat was that if they did not turn the deeds over to the church, they would be excommunicated. Most relented. Those who did not faced the church’s lawyers and eventually lost their homes in spite of their resistance. The church seized the final Indian-owned houses in the area and burned them during the 1960s and early 1970s. The church sold the land to ranchers to graze their animals (Pacheco 2005; Neaman 1979, 9-10). In a 1974 meeting to discuss the event, Geneva Alex Pacheco, Tom’s mother, said:

It was in June and I was scraping my deer hide at my home in Washakie, Utah, when I saw Mr. LaMar Cutler start a fire by Elias Pubigee’s home. The fire was coming toward my mother’s gooseberry patch and toward my home. Mr. Cutler’s fire was coming down the ditch and along the fence
line. I asked Mr. Cutler what he was doing and he informed me that he had orders from Stake President Smith to burn all this down. I told him that it was too bad, but he was not going to burn my place up. I told him we were paying taxes on this property and it was ours. I further told Mr. Cutler if he wanted to burn something to go elsewhere and burn. We exchanged unpleasant words. I also told him not to set foot into my yard as there is a boundary line here. Again I told him to go and he said O.K. and moved his fire along the ditch past my place and over towards the canal. A few days later, Mr. Cutler came over and asked me for my mailing address. I gave it to him. About a week later, I received a letter from the church attorney, Mr. McConkie. The letter requested me to get out of my house by the 3rd of June of that year. It also stated for me to take all my lumber and anything else that was mine and move on. I still have the letter I received from Mr. McConkie. I also saw Everett Neaman’s old house burn down. It went up as if it was a gasoline fire. This home was burned by Vernon Lamb and Mr. Snow. Vernon Lamb also fenced our driveway up. We went to our home and could not get into our yard. He made us a gate. I do not know if we had any water rights, but when Fullmer Allred was at Washakie, he would let us water our garden with water from the canal. After Mr. Allred left, we didn’t see any more water. (Parry 2000, 58-59)

Mrs. Pacheco left the experience understandably embittered towards the LDS Church.

My mom went down to meet with the First Presidency [the heads of the LDS Church]. She took a little bag of dirt with her. They were talking, and she was saying something about the land, and she goes, “This is the land I lived on. This is all the land I have left.” And she just threw the bag right in front of them on the table and she said the dirt just spread all over the table. She said, “Now you’ve got it all.” And nothing’s ever been heard from them, any more than that. They’ve sealed it up so nobody knows what actually happened. (Pacheco 2005)

She never again returned to church (Pacheco 2005). I asked to view documents related to the purchase and sale of Washakie at the LDS Church’s archives. They would not let me see the documents I requested. The archivist’s response that there are no oral histories
within the documents indicates that they did not actually read my request. Neaman notes that land continues to be important to the Shoshones. He summed up the end of Washakie simply by saying, “Washakie died in 1976” (Neaman 1979, 10).

The history of the Shoshones does not end with the loss of Washakie. They continued to want official government recognition for their band; white scholars to identity the events of January 29, 1863, as a massacre, not a battle; and an accurate memorial to the individuals who died in the massacre. Their memorial has finally been started, and now consists of a series of interpretive signs overlooking the site. This explains why some non-Indians close to the tribe feel that the Shoshones have everything they want.

RESEARCH REGARDING THE MASSACRE

In many ways, the history of the Cache Valley Shoshones is the story of two places: the valley of the Bear River Massacre and Washakie. Both are places where they found themselves betrayed and destroyed. In one they lost their lives; in another their homes and their land. Many feel that they have no control over the way their history is told. They certainly have historical claim that their story was ignored. Until Newel Hart began researching the Bear River Massacre, historians drew exclusively from accounts written by non-Indians. These accounts focused on the role of Bear River in settling the West (Barnes 2004, 21-23). In the course of his research, Hart asked Mae Timbimboo Parry to write down the story of the massacre from an Indian point of view. Parry obliged in 1976, creating a document called “Massacre at Baga Oi” from the story passed down through her family.
Brigham Madsen’s *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre* remains the most exhaustive work on the massacre event. Madsen’s work describes the complex interrelationship between the Shoshones and the Mormon settlers, and examines the reasons their initially friendly relations turned into outright hostility. It is notable that Brigham Madsen was largely responsible for the shift from calling the event the Battle of Bear River to calling it the Bear River Massacre.

John Heaton’s 1993 master’s thesis, later abridged into an article for the *Utah Historical Quarterly* (listed in the works cited section as a chapter in *Being Different*), examined the relationship between the white settlers and the Shoshones as they were affected by environmental economics. By destroying the environment the Shoshones used to acquire food, the settlers damaged the relationship between the two peoples and forced the Indians into dependence on the colonists. This dependence angered the colonists and led into many conflicts, the Bear River Massacre chief among them. In this way, even events perpetrated by the Indians can be blamed on the settlers.

A significant element was added to the massacre story in 1999 by Harold Schindler. Schindler acquired the journal of Sergeant William Beach, who had served under Connor at the Bear River Massacre in the 2nd Volunteer California Cavalry. Beach’s journal described the fight beginning as a semi-equal battle, but degenerating into a massacre. The journal gives a non-Indian perspective that supports the Indian viewpoints regarding the heinousness of the event.

In 2000, Parry wrote another account for Forrest S. Cuch’s *A History of Utah’s American Indians*. This second account sought to briefly summarize the entire history of
the Cache Valley Shoshones, resulting in a somewhat abridged version of the massacre. Parry largely quoted her "Massacre at Boa Ogoi" verbatim in this second document. Perhaps to make it shorter, she deleted her references to victims and survivors who were not her direct ancestors. Because of these deletions and because the second document so closely resembles the first, I have chosen to focus on the original here.

Thom Hatch’s *The Blue, the Gray, and the Red: Indian Campaigns of the Civil War*, published in 2003, represents a shifting in massacre study on a national scale. While Madsen argued that the massacre went largely unreported in the East because it occurred in the middle of the Civil War, Hatch devotes an entire chapter to the event. Hatch focused on repudiating justifications of the massacre, pointing out the cruelty of the soldiers against women and children.

In her 2004 book *The Bear River Massacre and the Making of History*, Kass Fleisher asked why the story of the widespread rape of Shoshone women as part of the massacre was not told more prominently, if at all, in the existing narratives. Her question is not unusual (Barnes 2004, 33). Fleisher saw the massacre as an event that was not merely forgotten, but she believed that knowledge of it was intentionally subverted by the LDS Church. Fleisher had difficulty working with Shoshone informants because of this perspective. During an interview with Mae Parry, she brought up her theory that the church intentionally hid the massacre from public knowledge. Parry asked her to leave. Although many members of the tribe still hold animosity toward the church because of losing Washakie, most remain fiercely loyal. On one occasion, I was conducting an interview when the subject of Washakie’s loss came up. The interviewee complained
about the church and how its actions in taking Washakie were unfair. Soon after, he received a call that one of the tribespeople had been involved in an accident. He immediately left to give her an LDS blessing. The relationship between the Cache Valley Shoshones and the LDS Church continues to be strong in spite of the anger many of them feel toward the church. While Fleisher felt that the story should circulate more widely in non-Indian circles, she did not examine the story as it circulates among the Shoshones themselves.

In 2004, John Barnes' wrote a master's thesis that examines the massacre in much the same way as Fleisher. He discusses how peoples' memories regarding the massacre have been effected by subsequent history. Barnes examined the prevailing viewpoints of the settlers in their letters, journals, and newspaper accounts, finally drawing parallels between these viewpoints and the monuments later erected at the site. Barnes' major contribution lies in his examination of feelings regarding the massacre as they evolved through the twentieth century from one of commemorative admiration to one of deep regret.

The concept of the Bear River Massacre as the last great Indian battle has progressed into the understanding that the Shoshones were brutally massacred. The site has been given increased attention in the media, and new interpretive plaques overlook the valley where the massacre occurred.
CHAPTER 3
DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The fact that the Cache Valley Shoshones continue to fight over the identity of one of the key massacre players (namely Sagwitch) indicates the importance of the event in the lives of current Shoshones. In this chapter, I consider various Shoshones’ alternate viewpoints that I have gathered regarding massacre events. While I do briefly describe some white viewpoints, I do it to give context to the Indians accounts. I do not give a detailed comparison of various white accounts. If the reader is interested in a white perspective, I refer them to the works cited page and especially to Madsen’s *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre*.

As I mentioned in the introduction, most of the additional elements relate to Shoshone spiritual leaders. Parry describes attempts to escape, briefly relating what certain people did. Other accounts reveal more about the people Parry briefly mentions, adding their importance within the tribe and how they reacted to the massacre.

First, a summary of Parry’s famous 1976 version of the massacre is necessary to make the reader familiar with the existing account. Parry began with a description of Washakie, who she described as the very wise chief of the entire tribe. Assisting him, according to Parry, were several sub-chiefs. The sub-chiefs in charge of the Cache Valley Shoshones were Sagwitch and Bear Hunter. Parry spoke of the tribe’s subsistence patterns, tying the Shoshones’ lifeways with the earth. She described children playing, digging holes (later used as foxholes to fight Connor’s soldiers) to play in during the summer and sledding during the winter. The Indians had gathered for a warm dance a
few weeks before the massacre, but most of the participants had already left. Had Connor known the ways of the “red man,” he would have attacked earlier (Parry 1976, 231-232). After these descriptions, Parry moved on to give her account of the massacre itself.

