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Colonial Power and Indigenous Justice: Fur Trade Violence and Its Aftermath in Yaquina Narrative

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Colonial Power and Indigenous Justice

Fur Trade Violence and Its Aftermath in Yaquina Narrative

BRITISH, SPANISH, RUSSIAN, AND AMERICAN colonial interests manifested in different ways across the North American West, and a growing body of scholarship addresses the effects of that empire expansion on Native communities.¹ Of the tribes that survived decades of warfare, starvation, and disease, some remained in their traditional homelands while many were displaced, often becoming part of confederations such as the Confederated Tribes of Siletz and Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Indians of western Oregon. In the Pacific Northwest, United States relocation policy was particularly devastating for smaller coastal tribes such as the Yaquina, one of many ancestral tribes of today's Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. Historical analysis of colonial power relations stands to benefit from consideration of both the effects of empire expansion in Native communities and Native perception of that expansion. To that end, this article addresses Native survival as portrayed in oral narrative. The indigenous narrative centers on an episode of fur-trade violence, elucidating historical power relations in the Northwest while also shedding light on the long-term meaning of the episode for a small coastal tribe with deep ties to the land.

The set of oral narrative accounts and Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) correspondence details, from a radically different perspective, a series of violent conflicts between fur trappers and Native people at Yaquina Bay and nearby Beaver Creek, on the Oregon coast, during the spring of 1832. Two of the three Native accounts have not previously been published, while the HBC correspondence is widely cited in studies of fur-trade conflict. Considering the aftermath of the 1832 conflicts — when the Yaquina suffered



Alsea chief Kaseeah stands with two wives and his son at Yaquina Bay in 1877 (engraving based on a drawing by Wallis Nash, published in Nash, Oregon: There and Back again in 1877).

more losses through violent conflict, relocation, and immigration — the indigenous accounts resonate with the effects of United States settlement and reservation policy in western Oregon. They also reveal much about fur-company resource extraction practices and related violence that involved smaller, sedentary tribes or nations.

In contrast to its limited affect on HBC operations, the violence of 1832 appears to have been transformational for the Yaquina survivors and the neighboring Alsea people. The growing colonial presence meant that indigenous principles of justice no longer applied in conflicts with outsiders. Traditional discourse involving negotiation between leaders and mutual recognition of territories and national sovereignty rapidly eroded with HBC fur trapping and United States settlement in western Oregon. By the time the Alsea Agency of the Coast Reservation was closed in 1875, there was no longer a Yaquina nation, and few if any descendants still lived at Yaquina Bay.

Prior to the mid-1850s, Yaquina and Alsea villages were most populous along the shores of Yaquina Bay and Alsea Bay, with smaller communities on the rivers and tributaries above tidewater and on the coast. People lived

in those villages during all seasons, making their living by fishing, plant gathering, hunting, and through trades such as canoe making, weaving, and house building.² Social networks were extensive; people of one Yaquina village typically had relatives in the Willamette Valley and in the Tillamook, Alsea, and Siuslaw communities along the coast. Within tribal territories, people managed plant and animal harvests through controlled burning and selective harvesting, and by culturally restricting use.³ Tribes or nations consisted of communities who shared a language or dialect and recognized territorial rights to residence and the use of other resources as well as to hunting, fishing, and trapping.⁴

NARRATIVES OF FUR-TRADE VIOLENCE IN NATIVE ORAL HISTORY

Much of the documented early- to middle-nineteenth-century Native history in western Oregon comes from interviews ethnographers conducted with tribal elders during the 1930s and 1940s. Two individuals provided accounts of the fur trade conflict at Yaquina Bay: Coquille Thompson, a Coquille [ko-kwel] man who resided for most of his long life at Siletz, and Leona Ludson, a Yaquina/Alsea woman who lived at Alsea Bay (when it was part of Siletz Reservation) and later at Siletz Agency itself. A third account was recorded in 1864 by a United States soldier named Royal Bensell, whose source was evidently Native and most likely Alsea. As with other Pacific Northwest oral tradition, some aspects of these accounts were likely dynamic, reflecting social changes experienced by the people who told them.⁵