Her description of the massacre began with the assignment of blame. Specifically, Parry blamed “troublemakers” from a neighboring tribe who had began to harass the white settlers. Tin Dup, a Shoshone prophet, had a dream foretelling the massacre. He asked everyone to leave, but few did. Parry described a white man coming into the camp to warn the Indians that Connor and his troops were coming. Then, she begins describing the day of the massacre. Her account describes Sagwitch rising early to see the soldiers coming over the hill, and warning all the Indians to prepare, but not to shoot first. Connor began the shooting, which slaughtered the Indians like wild rabbits (Parry 1976, 232-233).

Parry went on to describe some individuals who escaped. Ray Diamond, Sagwitch’s nephew, escaped by crossing the river. Anzee Chee, described by Parry only as an “old woman,” escaped by keeping her head hidden under the riverbank. At this point, the Shoshones begged Sagwitch to flee in order to save his life, which he did. Yeager Timbimboo, a son of Sagwitch, survived by hiding among the dead bodies, although the story includes him raising his head for a moment and almost getting killed. Soquitch, Sagwitch’s eldest son, escaped with his girlfriend, only to have her shot in the back and killed as she sat behind him on a horse. Parry’s description of the massacre
ends with Sagwitch returning to his teepee, the lone teepee left standing, to survey his murdered bride (Parry 1976, 233-236).

In Parry’s version, a man named Tin Dup foretells the massacre and some families leave. In the additions, Tin Dup is revealed to be a strong spiritual leader, a man of great standing within the tribe. Parry’s version has a Shoshone man escape by swimming with a buffalo robe on his back, which protects him as he escapes. In other versions, this man rides his horse between the Californians and the Shoshones, buffalo robe trailing behind his back, drawing fire to himself. He uses his spiritual power to escape unscathed as his buffalo robe protects him from his enemies’ bullets.

Each of these stories reveal the importance many Shoshones place on the spiritual power of their ancestors’ lifeways. These stories tie the Shoshones to the past. While the Shoshones have adapted, pulling aspects of white culture into their own society, they remember the importance of their identity as Shoshones. For the Shoshones, identity is not simply a term that makes them feel good about their ethnicity; it is a necessity for cultural survival. They must learn to survive within the context of two very different cultures. Speaking about one of his sons, Tom Pacheco (2006, 22 January) said, “He decided he actually had to live in two worlds and decide what he’s going to be. All my boys have done that.” The stories of the massacre help the Shoshones adjust to lives lived in two cultures.

Adjusting to life under colonialism is no simple task. Tom talks about his mother preparing him to deal with the expectations of many outsiders. “First day of kindergarten my mom stood me up on a stool. She was getting me ready, and she said ‘You’re going
into a world that people don’t like other people who are different.' And she said that ‘No matter what you do, it’ll never be good enough, and I want you to go do your very best’” (Pacheco 2006, 22 January). The Cache Valley Shoshones must live in a system that justifies itself in taking their land and relegating them to an inferior status. At the same time, they must acknowledge their own use of aspects of white culture. Stories aid in this. For example, Schramm spoke about the importance of the traditional prayers. “The Indians prayed, you know, that they would get some kind of help from our Lord, you know, and they’re praying for that. . . They were asking our Heavenly Father to help them, because they were starving” (Schramm et al. 2007). Clearly, Schramm sees no difference between her Native tradition and her Judeo-Christian beliefs about access to God. Both access the same deity. This belief, which is shared by most of my informants, helps them explain their adoption of beliefs outside their indigenous religious practices.

ADDITIONS

Allowing the Shoshones to have multiple versions prevents many events being passed by quickly or simply ignored. One good example of a recounting that requires other perspectives is Mae Parry’s entry “The Northwestern Shoshone” in Forrest Cuch’s *A History of Utah’s American Indians* (Parry 2000). Parry begins with a detailed explanation of traditional Shoshone culture on the plains. She skips all mention of contact with whites until the Bear River Massacre. Her version of history ends in the early 1970s. One must look to other viewpoints to fill in the gaps. These gaps gloss over or ignore important people in the massacre story.
I will begin with Tin Dup, an important Shoshone spiritual leader. Parry (1976, 233), devotes a paragraph to Tin Dup, who she describes as an “old man.” Tin Dup foresaw the massacre two days before its occurrence. He warned the people to leave, but only a handful of families headed his advice. Other Shoshones add dimension to this short version of Tin Dup provided by Parry. Parry makes no note of his standing in the tribe. She gives no indication as to why some families would follow him. The other accounts enrich our understanding. According to Tom, he was a Shoshone prophet (I have heard them refer to him as a prophet, a shaman, and a medicine man at various times. I chose the word prophet because that is the word my informants use most often [Pacheco 2005; Pacheco 2006, 22 January; Schramm et al. 2006]). Tin Dup held standing within the tribe because of his spiritual power. He was regularly called on regarding spiritual matters. He was well respected within the tribe, admired for his wisdom and power. Tin Dup’s dream demonstrates his spiritual power, and the fact that many followed him reflects his political power within the tribe. Unfortunately, Parry’s account focuses on Sagwitch as the tribal leader, leaving little room for other leaders, spiritual or political.

After the fighting had begun, one man donned his buffalo-skin robe and mounted his horse. He rode between the lines, back-and-forth, his robe flowing behind him. The soldiers, thinking him an easy target, expelled many rounds toward him. But while many of them were good aims, none of them were able to kill him. When he completed his ride and escaped, his buffalo robe did not have a single hole in it (Pacheco 2005; Pacheco 2006, 22 January; Schramm et al. 2006). In Parry’s version, he is only given a few lines.
She says, “Another man swam [across the river to escape] with his buffalo robe upon his back. The soldiers shot and shot at him but their bullets could not penetrate the buffalo robe” (Parry 1976, 234). His spiritual power was stronger than bullets. He was, in many ways, stronger than the army that has come to kill him and his people. He became a symbol of the power that the Shoshones maintain, even while they are under the control of another culture. The man with the buffalo robe is as invincible as the Shoshones themselves. The story is one of a man who could not be brought down by whites’ most powerful attempts at controlling the Shoshones. The story reinforces their identity as a group that continues to thrive in spite of foreign control of their people. The man with the buffalo-skin robe also reflects the spiritual power of the Shoshones’ indigenous religion, demonstrating that miracles are not exclusive to a Judeo-Christian religious tradition. It provides justification for those who continue to practice segments of their traditional religion.

Fleisher wondered why the story of the widespread rape at Bear River did not circulate more widely. Interestingly, none of the Shoshones I interviewed mentioned rape except as a passing reference. Violence against children, however, is a frequent theme of their stories. One especially heinous story, repeated by Elva (“Before You Were Here” 2006), describes the soldiers attempting to save ammunition by murdering the children without shooting them. Instead, she describes the soldiers picking up the children by their feet, swinging them around, and bashing their heads open against trees and rocks. “They’d grab these little children by the legs like a jackrabbit and then they’d hit their
heads on the ground” (“Before You Were Here” 2006). I have read Parry’s version so many times that it haunts my thoughts. Elva’s version makes me ill.

To me, one of the primary things that more voices add is details. Outsiders already know about women running to escape, but when another voice comes up and describes them hiding beneath foliage at the side of the creek, it becomes more real. More stories do not detract from the narrative, but they make it more real. Is that not, after all, one of the primary reasons they might have to share the story with non-Indians?

The appendix contains the transcripts of some of the Shoshones telling their stories. I refer the reader to this section to understand the power of experiencing the story in the Shoshone’s own words.

Some of the added stories are intensely personal. Elva’s grandfather’s mother was one of the massacre survivors. After being shot in the breast, she had her two little boys wrap their legs around her and she swam along the banks of the river with them. At times, she had to dive underneath the ice to progress (“Before You Were Here” 2006).

My great grandmother, my grandfather’s mother, was one of the survivors. How she survived is she just jumped into the river. She got shot in the breast and she thought she’d get killed there. But she just swam right down underneath that ice, she said. And went down along the banks as slowly and quietly as she could. . . She said she carried two little boys along the banks of the Bear River. That’s how she got away, she said. My great grandmother survived by swimming away along the banks. She said she laid there for the longest time. She thought she was going to freeze. Many native Americans know how to survive from things like that because they are taught that this is their land. They know how to survive in the elements, with their feet on the ground. This is how she survived. (“Before You Were Here” 2006)

Stories of the massacre came down in families, along with happier stories about the Shoshones’ ancestors. Elva told me that her great-grandmother always bore the scars
from the battle, and shared some humorous stories about her living with a damaged breast. The same night, she described how the wound pained her great-grandmother until her death (Schramm & Lamalinga 2006). While Parry (1976, 234) does mention Elva’s great-grandmother and mentions her wounds, Elva knew her in a more personal way. Because of this, she brings ancestor to life for us.

Additional stories also add to our information about fighting during the massacre and Bear Hunter. Since the Shoshones had expended all of their ammunition near the beginning of the battle, Bear Hunter was seated by the fire, frantically melting down what metal he could find into more bullets to use against the incoming army. While he was engaged in making bullets, he was captured by the troops and tortured to death (Pacheco 2005; Schramm & Lamalinga 2006).

The Shoshones also speak about the choice of location. While Parry (1976, 231-232) mentions the importance of the valley to physical survival during the cold winter months, other tellers mention the importance of the valley as a spiritual center. The healing power of that particular area of Cache Valley is part of why they were camped there when they were attacked (Neamon 1979, 5). The Shoshones believed that the hot springs held special spiritual power that could rejuvenate and heal them. Their camp in that area did take advantage of the warmth generated by the geothermal springs, but it also gave them a chance to re-center their spiritual lives and seek healing from physical ailments.

Most of these additions have to do with spiritual power. The added characters use their spiritual power to fight the troops, or die bravely, or ride between the lines without
receiving any wounds. It is clear that the Shoshones who told me these stories believe
them, and that they believe that there is spiritual power in the traditional lifeways their
ancestors enjoyed. When the power they gain from their indigenous traditions is coupled
with the spiritual power they gather from their contact with Judeo-Christian traditions,
the Shoshones remain a people who have a high regard for spiritual power and can utilize
it in their lives.

More than simple differences, my informants simply believe that the Parry
version of the story is "not correct" (Schramm et al. 2007). There are aspects of the story
that both sides claim. Parry told about one particular child.

Yeager Timbimboo told of feeling excited as any young boy would have
during the fighting. He felt as if he was flying around. He dashed in and
out among the whizzing bullets but was not hit. He heard cries of pain and
saw death all around him. The little Indian boy kept running around until
he came upon a little grass teepee that was so full of people that it was
actually moving along the ground. Inside the grass hut Da boo zee found
his grandmother, Que he gup. She
suggested they go outside and lie
among the dead. She feared the soldiers were going to set the teepee on
fire any moment. The boy obeyed and pretended to be dead. “Keep your
eyes closed at all times,” his grandmother whispered, “Maybe in this way
our lives may be saved.” Yeager Timbimboo and his grandmother lay on
the freezing battlefield all day. At the end of the day the soldiers were
moving among the Indians in search of the wounded to put them out of
their misery. Yeager, being a curious boy, wanted to watch the fighting
once more. This nearly cost him his life. A soldier came upon him and
saw that he was alive and looking around. The military man stood over
Yeager, his gun pointing at the young boy’s head ready to fire. The soldier
stared at the boy and the boy at the soldier. The second time the soldier
lowered his gun and a moment later raised it again. For some reason he
could not complete his task. He took his rifle down and walked away.
What went through this soldier’s mind will never be known. Perhaps a
power beyond our comprehension stopped this soldier from killing young
Yeager so that the story of this massacre could be written. Yeager
Timbimboo got the scolding of his young life. His grandmother reminded
him that he was supposed to remain motionless at all times, keep his eyes
closed and play dead. He had disobeyed and this had nearly cost him his life. (Parry 1976, 234-235)

Schramm and her sister, Darlene Taylor, disagree with the identity of the little boy, saying that he came from their family instead of Timbimboos. Schramm said:

That was my grandfather’s story. When the cavalry was pointing his gun at him, you know. That was our grandfather’s story... And it’s a shame to hear the Timbimboos speak and say “If it weren’t for that soldier, we would have never been here.”... Darlene wrote about that story in high school. (Schramm et al. 2007)

Susie Caldera summed up the complaint, saying that it was their story that had been taken (Schramm et al. 2007).

Elva summed up her knowledge of the massacre much better than I can. She said, “This is what happened to some of our family members... It’s been told to me since I was little. Then it went on from family to family” (“Before You Were Here” 2006). Tom heard the stories from his grandmother in much the same way (Pacheco 2006, 8 April). The stories will continue to circulate in those families, helping to cement their identities as Shoshones. Hopefully, they will begin to circulate among outsiders as well.

COMMONALITIES

Despite diverse, often bitter differences between Shoshone accounts, a remarkable amount of similarity remains. The Shoshones argue with one voice in protesting their innocence. Logically, the slaughter of innocent Shoshones is an atrocity, while a fight with those who were attacking whites could be claimed as an unfortunate cultural misunderstanding. My informants (Pacheco 2005; Schramm & Lamalinga 2006) place the blame for the attacks on immigrant trains squarely on the shoulders of Pocatello’s
band. Parry (1976, 232; 2000, 35) agrees. Even Pocatello’s band received some redemption for their attacks in the Shoshones’ stories.

When the Indians fought, it was more honorable than when the white man fought because the Indians were not savages. Because of the fact that the most honorable thing that you could do in a battle against your enemy was to ride up to him and slap him with your own hand. . . . Just touch him. Embarrass him in front of everybody. But you were able to walk up to him, touch him, and walk away unscathed. That was the biggest honor you could ever get. Killing somebody, you know, there was no honor in that because the fact that it was not personal. You never actually touched the person. . . . And the military, their idea is to kill the enemy outright at as far distance as possible. . . . That’s just not the Indians’ way. . . . It was never as brutal as what the white man brought. He taught them how to fight. And the sad part was that he couldn’t understand why the Indians were so brutal in return. (Pacheco 2006, 22 January)

All different clans of the Cache Valley Shoshones place the blame for the massacre back on the whites. All paint the massacre victims as innocent bystanders in a conflicted world.

Naturally, every Shoshone version of the massacre describes Connor as a villain. Brigham Madsen titled his biography of Connor Glory Hunter, demonstrating that even many whites view him as a power-hungry villain. The Shoshones are quick to point out that Connor’s mission was one of eradication, not punishment (“Before You Were Here” 2006; Pacheco 2005; Parry 2000, 35; Scramm et al. 2006).

Whites involved with the massacre described a series of bulwarks or foxholes that the Shoshones dug (Orton 1890, 9). The Shoshones unite with one voice in saying that these were children’s play areas. Parry points out that digging such elaborate bulwarks would be impossible, given the short time frame and the frozen ground (Parry 1976, 232).
Instead, both Parry (1976, 232; 2000, 36) and Pacheco (2005) say that they were dug by children over the course of several years as places to hide and play.

Neaman (1979, 1-2) said that the band’s fighting men were “depleted” due to the traditional practice of sending them to help other Shoshones in battle against other tribes, meaning that the massacred were “primarily the sick, aged, the young, and some wounded warriors” (Neaman 1979, 4). Pacheco (2005) and Schramm (“Before You Were Here” 2006; Schramm & Lamalinga 2006) say that the warrior-age males were absent from the camp because they were hunting deer. Parry (1976, 232) describes a Warm Dance that took place a few weeks before the Massacre, where many different tribes were together. In any of these situations, the Shoshones are united in saying that the massacre could have been worse than it was. More people could have been killed. Considering that it is one of the most heinous atrocities in U.S. history, this claim is significant.

The Indians ran out of ammunition within an hour of the beginning of the fighting. Perhaps this is why the fighting continued all day according to Parry (1976, 234) and Pacheco (2005), but only lasted one hour according to a white participant (Cache Valley 1929). He may only have counted time to the end of the period when both sides were effectively fighting, while the Indians may consider the duration of the entire massacre. It is important to note that a heavily fortified group would hardly run out of ammunition a mere hour into a battle (Pacheco 2005). Since the Shoshones ran out of ammunition quickly, they were almost certainly not prepared to engage foreign troops. Pacheco asks, “Can you tell me why they were still making bullets for their guns if they were armed to the teeth, ready for battle? All they had was a few muskets, traditional
bows, lances, their knives, rocks, sticks, and their bare hands” (“Before You Were Here” 2006).

Most significant among the commonalities is the simple fact that the event was a massacre. Curtis Warner, the descendant of Sagwitch who served as Kass Fleisher’s primary informant, worried that adding alternate versions of the massacre story would harm the significance of the event as an atrocity. He said, “We’re going to have tribal members within tribal members publishing information saying, ‘Sagwitch wasn’t nothing, the whole Bear River Massacre story was a crock.’ It’s going to look bad for us” (Fleisher 2004, 226). These commonalities demonstrate that the event’s status as a massacre should not be called into question simply because Shoshones disagree on the details.

SAGWITCH

Despite the similarities within the story itself, there are also many points of contention. All of these stem from Sagwitch. Many of those who are not descended from Sagwitch paint him as a villain at best, a complete outsider at worst. Those who are descended from him, the Timbimboo family (Mae Parry, in particular), believe that he was Bear Hunter’s successor and the leader of those who survived the massacre.

Bear Hunter, identified by Cache Valley LDS leader Peter Maughan as the “War Chief” of the Northwestern Shoshones, was a leader of the Cache Valley Shoshones. He was called Bear Hunter by the Indian agents, although Wirasuap, his Shoshone name, literally means “Bear Spirit.” Bear Hunter was as powerful as Washakie, which became apparent during meetings between the two near Bear Lake. Chief Bear Hunter “has not
received the historical recognition he deserves” (Madsen 1985, 7-8). In Parry’s “Massacre at Boa Ogoi,” she places Sagwitch and Bear Hunter as equals under Washakie’s leadership (1976, 233), making them co-leaders of the Band.

Once I was having a conversation with Elva Schramm, one of my most vocal informants. She was speaking about an event we had recently attended, and began to complain about Sagwitch, saying, “He ain’t no chief. Chief of the Timbimboos maybe.” I asked her what she meant, and she explained that each extended family had its own leader. Each family functioned as an autonomous unit within Shoshone society. She was adamant that Sagwitch was chief only of the Timbimboos, and the main leader was Bear Hunter. Bear Hunter was one of her relatives.