Coquille Thompson gave the most detailed account, which he presented as a retelling of a narrative known to the Yaquina people. His account is preserved at the Smithsonian Institution in the field notes of linguist and ethnographer John P. Harrington, who met with Thompson several times in 1942.⁶ Born during the 1840s in an Upper Coquille River village near what is now Myrtle Point, Oregon, Thompson survived the U.S. military attacks on Coquille villages during 1851; five years later, the military forcibly relocated him and other Coquilles to the newly established Coast Reservation, encompassing 120 miles of the Oregon coast.⁷ Thompson's father, Chief Washington, was an 1855 Coast treaty signer, and Thompson also became a leader of the Indians at Siletz, serving with the Tribal Police. He was widely known for his role in the Warm House Dance Movement, a version of the Ghost Dance of the 1870s, involving belief in maintaining Indian-ness and return of ancestors.⁸

Thompson was in his nineties when he met Harrington, who was doing ethnographic research on the Oregon coast tribes for the Bureau of American Ethnology. Because of his sharp memory, Thompson was able to

provide extensive oral narrative and information on traditional practices.⁹ He explained to Harrington that the narrative of conflicts at Yaquina Bay and nearby Beaver Creek had been told to him by a survivor named Yaquina John. Although Thompson acknowledged elsewhere that diseases such as small pox decimated some coastal Indian groups, he told Harrington that the Yaquina people were almost completely killed off in an attack by a large party of fur trappers.¹⁰

The Yaquina tribe had been comparatively affluent prior to the 1830s, when the attack Thompson described occurred. In 1806, Tillamook Indians told William Clark that there were seven hundred people living at Yaquina, an estimate that likely referred to the entire tribe rather than the primary village alone. By 1849, Theodore Talbot estimated that only eighty Yaquina people remained.¹¹ Few Yaquina narratives have been preserved, because individuals born into Yaquina communities were not interviewed by twentieth-century ethnographers. During the 1880s, linguist J. Owen Dorsey interviewed Yaquina John and recorded word lists and place-names, while ethnographer William Everette recorded his testimony on spiritual beliefs.¹²

It is likely that Thompson heard the Yaquina John narrative in the 1880s or 1890s, when both men were living at Siletz, although the two may have met as early as the 1850s. Beginning in the 1860s or 1870s, Thompson had family ties to the Yaquina, as his sister had married a Yaquina man. From Harrington's interviews with Thompson, we know that Yaquina John was a chief of the Yaquina Tribe and an 1855 treaty signer. He was tall and slender, regarded as handsome, and spoke Yaquina, Alsea, and Tillamook dialects.¹³ Yaquina John's home before the reservation years was the Native town of Mit'-ts'ul-stik [meet'-tsool-stick], now the city of Newport, near the mouth of Yaquina Bay. This Indian town was also called Yaquina, and thus the name applied to the town, the tribe, and the bay or river.¹⁴

One of the most detailed narratives of Yaquina history, Thompson's account of the Yaquina conflict appears in Harrington's notes as direct transcription of the spoken word, though some modifications, to grammar in particular, may have been made by Harrington. Embellishment, such as dialogue, may be Thompson's rather than Yaquina John's. The notes were recorded quickly by Harrington, with abbreviations he typically used. To make the account readable, I have spelled out abbreviated words and added limited punctuation.¹⁵ My comments, shortened place descriptions, and uncertain or unclearly abbreviated text appear in brackets. Thompson used the terms *Indians* and *Chinooks* to refer to fur trappers.