Claims that Sagwitch was the chief of the Shoshones persists within and outside scholarly circles. Scott Christensen, Sagwitch’s biographer, attempted to justify Sagwitch as permanent chief of the entire band. To do so, he cited primary sources that identified Sagwitch as the band’s chief. Bishop Nichols, one of the LDS leaders in the area in the late 1800s, identified Sagwitch as the chief (Christensen 1999, 32). A list of gifts presented to Shoshone chiefs lists Sagwitch among the chiefs who received gifts (Christensen 1999, 40). The warrants issued for Sagwitch’s arrest identified him as a tribal chief (Christensen 1999, 45). Settlers called him the chief (Christensen 1999, 61). Finally, Christensen says that Sagwitch became chief after the death of Bear Hunter. Any other leaders were simply dismissed as informal leaders. Christensen cites an interview with Parry, concluding that Sagwitch was “the last true chieftain of his people” (Christensen 1999, 241).
Christensen was not the first scholar to identify Sagwitch as a semi-permanent or permanent chief. Julian Steward, the anthropologist most noted for his study of the Shoshones, said that the Shoshones at each camp chose a chief to lead them through winter, because it was a time period when their location was especially stable. These chiefs retained their position as leaders until the Shoshones broke camp and went their separate ways. The next year, a different leader would be chosen. Sagwitch, according to Steward, kept his position as leader for for many years. Christensen hypothesizes that this may have been due to his abilities to lead the hunters to game and his ability to interact well with outsiders. Steward came to this conclusion based on interviews with some informants who had lived in Sagwitch’s band. In addition to Steward’s research, Christensen claims that Sagwitch was a semi-permanent chief based on family tradition. Sagwitch means “Orator,” a title that Mae Parry said Sagwitch earned due to his ability to persuade people to follow him. Parry says that Sagwitch “probably became their leader because of his use of words. He could reason with Indians and also tried to make the white man understand the Indian way” (Christensen 1999, 8-9). Christensen used the documents written by Sagwitch’s contemporaries to justify his claim: “Surviving documents show that government agents and Mormon settlers who interacted with Sagwitch considered him to be a chief of the Shoshone and negotiated with him on behalf of his people, apparently with their full sanction” (Christensen 1999, 9).

Note Christensen’s use of sources: He cited either Sagwitch’s descendants or non-Indians, who were likely to appoint their own chief to simplify dealings with Indians (Smoak 2007, 40-41). Christensen said “even in uncomplicated Shoshone society which
had little call for leadership, Sagwitch often functioned as a leader or chieftain” (Christensen 1999, 9), demonstrating that he realized that a permanent leadership position was unnecessary.

According to my informants (Pacheco 2005; Pacheco 2006, April 8; Schramm & Lamalinga 2006; Scramm et al. 2007), as Christensen was writing his book, the local Shoshones had a meeting. They told him that he was being fed misinformation, and that many did not believe Sagwitch had held the leadership role his descendants and his white contemporaries assigned him. Christensen obviously believed the Timbimboo version of the story, since he included frequent justifications to his claim that Sagwitch was the leader.

Claims of chiefhood, especially those relying on white outsider accounts, are troublesome when viewed in light of the historical record. Smoak explains that Shoshone concepts of political leadership were “dynamic and individualistic” (2007, 40). Europeans expected strong, stable leaders who enforced societal rules. However, the Shoshones did not have leadership of this nature. Instead, “the bands evident in the mid-nineteenth century coalesced around able leaders of cooperative endeavors—the talkers of *dai'gwhanee* in the Shoshone dialect of Fort Hall—be it salmon fishing, pine nut harvests, or buffalo hunts” (Smoak 2007, 40). The ability to mediate between the desires of various members of the bands was one of a leader’s most necessary skills. Leaders had to negotiate within the band and with other bands for land and resources. As the United States expanded into Shoshone territory, these informal leaders often became the representatives who interacted with the Euroamericans. The non-Indians assumed they
were head chiefs, people with permanent and immutable power, instead of simply people
gifted at intercultural interaction. The whites believed that they had power to force their
people to follow them, and that they had power to speak for the entire tribe. Instead, they
did not rule by force, but by persuasion; and they only spoke for those who believed as
they did (2007, 40-41). Even Washakie himself, leader of a very large group of
Shoshones, was in a position where he stood to lose the trust that brought him to power
(Evans 1938, 31-38).

Coming from a society as hierarchical as the United States, where the president
and Congress held the power to make treaties between nations, most people certainly
expected (and many continue to expect) a similar top-down political structure. Instead of
understanding the difference in power structure, white Americans often simply assumed
that someone was the chief and treated that person accordingly. Sagwitch was likely a
great orator, and the record shows that he held many conferences with white people, who
would naturally assume he was in charge. But, looking at it from a Shoshone viewpoint,
this would not have given him power to make decisions for people who made decisions
for themselves. Therefore, the white record calls the existence of chiefs into question,
and especially fails as adequate evidence that Sagwitch was the sole chief. My
informants, however, do not claim that Sagwitch was merely not their chief. The oral
tradition maintains that he was half Ute, half white. They call him a “renegade” (Pacheco
2005, Schramm et al. 2007).

At first glance, one may be tempted to simply dismiss my informants’ claims
regarding Sagwitch as rumor. Rumors, though, reveal much about a culture’s underlying
motivations and fears. Additionally, I would argue that outsiders lack the right to decide the correctness or inaccuracy of another culture’s oral histories. Furthermore, the role of chief in the Northwestern Band’s social structure was a fluid position. And, while one could argue that Sagwitch was not a chief in the sense that many use the word, there is another explanation that also fits both oral and written history. Sagwitch could have been chief of only part of the band.

Mormon settlements were rapidly absorbing the Shoshones’ traditional land, which had the misfortune of being placed in the main corridor of LDS settlements (Madsen 1985, 6). Logically, Indians displaced by white settlements had to find other places to camp. The Shoshones who were arranged in a band organization retained a flexible political organization. Shoshones, both as individuals and in family groups, had the freedom to move between bands freely. The leadership of the band was as flexible as the members, moving from one person to another as occasion required. Leaders regarded themselves as equals. Chiefs came about because the white men expected a central leader with whom to interact. “White explorers and trappers identified (and, where necessary, appointed) Indian chiefs for the Shoshoni although the Indians generally remained somewhat unimpressed by the imposition of such a foreign arrangement” (Wells 1980, 19).

Since the natural organization of the tribe revolved around separate but flexible groups, family groups displaced by settlers could easily find quarters with other families in the band. As more foreigners settled the Intermountain West, extended family groups who previously had limited contact were forced to camp together. Such coming together
of separate groups was not unusual with Shoshone society (Pacheco 2005; Parry 2000, 33-34).

The Shoshone camp that Connor massacred was one such camp. Parry (2000, 33) confirms that the camp was a gathering of many different branches of Shoshones. Their intention was to perform a Warm Dance to bring the Spring, a season that many participants never lived to see. It is possible that the ancestors of my informants and the relatives of Sagwitch were simply members of different groups who were unfortunate enough to live through the same heinous event. If that is the case, then they have been forced together by fate, and Sagwitch really was not the leader of my informants’ ancestors. Julian Steward identified “Segwite” (Sagwitch) as the head of the winter camp at Tongicavo. This Shoshone camp sits west of the Promotory Mountains near Mount Tarpey. Sagwitch repeated his role as the winter chief in way that was “more constant than was traditional among the Shoshone” (Christensen 1999, 8). Even if Sagwitch was a semi-permanent chief, it was not among the Shoshones who regularly wintered at the massacre site, but among the Shoshones many miles southwest. This may have contributed to the oral histories that claim he was a Ute, since the Utes lived to the south of the Shoshones.

Curiously absent from Parry’s account, and my informants’ accounts, is the fate of Sanpitch, who, along with Bear Hunter and Sagwitch, were listed in Connor’s warrant. When expressly asked, Tom and Elva, my two principle informants, both said that all the other Shoshone chiefs were murdered in the massacre.
The fact that Sagwitch escaped from the massacre provides many of the Shoshones an opportunity to criticize him. While Parry (1976, 234) claims that he left because “the Indians which were still alive were calling to their chief to escape so he could be saved,” others view his retreat as an act of great cowardice. They compare him with Bear Hunter, who met his fate without leaving or showing signs of fear. In Shoshone tradition, the ability to endure terrible pain without flinching was a sign of his power. “The acquisition and use of spiritual power or supernatural strength—bo’ha or puha in various Numic dialects—was at the center of Newe spiritual life” (Smoak 2007, 39). Bear Hunter certainly demonstrated supernatural strength at the time of his death.

The negative reactions of my informants and their families regarding Sagwitch have been colored by 150 years of history, meaning that later actions of one group may have served to alienate the other. Lee Neaman (1979) reports that the Shoshones were “ordered by their white bishop to attend this degrading ceremony [to dedicate the 1938 “Battle of Bear River” monument] in their full regalia.” The monument describes how the brave, peace-loving pioneers finally defeated the Indians who brutally attacked them (Barnes 2004, 3-4). Since the bishop in question was Joseph Parry (Mae’s ancestor), his actions may have incited some of the negativity that my informants’ families show toward Sagwitch.

Whatever side one chooses to believe in, or whether one opts instead to mesh the versions together, both stories are effective in supporting the storyteller’s viewpoints. Parry has been taught by her ancestors that Sagwitch was a great leader, a wonderful man who left at the request of his loyal followers. Pacheco received a different account from
his mother, who saw Sagwitch as a coward. Both accounts have passed through
generations interested in protecting their family legacies.

Was Sagwitch a hero or a renegade? Such binary questions nullify the importance
of having more than one tribal spokesperson. There are simply too many divergent
points-of-view. Looked at one way, he saved his people from the incoming settlers,
paving the way for many of them to thrive in a world controlled by outsiders. A different
perspective on the same actions reveals a person who irrevocably altered his people's
culture, giving their future over to the outsiders who would ultimately control their
destiny. For now, Sagwitch will remain an enigma to some of his own people, and to
those outside the Shoshones. Examination of Sagwitch from multiple perspectives
remains a fruitful pursuit because it enriches the understanding that outsiders have
regarding the band, demonstrating how complex the interactions are within the Cache
Valley Shoshones.

INTRATRIBE CONTENTION AND ORAL HISTORY

Both factions are well aware of the arguments the others make against their
versions of history. Each side has their own version of why the others tell different
stories. My informants feel the others have managed the tribe poorly. Curtis Warner of
the Timbimboo family said that much of the intratribal contention stems from jealousy
within the tribe (Fleisher 2004, 226). Jealousy means that one group desires what the
others have. Those who argue with Timbimboos do, in fact, desire greater political
control within the tribe. This, though, can hardly be held against them since the tribe
governs their housing and health care – items important enough to make most individuals wish they could maintain control of them.

One might argue that the Timbimoo version is established history. However, one cannot claim that the Timbimboo version of events is in any way ancient – Parry first put it on paper in the late 1970s, over one-hundred years after the events it describes. Her version, currently accepted as the authentic one, has gone through all the changes inherent in oral history, just as those of my informants have. Outsiders cannot simply decide that one is correct merely because white people heard it first. Such a stance mirrors the ethnocentricity that has plagued Indian/white relations since they began.

Why is there so much animosity between the groups? I hope the reader is convinced that it is more than a simple matter of declaring one correct or labeling the other as jealous. The stories, as they have been passed down through the generations, have been colored by the ongoing political strife within the tribe. They will continue to be affected, pulling the tribal factions away from each other, until the underlying contention is resolved. The reader should also note that the importance of family groups continues on even today. The stories have been passed down in families, the band divides itself according to families. Everything the tribe continues to revolve around family groups, much as it did one-hundred-and-fifty years ago.

Power, political and academic, certainly influences both stories. My informants would like more, and the Timbimboos would like to preserve what they have. When the Timbimboos are contacted concerning tribal history, they identify themselves as descendants of Chief Sagwitch, using this tie to justify their positions as authentic
interpreters of tribal history. For example, an article in the *Deseret News* dated April 12, 1999, expresses concern that a dam along the Bear River would threaten the Washakie cemetery. Patty Timbimboo is cited in the article, not as a cultural resource contact person, but as the "great-great-granddaughter of Shoshone Chief Sagwitch." This trend continues: A September 14, 2007 article cites two descendants of Sagwitch and none of other ancestry. Certainly this trend would grate on the nerves of those who share a common history; especially when their contributions to that history are dismissed as illegitimate or unimportant.

The critique of the Timbimboos is certainly an attempt to increase power. As I mentioned earlier, they maintain that Sagwitch was not a Shoshone at all, but a Ute. One in particular has worked tirelessly in an attempt to prove this hypothesis with an outside record. She has been unsuccessful. Others heard that the Timbimboos are not as full-blooded as they claimed to be. On one occasion, I rode down to Salt Lake with one of them to search through the old Shoshone censuses and see how much blood each of the members had. I disagreed with the project then, and I do now. Pushing someone away because they lack a sufficient percentage of blood seems wrong to me. "What will happen in a few short generations, when there are no Shoshones left?" I asked. The answers vary. Still, I went with her, trying to convince her the whole way that we probably would not find what she intended to find. I was sure the rumors were false. We arrived, and I pulled up the necessary document. Contrary to what I expected, we found that the blood quantum reported historically does not match that reported presently.
The significance of this event lies not in what we found, but the fact that they hoped to find it at all. It is an argument, an ongoing struggle for power, and it has become important enough to make many of my informants to wish for a more exclusionary version of the word Shoshone. Others, like Tom, are pragmatists, who recognize that the tribe will eventually die out under their rule, which currently demands at least 1/8 of their blood be indigenous.

Along with political power, the stories are related to financial power. Many within the tribe believe that the Timbimboo family has received financial windfalls from their version of the story, especially regarding the relationship between the Park Service and the tribe. Some Bannocks have begun to claim that they were present at the massacre (although they have probably claimed this for years since Parry expressly countered it in her 1976 version of the story [238]). Many within the tribe feel that these claims are attempts to acquire money (Fleisher 2004, 226).

Authenticity is another significant issue among the Shoshones. Not only do many of the anti-Sagwitch group disagree with the facts that others purport about their tribe, but they disagree with those items being discussed with outsiders at all. I do not refer to tales of the massacre, but other aspects of Shoshone folk tradition, like certain rituals and ceremonies. I saw the authenticity battle firsthand. In late January 2006, I took my wife and children up to participate in the massacre commemoration. There, Tom and his wife, Ronda, introduced us to many other members of the tribe. They began with a program reminiscent of an old-time testimony meeting, with whoever wished to going up in turn and sharing their thoughts on the massacre. In line with the tradition at Mormon
sacrament meetings, they each finished their comments “in the name of Jesus Christ, amen,” evidence of the blending of cultures. Elva stood and told them that it was time that everyone’s story was told. “You told your family’s story,” she says, “and I’m glad for you. But now it’s time for the rest of us to share our stories.”

Issues of authenticity become complicated further by outsiders interested in co-opting sacred aspects of Shoshone culture. Shaun Chee said, “These people, these wannabees, don’t understand” (Schramm et al. 2007). On the same topic, Darlene Taylor said, “People just don’t understand what they’re doing or saying” (Schramm et al. 2007). Authenticity brings outsiders who take aspects of Shoshone culture they don’t understand and apply them in ways that violate their sacredness. The Shoshones are faced with trying to teach their children the importance of their traditions, while sharing their story more fully with whites, while not allowing those who would misuse sacred things to take them. It is an ongoing problem without an easy solution.

Unfortunately, I have sometimes felt as if my informants expected me to lend authenticity to them, or to somehow judge whether they were deserving of it. Since most scholars and journalists ask Mae Parry, Helen Timbimboo, and their relatives for information on the Shoshones, those research communities lend an air of authority to them. A relationship where an outsider is asked to evaluate authenticity is not rare in indigenous communities. “‘Authorities’ and outside experts are often called in to verify, comment upon, and give judgements about the validity of indigenous claims to cultural beliefs, values, ways of knowing and historical account” (Smith 2006, 72).
Along with authenticity issues, spiritual issues come into play. Often, these issues concern whether one can access God through traditional Shoshone practices or through the LDS Church, and to what degree each plays a role in personal spirituality. “The firm belief of the Shoshone is that the Great Spirit resided in North Utah, where many religious and sacred ceremonies were conducted” (Neaman 1979, 1).

Aside from other spiritual and political leaders, the Cache Valley Shoshones’ LDS bishop at Washakie became a significant spiritual force within the tribe. One bishop would eventually marry into the tribe. Mae Parry is a descendant of the Washakie bishop who insisted the Cache Valley Shoshones attend the dedication of the hated monument at the massacre grounds (Neaman 1979). Perhaps some of the anger many of the Shoshones continue to feel toward the Timbimboos stems from these early orders from their bishop, as I mentioned earlier.

Additionally, their LDS bishop repeatedly instructed them to avoid using any of their indigenous rituals (Schramm et al. 2007). The members of his family no doubt complied with such an order. Others, however, rebelled against it, maintaining many of the rituals from their ancestors. A review of the additions to the Timbimboo-Parry account shows that most of the additions are spiritual. Tin Dup the prophet, the individual who was saved by a buffalo robe, and the role in the church of the seizure of Washakie all receive a more full treatment in other families’ stories. Ray Diamond, cited by Parry only as “a nephew of Chief Sagwitch” (Parry 1976, 234), becomes a spiritual leader in other stories. Elva Schramm tells about Diamond blessing the soldiers who left Washakie to serve during World War II. He blessed them that they would not be killed by
enemy bullets and that they would be able to save those around them because of this protection ("Before You Were Here" 2006). He is an individual who retains spiritual power, and thus becomes a strong leader among the Shoshones at Washakie. Adding more oral histories fleshes him out as a historical character.

FUNCTIONS OF THE MASSACRE STORY

Even if the contention within the tribe continues, I think it unlikely that the stories will completely sever the intratribal ties the descendants have. The massacre remains an important part of Shoshone ethnic identity. Every year, many tribespeople visit the massacre site to mourn their lost ancestors on the anniversary of their deaths. Those who do not attend are intimately aware of the date and the importance of keeping the memory of the event alive.

One function of the massacre story within the tribe is to identify those who are truly members. Mae Parry’s version ends by talking about the monument at the massacre site and saying what she thinks it ought to read. She ends with the words "No Bannocks were present, only Northwestern Shoshone of the Great Shoshone Nation" (Parry 1976, 238). She could have said that those whose ancestors survived the massacre are one group of Shoshones, and those who did not are another. One can read her pride at being a Northwestern Shoshone in these words. While they may have been barely unified by political factors before the massacre, surviving the massacre together as a group unified them, welded them together into a unit. Their overall stories function to unify them. They made it; they are survivors. As a people, they lived through the massacre, they survived having their land removed, and they will survive whatever challenge awaits
them now. Lori Pacheco, Tom's daughter, said, "Those are the stories that make us who we are. They remind us where we come from" ("Before You Were Here" 2006).