The Yaquina tribe had been largely killed off, and [Yaquina John] told me how. Two Indian men and one woman, maybe from the Columbia River, from the north, probably French people, came trapping to that lake inland of where Seal Rock is, and the party



Eighty-seven-year-old Coquella Thompson sits on the steps of his home on the Siletz Reservation. His consultation with John P. Harrington and other ethnographers provided a vast amount of historical, cultural, and linguistic information on Oregon coast Indians.

stayed there all winter, getting beaver skins, sea-otter skins, muskrat skins just piled up. Alsea people did not know and Yaquina people did not know. [How many] beaver hides they got, maybe 200 lbs, and fisher skins like sea-otter. Two Alsea came along there one day, it must be that the two men had gone hunting somewhere, and they talked to the woman. The woman said: we came from Ma'los [Columbia River]. The two Alsea men did not answer but went away towards the South. They said Maybe we'll kill those people, they do not belong here, they are taking all those hides. When those two got home, those men talked. We are going to kill those people, and the Alsea chief knew nothing about it, and the Yaquina chief knew nothing about it. The two went back and killed the two men, but the woman as they were killing the two men, the woman got away, never trying to help the men though she could have easily helped the men. The woman ran. They tracked her in Newport direction and maybe when she saw the men coming she hid in the brush. Early in the next morning she waved to the Yaquina Indians living on the north side of Yaquina bay and they came and took her across, she saying merely: I want to go home. She ran night and day towards the Tillamook country, crossing the Siletz mouth and keeping up the beach. She was maybe Chinook people. As soon as she got home she told [what happened], and the Indians got ready. She said Yaquina people did this. She had not even learned enough while there to distinguish

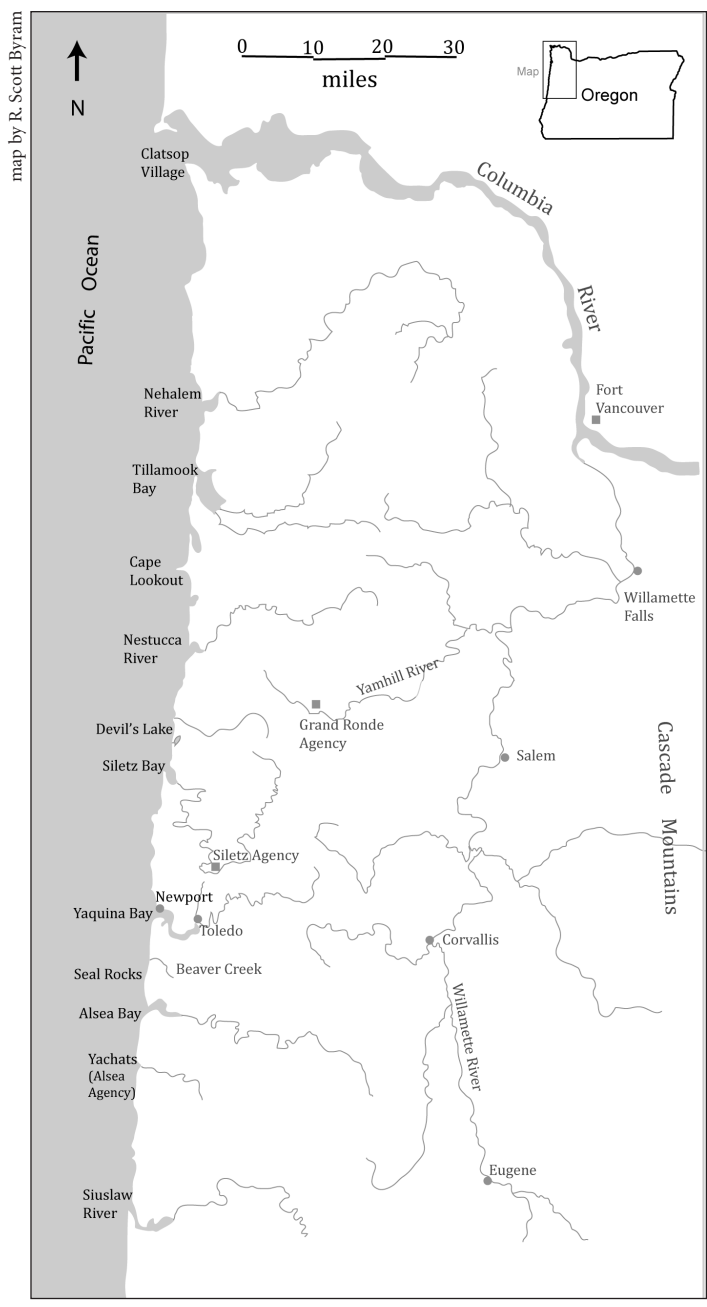
Alsea and Yaquina people — it was Alsea people who had done the killing. The Chinooks got ready. They came on horseback with guns and knives and axes, and packing lots of grub down [the] coast. They had to fetch the woman back on horseback — she had to show where they killed her men. They did not cross the mouth of Siletz — they came down Skunk Creek and swam their horses across the Siletz River just down from Medicine Rock. They then went across country following Indian trails until they hit the coast at Cape Foulweather, then down the coast to Nile [Nye] Creek and reached Newport [Yaquina]. They found lots of empty Indian-houses at Newport at about 4 pm. So the next day they asked one old lady who was home, she couldn't talk jargon.