The Shoshones who settled at Washakie suffer from appearing to be a little too much like area whites. Madsen (1980, 13) said they "became absorbed into the neighboring white population during the years after World War II." One might assume from this statement that they have completely abandoned all of their native ways and have become virtually indistinguishable from those who settled their lands over a century ago. On the surface, this may appear to be the case. They work among the local whites, they eat what their white neighbors eat (with the addition of frybread), and they participate in religious ceremonies with the neighboring whites. However, a short conversation is all it takes to discover that they retain a distinct and valuable cultural identity. Telling about the massacre does more than simply impart historical knowledge to the listener. It shows the teller is a member of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, a group that continues to thrive today. Only members can truly claim that their ancestors were at the battle, and so inclusion into the group of tellers includes inclusion into the tribe. They are not simply people who ceased to exist: the fact that the story continues to circulate shows that they retain a unique ethnic identity.
CHAPTER 4
CONCLUSION

People need to accept the fact that Indians do not, and should not, speak with one voice. For years, Mae Parry acted as informal spokesperson for the Shoshones. Curtis Warner, a relative of Parry’s, said:

“But the fact of it is, I told every one of them, ‘If you guys want to be a Mae Parry, I can get plenty of people that would be willing to come and talk to you and take down everything you say.’” *There is not storyteller for the Bear Hunter family, and consequently the story hasn’t been heard much outside the tribe, he says.* (Fleisher 2004, 226, emphasis added)

There is not one spokesperson for the tribe. There should not be. Likewise, outsiders should listen to every descendant of Bear Hunter who chooses to speak, not attempt to force them to choose a single spokesperson. Wishing for a single person to speak for others smacks of colonialism. Furthermore, my informants have tried to tell their stories. They have told it to newspaper reporters who only selected certain quotes. They have told it to documentary filmmakers who expunged sections they felt were important. They have told it to scholars who visited tribal meetings. They remain willing to speak, they are ready to speak, and when they are asked they will choose to speak. But they will not pretend they speak for the entire tribe, because they do not. They speak only for themselves. Outsiders should not throw either version out altogether simply because it may have changed over the years. A story that contains some embellishments is certainly worth more than no story at all. It is better to have many different tellings.

Perhaps most importantly, the event remains a massacre. While the perpetrators were proud of their dubious accomplishment, their own words reveal that they ruthlessly
slaughtered men, women and children. Adding voices to those who already speak for the dead only serves to increase the surety that the event was, in fact, a massacre instead of a battle.

In court, multiple witnesses serve to confirm an event’s validity: If many reputable sources come together, the judge is more likely to believe their version of events. People tend to believe things when they hear it from more sources. While the minor aspects of the story will always differ from person to person simply because each person’s experience and viewpoint differs, the story that spreads over the event itself becomes more clear.

Sagwitch may not have been as high-ranking as some of his descendants believe, but that does not diminish him as their ancestor. It only leaves room for the ancestors of others to come forward and be recognized as heroes alongside him. He can be the leader of the Timbimboo clan, the man who lead them through the darkest period in their history. But outsiders must allow others to come forward also, the leaders of their clans, to claim their true status as heroes in the history of the Cache Valley Shoshones. Bear Hunter, first and foremost, deserves the designation of Shoshone hero. He fought bravely, ultimately giving his life for a cause he believed in. One can hope for no better hero than the one who dies so bravely that the echoes of his death inspire bravery in his still-living band.

Too often, outsiders expect our indigenous American neighbors to speak with one voice, reminiscent of the old Western movies when the Great Chief came and spoke with the whites. Just as the existence of a single spokesperson was a historical legend, the
existence of a single modern spokesperson remains a myth. Outsiders need to move from
discussing "the Northwestern Shoshone account of Bear River, written by Mae Parry"
(Barnes 2004, 25, emphasis added), to discussing "the Shoshones' accounts of Bear
River." When one seeks to understand how an event affected a people, one needs to seek
opinions from people of multiple bloodlines in understanding the past. Surely outsiders
can accept more than one viewpoint of the past. "To hold alternative histories is to hold
alternative knowledges" (Smith 2006, 34).

While the oral traditions among the living Shoshonean descendants of the
massacre victims vary, they have much in common. Especially important among these
commonalities are the protests of Shoshone innocence, the lack of preparation for a
battle, the absence of the full number of Shoshone people, and especially the identity of
the event as a massacre. These commonalities bind the living Shoshones together, giving
them a group identity that helps them continue to thrive as a distinct cultural group
despite their loss of their traditional homelands.

The divergent aspects of the stories also reveal much about the modern Shoshone.
While they share many importance aspects of their identity, there are differences within
the tribe. Many of these differences reflect the varied access to political power in tribal
government. Many of them also reveal the feelings different groups of Shoshones hold
regarding traditional Native spirituality. While some Shoshones have completely
abandoned their ancestors' faith in favor of a Judeo-Christian tradition, others retain
aspects of their traditional beliefs, pulling spiritual power from multiple sources. Their
stories reflect their feelings and opinions, revealing a depth of cultural complexity that is often overlooked by their white neighbors.

Both the differences and the similarities help the Shoshones hold on to varying versions of their historical identity. They are able to keep aspects of their traditional culture while absorbing aspects of the powerful cultures around them. The stories help them adjust to their lives, enabling them to choose aspects of culture that will help them continue as a viable people for generations to come.
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——. 2006. Unrecorded interview by author, 8 April, Weber State University Powwow, Ogden, Utah.


Schramm, Elva, Tom Pacheco, Ronda Pacheco, Susan Caldera, Shaun Chee, and Darlene Taylor. 2007. Interview by author, 3 August, Brigham City, Utah. Digital recording. Author's personal collection.


CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF INTERVIEWS

5 November 2005, Brigham City, Utah
Recorded formal interview with Tom Pacheco

3 December 2005, Brigham City, Utah
Unrecorded interview with Tom Pacheco at the opening of Shoshone photo exhibit at Brigham City Museum-Gallery

5 December 2005, Brigham City, Utah
Unrecorded interview with Tom Pacheco, while filling helium balloons at the opening of the Subway in Brigham City’s Walmart

17 December 2005
Phone Interview with Hal Reeder, former teacher at Intermountain Indian School

22 January 2006, Brigham City, Utah
Recorded formal interview with Tom Pacheco

30 January 2006, Bear River Massacre Site, near Preston, Idaho
Separate conversations/unrecorded interviews with Elva Schramm, Enid Lamalinga, Tom Pacheco, Aaron Pacheco, Rios Pacheco, Susan Caldera, Bruce Parry, and Leland Pupigee.

March 2006, Brigham City, Utah
Conversations during beadworking class with Rios Pacheco, Ronda Pacheco, and Geneva Alex.

8 April 2006, Ogden, Utah
Unrecorded interview with Tom Pacheco at Weber State University’s annual pow-wow

21 April 2006, Logan, Utah
Conversation with Elva Schramm & Enid Lamalinga following “Before You Were Here” Storytelling festival.

27 May 2006, Washakie Cemetery, Washakie, Utah
Conversations with Rios Pacheco, Tom Pacheco, and others while cleaning graves

August 2006
Phone interview with Elva Schramm

September 2006, Tribal Office, Brigham City, Utah
Unrecorded interview with Lori Pacheco and others while making dresses for Peach Days

19 September 2006
Conclusion of back-and-forth e-mail interview with Tom Pacheco
October 2006, December 2006, September 2007
Tom Pacheco told the story of the massacre as a guest speaker in my history classes

21 November 2006
Interview with Tom Pacheco over MSN Messenger

December 2006
Phone interview with Elva Schramm

3 August 2007, Brigham City, Utah
Recorded formal interview with Elva Schramm, Tom Pacheco, Ronda Pacheco, Susan Caldera, Shaun Chee, and Darlene Taylor

These do not include most of the countless phone calls, e-mails, instant messages, and other short conversations for which I am indebted to my informants.
Transcription of “Before You Were Here,” a storytelling festival I helped organize as a graduate student.

Lori Pacheco:

Good evening, sorry for our tardiness. The traffic was not good. My name is Lori Pacheco. I am from the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation. I have had the privilege of growing up in Brigham City all of my life. Living within the community and the environment that day to day people are very accustomed to. I lived in a home, not a teepee. I started attending Weber State college a few years ago and I had a little girl, she wanted a pen pal. She started writing several others in the university. That was one of her first questions to me—she wanted to know how many sticks was in my teepee. And if I had bugs that would crawl on me at night. I find it very interesting, and this was in 1996 even then, the lack of understanding that we have of the history, where we evolved from and where we are going. It’s still very, there’s a huge gap in it.

We want to thank Aaron, and the students and the university and the professor that has allowed this to come to the university. I am now a student of Utah State trying to finish my degree. I haven’t been on campus in a long time. I am doing it through the extension in Brigham City.