They asked her where or how the people got killed. Finally she started and talked talked [sic] Yaquina language, and she kept motioning to indicate that the Indians living in the Indian houses at Newport had gone toward Oysterville [upriver]. One Chinook man then climbed a mountain and spied a lot of (Yaquina) Indians at Oysterville [Tcil-ki'tik]. . . . Now they got ready for battle. There were many Chinooks. . . . All the Chinooks went to Oysterville [Tcil-ki'tik], surrounded the Yaquina campers there, bum bum bum. They shot down man, woman, and child as they ran naked from the houses. Not one escaped. That is why only Yaqwina [Yaquina] John and few others of the Yaquina people survived. [The fur trappers] killed many people in revenge for two of a different tribe and about whom the Yaquina people knew nothing. The Yaquina people there had no guns, they had some arrows but nothing to fight back with. They were slain naked and helpless, exterminated.¹⁶

Thompson's voice in this narrative is distinct, yet aspects of the account warrant clarification. Given that Yaquina John and approximately eighty other Yaquina people lived at Yaquina Bay during the 1850s, the account probably refers to killings of the residents of the village of Yaquina (Mit'-ts'ul-stik), rather than the entire tribe, though Yaquina was a large and prominent village. Residents of the upriver village may have also been killed. The location of Oysterville, at the north bank, most closely matches the village of Tcil-ki'tik [pronounced thlil-kee-tik].¹⁷

Regardless of the actual scope of the killings, the statement that the narrative portrays how the Yaquina were "largely killed off" stands out. This portrayal may actually reflect a process that went beyond the events of a single year, encompassing the cumulative effects of disparate outsider actions that were unified by their injustice relative to traditional Native principles. On one level, the trappers attacked the Yaquina because of the lack of local knowledge on the part of the sole survivor of the small wintering party. Of more significance, the large retaliation was possible because the trappers were well armed, had the advantage of surprise, and were led by people who intended large-scale retribution. The misapplied vengeance of powerful outsiders eschewed the traditional stage of dialogue, during which leaders of each group might negotiate compensation for the initial killings or might offer the lives of those responsible for the homicides. For the Yaquina, the fur trappers' attack was an initial, wide-scale breakdown of principles of justice regarding international relations — principles that had sustained their sovereignty for untold generations.¹⁸ The relationship of this perceived injustice with the destruction of the Yaquina as a nation becomes clearer in light of other accounts of the events and the history of subsequent United States expansion into the region.

Some of the terms and place-names in Thompson's narrative require clarification. The dual description of the two trappers' ethnicity as Indian



Northwest Oregon is a region of rugged topography, heavy seasonal rainfall, and a temperate climate. The Willamette Valley and coastal estuaries (tidewater rivers and bays) were the most productive settings for Native economies historically, and communities were most populous in those places.

and French may be the result of discussions between Thompson and Harrington while the narrative was being taken down. It may also reflect the ambiguity of some ethnic divisions in the Pacific Northwest during the first half of the nineteenth century. Many fur trappers employed by the HBC were either Métis or of solely Indian parentage.¹⁹ HBC records and other sources provide information about the identity of the trappers involved in both 1832 conflicts, indicating that at least one of the wintering trappers was Iroquois and that some of the larger assault party had Native ancestry.²⁰ Local Native, Métis, and non-Native trappers wore similar clothing and carried the same type of gear. It is not entirely surprising, therefore, that Thompson or Yaquina John would have referred to those people as Indians, even though several of the assault party had at least partial European ancestry, including the party leader, who was French-Canadian.