We are very excited to come up and listen and share. We have two other elders who are supposed to be coming up from our tribe. We do this kind of in a generational thing. Stories are taught to the young kids, then they are passed from them on up. Everybody has a story. You have a story, I have a story, my son will have a story. Those are the stories that make us who we are. They remind us where we come from.
Tonight, to start off, I would like to introduce my father, Tom Pacheco. He has many great stories to share. There are so many and lots of them, you know when you grow up you say, “Oh my gosh, I wish I would have remembered that.” So it is always exciting for me to hear them. He has a great deal of experience from past and present and also within the tribal governments and how they run. Tonight I’m going to turn the time over to him to let him start the meeting that is going to go on tonight. Thank you for having us.

Tom Pacheco:

I’m not a great speaker, I’ve always said that. Train of thoughts kind of go from one thing to another. Like my daughter said, we have many stories. The stories she tells are more of a modern type of a story. I was one of the lucky few to that actually grew up in Washakie, an all Indian community that came as a result of the Bear River Massacre in 1863. There were approximately 400 they say, 450 that were killed that day.

I don’t know how many of you know the story, have read the story or have been told the story. It’s like any other type of history lesson. I take the history lesson to the junior high in Brigham City. I have a group of kids, probably about as big as this [holds hand about chest height] and I talk to them. I talk all day long to each one of the history classes. I tell them the story. I ask them a question. When I do that, I bring artifacts with me. I ask the boys questions that pertain to the boys and questions that pertain to the girls. The answers that I get are pretty astounding. A lot of them don’t know what we have in our hand. Like the one time, I brought a round rock. It was very smooth, it was oblong.
There was another one, it was the same size, but a little rougher. I asked the girls, this is a question for the girls, I said, “What is this?” These girls looked at me and goes “a rock.” I go, “Okay, other than a rock, what is it?” They sit there and you can just see their minds are acting up. There eyes are going from one to another. They don’t know what it it. I say, “It is the very first food processor.” They get this dumb look on their face. I said the round one, the smooth one, you use to pound your dear meat, elk meat, whatever, and they get kind of a powder with it. The other one, rough one, you ground your grain with it, your corn. You can just see the lights go on, they know what I’m talking about then.

I show a cradle board and I ask them what that is. You’d be astounded, they don’ t know. I tell them, “It’s the very first car seat.” They look at me I say, you take a piece of leather, attach it to your back, then you can get on the saddle of the horse, and it is a car seat. It’s very practical from what we talked about, and yet, they don’t know what it is. We talk about the food, the diet, the medicine. I’ve seen it, myself. My grandmother took a grocery bag and was gone for hours one day. She came back and the grocery bag was just filled with weeds. I was trying to figure out what she’d gone out to go pick weeds for. I was just a little guy, four or five when she did this. I couldn’t figure out why my grandmother would go out with a bag, get these weeds and bring them home, when I could go outside and get them. Come to find out she was making medicine. She knew how to make a cold medicine. And I’ll tell you, you think medicine tastes bad, today? Not even close, not even close. And that was when it was hot. Like a hot tea. Well, when you got done with it, she put it in a Mason jar and put it in the fridge. And it was
even worse when it was cold. and you had to drink a whole quart jar. That’s something I
don’t want to do again, but it works, it definitely does work.

The history that happened here in this valley. A lot of the people that I know
about, you won’t find it in the history books. I’ve taken it as far as when Governor
Leavitt, was in office. We asked him, and along with the the state legislature, “Why don’t
we have any history in the books?” And that was in 1994, the first time I went to see the
governor and the legislature and it’s still not in the books.

When I talk to the kids, I tell them history is written by those who conquered the
people that were here. They will tell you who you are, what you are and where you’re
going. You hear the fact throughout the history books that were written. You hear the
strong people who fell and it’s not exactly the same.

I had the fortunate experience of growing up with an Indian grandma. As a young
child, she would sit me down almost every evening and she would repeat to me story of
the Bear River Massacre. I couldn’t figure out why she would tell the same story over
and over, as a young child. I wanted to hear something else. She would always make
sure we heard that one story. At least one, and remind us of every other one. She always
said, “Remember this.” I could never figure out why I should remember the same story
over and over. But, come to find out I grew up and learned later in life, there are different
versions of the same story, even amongst our own tribal members there are different
versions of the same story.

We get mentions of a man by the name of they called Sagwitch. He was supposed
to be our leader and our chief. Everybody knows in the tribe, the stories I was told, he
wasn’t. It’s a controversy today. Because the fact that, think of all the great warrior
chiefs throughout history. I” talking about Sitting Bull, Red Cloud, and others like those
gentlemen. They did not go out and make war. They went out and protected their
people. They protected the young people, the old people. That was not their objective, to
go out and make war. Although Hollywood has made that a very good story line and you
know who always the bad guy is. I never could figure out how come all the winners were
all these white cowboys or soldiers. But then, history’s not written the same way,
because it doesn’t make money.

History happens to be one of the worst subjects I had in school. I hated history.
But, as I grew up, I met two older gentlemen. We just happened to talk about something
from history I read in a book. I asked them about it, because those two guys were there.
I asked them, did this really happen this way? They looked and me and went, “No. This
is what we saw, this is what happened then.” And I said, “Well, it’s written in the history
book and history books are supposed to be written correctly, aren’t they?” They went,
“Well, that’s their version.” That’s when my curiosity got the best of me. I started
looking for the other side of the story. Because one question I always ask the kids is
“Have you ever gotten in trouble because of something that somebody said happened and
you just happened to be there?” and about 75% of the hands go up. I said, “What
happened? Did you get punished for it?” And they go, “Well, yeah.” “Did you get a
chance to explain your side of the story?” They said, “Yeah.” I said, “Then what
happened?” They said things changed. “They saw that I didn’t do it.” I said, “Okay,
now you know what the Indian version is. There are always two sides to every story.
Good, bad or indifferent.” I said, “Always make sure you get both sides of the story before you come away with in kind of an opinion.”

The opinions we get, like I said are written by those who conquered.

I went head to head with a professor from the University of Utah. We had a meeting in Salt Lake and he started to tell me about my people and the massacre. You can go down to the museum there and see the same thing talked about. He talked about how Colonel Patrick Connor marched his men from Salt Lake City all the way up to the Preston area. It was January, and everybody knows how much snow you get in January, especially back then. It was probably down in the 20s maybe. This part of the story, I just found out a couple years back. My wife’s family, who lived in Honeyville, actually helped Colonel Conner with his troops who got sick or frostbite. They stopped at their farm in Honeyville. I turned and looked over at her and go “Is that right?” She said “Yeah, that’s what they say. It’s written in the history book of Box Elder County.” I thought, Well, that’s great. You’ve got to get really [unintelligible] It’s funny, how our two families got intertwined before anything ever happened. Before this valley was ever really settled.

These kids, I ask them if they like history, they say no. “Do you ever really read it, find out what it’s all about? Because it’s going to surprise you.” That really surprised me. That our two families met hundreds of years ago.

That story is [unintelligible]

I went farther into the history around that area at that time. They said that Colonel Conner was out to get the Indians, to put an uprising down, to control the Indians. I
asked him, “Why didn’t he?” He said, “Well they did, because that tribe was Shoshone.” I said, “No no no, before that. Why didn’t he?” He goes, “What to you mean?” I said “About two weeks before that there were thousands of Indians in the same area. If he wanted to take care of the problem, they were there, why didn’t he do it?” The professor had no answer. I asked him, “Is that the actual army report that they had given him.” He said yes. I said, “In that report it says that approximately 29 US troops died that day, right?” He said, “Yes.” I said, “18 of those were not battle inflicted, were they?” He said no. They died of exposure, frostbite, they froze when they crossed the river. Just the remaining few that died of their wounds or were outright killed in the battle. I said, “Just how many were killed on the Indian side?” He said, “They really don’t know for sure, approximately 400, they say up to 450.” When he told me that, I said, “I read your article, in the basement. The thing the army did. Said they were totally ready for battle, armed to the teeth. Can you tell me why they were still making bullets for their guns if they were armed to the teeth, ready for battle? All they had was a few muskets, traditional bows, lances, their knives, rocks, sticks, and their bare hands.” That’s the way they went down. There are stories that float around, even through our families of certain individuals that just happened to survive that fight. When the professor asked me where I got my information from, I said, “I got it from the source.” He said, “What do you mean?” I said, “My family was there, they are survivors of this battle.” He looked at me and just sat down. He didn’t say another word for the rest of the conference. So, even he didn’t have all of his story straight. He didn’t research like he should have. That’s what happens when history is written by one culture over another.
We have grown along with this society, [unintelligible] Does anybody have any idea how many Indians are up and down the Wasatch front? Wild guess? 5 thousand? 10? There are 35,000 Indians up and down the Wasatch front. You don't see them, do you? We're still here. Now, I'm kind of like the bridge between the old and the new. We have people here that know more than I do about what happened, because they were here a little longer than I have been. I'll leave the time to them.

Elva Schramm:

Hello everybody, my name is Elva Shramm. My last name is German. [unintelligible] I come from one of the survivors of the ones that were in that massacre. I just got into a car accident about a month ago. I have a fractured pelvis, that's what they told me. I have to sit down, I can't stand for long.

What Mr. Pacheco has said to you is really true. There are so many in our families that survived the massacre. [unintelligible] Our tribal members liked to travel in families. Families travelling together. Sometimes they're left. What they do is search for food. It's just our way. "Shoshone" means in English "belly-dwellers". That's what the Shoshone word means. That's why everybody goes in certain times to certain areas. The Shoshone, there are some that are called buffalo-eaters, salmon-eaters, that's because they go in different areas. So we're not known as just Shoshone. We're named for where we travelled and where we settled.

The reason why we picked Preston is because there was a hot springs there. During the winter time, a lot of the old people liked to be around where it's warm. And that's what they had. Because of the spring water, the hot springs, that's why they settled
there for the winter. Because there was plenty of food, you know. They hunted for deer, it was there. Everything was there for them. Mostly, the older people and the young children and the wives are the ones that stayed in that camp at the time when this all happened. Most of the men were gone from the village, the camp. This is why when Conner arrived there, he killed most of the women, the babies, the little children. They weren’t prepared for any war at all. They were there for, this is their land. This is where they lived. This is their home. That’s what they called their homeland. Other Shoshones would settle maybe towards the north. They moved on like that. They were more comfortable in some areas, so this is where some of them came, most of the Shoshone.

My great grandmother, my grandfather’s mother, was one of the survivors. How she survived is she just jumped into the river. She got shot in the breast and she thought she’d get killed there. But she just swam right down underneath that ice, she said. And went down along the banks as slowly and quietly as she could. She said that she saw what was happening to her brothers and sisters. Everyone started crying, “They’re going to kill us,” they said. Some of the parents said, “Pretend that you’re dead, so that they don’t kill you.” How can you keep little children quiet?

One of the survivors said that she had gotten away and she was laying under the bushes with a little boy, she said. And was looking upon Conner coming upon on a family. She said that what she saw was that they’d grab these little children by the leg like a jackrabbit and then they’d hit their heads on the ground, she said. She said that’s what she was looking at, she said. It wasn’t a good sight, she said. Everybody was running in different directions. Some ladies took their children and put them in back of
her arms, I guess. She just wrapped them around her as tight as she could. She said she
carried two little boys along the banks of the Bear River. That’s how she got away, she
said. My great grandmother survived by swimming away along the banks. She said she
laid there for the longest time. She thought she was going to freeze. Many native
Americans know how to survive from things like that because they are taught that this is
their land. They know how to survive in the elements, with their feet on the ground. This
is how she survived.

Another survivor also told this too, that what she seen too, when she was shot
also. I guess what she did was crawled, she said crawled. In some areas where they
wrestled [unintelligible] What she saw was ugly, she said. How Bear Hunter died, she
said it was the worst thing. She kept so quiet and told that little boy, don’t make a noise.
They had gotten ahold of him and shoved that bayonet right into his head in the cruelist
way. They really tortured him. Just like they did the childrens and womens and the old
ladies. It’s not good history, when you really look at it. To see your family die like that
and then our family had survive that to tell that.

They talk about Ray Diamond a lot, like in May Perry’s family book. They said
that he had no family, but he is. He is my great grandfather’s cousin, he might even be
his brother. As far as we know because, he said, that what we know to tell. He said, he
survived it also. He was shot also, he said. He lived to tell what happened there. There
are many stories, different stories that I could tell you, but we have such a short time is
what I heard. Is what I’m finding out. We have about 10 minutes and I’d like to have my
cousin tell what she feels, too.
This is what happened to some of our family members. I cannot put it into words. It's been told to me since I was little. Then it went on from family to family. This is the way we keep our history. All Indians are like that, they tell one child so that child to carry it on to another family. This is how we keep our genealogy. This is what we had. That I would remember what they said, what they told me. My grandmother told me this, this is how it all happened because my great grandmother had told her this and what she had seen there. A lot of the tribal members from Washakie didn’t know that this had happened. This happened to all Shoshone but with all the families in Washakie, they were all relatives.

I guess one of the leaders also was named Chief Pocatello, he had told them that there was a vision that he had, he said “Get away from here. Because there’s something coming and you’re not all going to survive from this.” I guess they figured that they wanted to stay. And this is what happened, they got massacred, right there by the Bear River. I wish I could tell you more. I could put it in writing and I haven’t even done that. I have talked to that young man that is going to help me with this book. This book that we’re going to do is going to come from the whole tribal members that remember all that happened in their family. We’re going to call it “The People of Bear Hunter.” I’m on my way to research all this from different tribal members from the Sho-Ban tribe, the Shoshone-Bannock tribe, also. I have talked to a few elders there, about age 80 or 90. I’m going to research it that much. They will tell each other stories. That’s what we are going to do while we take this couple of years to get this done.
Mae Parry and the Timbimboo family, they got their own story. I know that she wrote it out. I know something about her book, it’s all about what happened in her family. She mentioned Chief Sagwitch is a chief. Well, we know different, because he is not the chief, it was Bear Hunter. The ones that was well known was Chief Washakie, Chief Pocatello, Chief Sanpitch, and also Chief Bear Hunter, who was chief at the time. She told a story about her own family. We want to straighten that out, because, none of us, she never mentioned any of our families in her book, it’s all about her family. This is why we want to give the right history, who was the chief at the time. Because we know this by our own elders that passed on. They were very old when they died and they told us.

I could tell you more about the story that Ray Diamond told. I remember he was a very spiritual leader. I’ll tell you the story that he said. When our soldiers from Washakie, Utah, before they went into the World War II, he would pray for every one of them. He told them that, “All my life,” he said, “the things that happened to me, when our people got killed. The soldiers shot me,” he said. “But I survived. And that’s the way you soldiers are going to be, when you go out there.” He said, “Wherever they send you, they might shoot you, but they won’t kill you. Already I’m blessing you with this. That you will come back.” He named each one of these young men, then he told my uncle, “What’s going to happen you, you’re going to be the one that’s going to bring out some of your fellow soldiers out of where the Germans are going to kill.” Well he didn’t say Germans, but “where your enemies are going to kill the rest of the group, you’re the one who’s going to save them. And you know what? Every shot that comes from your
enemies is not going to touch you. They’re going to go right by you.” And that’s exactly what happened to my uncle. He said that’s what happened to him, was when they was all hiding in this barn. Where they kept their animals, their horses and their cows. We were the soldiers that were in there and we could tell that they were surrounding us. All the German troops were around us. How are we going to survive. They were talking to their leader. He said, “If any one of you want to live, I’m gonna tell you how to survive.” He was a good horseman, because we were always on horses at one time at Washakie. He said, “What’s going to happen here is we’re going to get these animals to stampede. I want each one of you to grab hold of the horses’ reigns or either it’s tail. Hang on to it with your dear life, because when I start shooting and making noise, those animals are going to all run. I’ll be in front of all of you, whoever you are, you follow me.” And that’s what exactly happened. He said, those Germans didn’t know what to do when all the horses and cows all running out of that barn. Every soldier was hanging on to the tail or the reigns of that horse. And my uncle said he could feel the bullets hitting him on the side. None of them even touched him, he said. He lived to tell that tale and he came back.

Well the [unintelligible] of elders, when the young mens came back they said, the U.S. army showed us, never gave us the credit for what we did with our country. We were treated very well, along with the soldiers. Nobody recognized us, and that’s what hurts. But then, one of the families that we’ve talked to were telling us that when he was a prisoner to the Germans he was treated really well. They didn’t do anything because he was a Native American. When I came back, he said, “I brought back a German helmet.”
All the family there that was in Fort Washington, Wyoming. They grabbed a hold of that helmet, and dragged it around back and forth hitting it. This is how they handled their loss. Some of the soldiers died in WWII and I suppose the Korean and also the Vietnam. We have families that have all passed on and never came back. I just thought I'd tell you that story.

Ray Diamond, the survivor of the massacre, told this story. And he [unintelligible] coming on in his life. He gave each of those soldiers, before they went into service, a beautiful blessing. And, you know, that's what happened to each of them, they all survived it. Well, some of them did. So, I'll end it this way.

I hope you can see what really happened at the Bear River Massacre. The book's going to be telling everything. I'm glad that we're going to do this, because it's about time. We don't want to lose what we know. We have never tried to write anything about what happened at the Bear River Massacre. I guess we just, we know it's there. It's about time to let the people here in Cache Valley and the world, they need to know what happened here.

Susan Caldera:
My name is Susie Caldera, my mother is a full-blood Shoshone Indian. She was born and raised in Washakie, Utah. I feel that we are very fortunate in meeting Aaron Crawford and that he's going to help get the truth of the Shoshones and the massacre at Bear River and publish it and people will be able to know the truth and the feelings of what the people have gone through. It's been a real hard thing to live with and to accept and to try to deal with. And there are still feelings to this day about how our ancestors
were massacred. The true story has never really been told, there's been some books that have been written but they are not all truthful and they are not all factual. And so the tribe is getting together. And we are going to get all this information from every family that has ancestors that were massacred. And we will get our book going and we are pretty happy about that. It was a really hard time. It was a really hard time living at the church farm, for the people that lived in Washakie.

I didn't know what I was supposed to say, but I just know that things are going to get better. This book, to me, is going to bring peace into the heart of the people, because so many stories have been told that haven't included the other families that were in the massacre, the families of the massacred people. There has been a lot of hurt and a lot of pain. By them being able to tell the true story of what their ancestors left them, their hearts are going to be healed. [unintelligible] They told you about the massacre and the things that have happened and we are just so grateful that we've met up with Aaron and we're going to be able to get this going and to tell the truth about the suffering of the people. It was just a massacre of greed. The land was gone, they took the land. They wanted the land, they massacred the people and they took the land. And that's just about what it is. I feel like the healing process is starting now for our people and that is a good thing. Thank you.