Thompson referred to the identity of the woman accompanying the trappers and the people in the party attacking the village as “Chinook people,” or simply “Chinooks.” It is unlikely that Thompson was referring to people of the Chinookan-speaking tribes of the lower Columbia River. Chinook was originally the name of a large town on the lower Columbia, and only gradually, during the land-based fur trade, did its meaning expand to encompass other lower Columbia groups.²¹ Northern Oregon coast tribes had other names for Indians of the Columbia River, such as Ma’los-itslem. In the mid to late nineteenth century, the word Chinook was used by Indians of the Coast Reservation in reference to the Chinook Jargon (also known as Chinuk Wawa).²² It is likely that the people Thompson referred to as “Chinooks” were fur trappers who frequently conversed in Chinook Jargon. His other comments suggest that the party may have been based out of a Columbia River post. In light of this, the fur trappers in the Thompson account were likely working with the HBC and based at Fort Vancouver.

The wintering party likely camped at the extensive tule marsh of Beaver Creek, located near the coast between Yaquina and Alsea bays. Seal Rock (or Seal Rocks), a well known landmark in the region, was the site of an Alsea village (perhaps a seasonal village) known as Kitau.²³ Beaver Creek, formerly the “Nackito” (Ne-Kitau, with “Ne” as a north coast village or village/tribal-group prefix), is the only major salmon stream between Alsea and Yaquina bays and appears to have been within the territory of the Kitau community.

Leona Ludson, born about 1870, was the daughter of Yaquina John. Her mother was Alsea, and she grew up at Alsea Bay, moving to Siletz in 1884.²⁴ Her brief narrative depicting the demise of the Yaquina tribe is quite distinct from her father’s and likely reflects more of an Alsea perspective on the conflict and its legacy. As recorded by anthropologist Philip Drucker,

Ludson's account includes far less detail, but her version adds to the story by indicating the HBC assault was not the end of violence for the Yaquina and Alsea.²⁵ Drucker apparently had no knowledge of the events depicted in the Thompson account. He noted only that the Ludson account was "told to illustrate how blood feuds always continued — [and] never could be settled for payment." The account appears in Drucker's notes as follows: "[A] Yaquina River rich man jealous of [his] own brother began a feud that wiped out all people on [the] river. Then some other people came down and finished them off."²⁶ In terms of the scope of the attack, the Ludson account is similar to Thompson's, indicating that these two individuals are referring to the same event, but Ludson's account raises the possibility of further violence subsequent to the HBC assault. The conflicts may have led to feuding between Yaquina survivors and the families of the Alsea individuals who killed the two trappers. Under the principles of justice that prevailed across much of the region, violence and even homicides could be resolved through payment to a victim's relatives by the perpetrator or his or her relatives. Drucker noted that, in cases of homicide, property and monetary payment were not always sufficient, resulting in blood-for-blood retaliation between relatives of victims.²⁷ Drucker's information for this exception was the Ludson account, however, which now appears to portray violence and threats by outsiders — "some other people" — who did not follow traditional conflict resolution practices. Notably, the Ludson account is related to irreconcilable conflict, which parallels the pervasive injustice in the Thompson account.

The third related account that appears to be of Native origin is found in the journals of Corporal Royal Bensell, who was a member of Company D in the Fourth California Infantry. Company D assisted the Indian agencies at Alsea and Siletz with the task of hunting down and capturing or killing Native people who had escaped the morbid conditions at the Coast Reservation or who remained in their homelands in southwestern Oregon. Bensell stood to benefit from the displacement of Native communities; two years after he recorded the account of fur trade conflict, he built and operated a sawmill on reservation land at Yaquina Bay that had recently been opened to settlement by non-Indians.²⁸ Bensell's personal interest may provide reason for questioning the accuracy of the statement he recorded, but it is unclear how his agenda would have influenced the words he put on page while at Alsea Bay.

On April 22, 1864, Bensell and his detachment were traveling south along the coast. After crossing the mouth of the Alsea River, they camped near what he termed an "old Indian graveyard." He wrote that the place "is where years ago the 'Sixes' fought the Hudson Bay Co., lost some 400 warriors.



As a corporal in the U.S. Army, Royal A. Bensell was assigned to keep Indians on the reservation. When the lands surrounding Yaquina Bay were opened to U.S. settlement, he resigned his post and developed commercial interests along the bayshore.

They are buried in canoes, the prow raised two or three feet in order to give the dead a good start heaven ward.”²⁹ His source for this account was presumably local, possibly a member or members of the Alsea Tribe. The Bensell account differs considerably from the Thompson and Ludson accounts. It is the earliest of the three, and it identifies the Hudson’s Bay Company as the opponent of a local community in a large scale violent conflict. The setting given is the south shore of Alsea Bay, well south of Yaquina Bay. Notably, the name Bensell gave for the tribe, *Sixes*, sounds much like the word for ‘friends’ in Chinook Jargon, *sikhs*. If his sources were Alsea, they could have been referring to the Yaquina people. Bensell or his translator likely mistook this word for the name of a south coast tribe near Cape Blanco.

Together, the Thompson, Ludson, and Bensell accounts appear to describe a set of events of great importance in the histories of the Yaquina and Alsea peoples. Central to the accounts is a massive assault by outsiders who killed many local Native people. In two of the three accounts, the Yaquina people were the ones attacked and their population was greatly reduced. Of the three narratives from Native sources, only the Bensell account was recorded before the Yaquina people were forced out of their homeland by order of President Andrew Johnson. As such, it may reflect different aspects of Yaquina losses. The Thompson and Ludson accounts were recorded over fifty years later, after a longer series of violent conflicts as well as loss of land, resources, and tribal autonomy. The scale of the attack in all three Native-source accounts differs considerably from what is depicted in HBC records.

ACTIVITIES AND RECORDS OF THE HUDSON’S BAY COMPANY IN OREGON COUNTRY

Beginning in 1824, fur-trading operations in western Oregon were run by Chief Factor John McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver on the lower Columbia River.³⁰ McLoughlin’s communications with his staff were normally in the form of letters delivered by employees or Indian couriers. Most of the staff

not stationed at Fort Vancouver or one of the other posts in the region were detailed to expeditions of twenty or more trappers for several months at a time. They were accompanied by local Native people of some affiliation, the families of company employees, and slaves. Expedition leaders such as Michel Laframboise and Alexander McLeod were expected to make decisions by themselves based on orders given by McLoughlin prior to departure. When McLoughlin determined that changes should be made to an expedition's plan, he would send a message by courier. Many of McLoughlin's letters were copied into a series of letterbooks that have been preserved, several in the HBC Archives. Fewer incoming letters have been preserved, but McLoughlin often recapitulated letters sent to him in subsequent correspondence with other posts or away expeditions. McLoughlin also prepared semi-annual reports to the HBC governors about activities of the company in the Columbia District. Among those letters and reports are accounts of the 1832 conflict and events that set the stage for it.³¹

The records indicate fur-company parties first traveled through Yaquina and Alsea territories in 1826. Before that time, Yaquina and Alsea people would have been aware of the presence of fur trappers and traders through other Native groups, and they likely traded with fur companies indirectly. Fur trade vessels may have occasionally entered Yaquina Bay. Conflicts with outsiders were probably rare on this part of the Oregon coast through the first quarter of the nineteenth century, as few outsiders appear to have visited the region before 1825. Still, the Yaquina certainly knew of conflict with heavily armed outsiders, as the crew of Robert Gray's ship the *Columbia Rediviva* had bombarded a village near Tillamook Bay in 1792.³²

The first fur-company scouting expedition to the north-central Oregon coast was led by Michel Laframboise during the winter of 1825–1826. Little information is available about the activities of Laframboise's small party, but, according to McLoughlin's report of March 1826, the party did pass through this part of the coast. Laframboise's party did little trapping or trading for beaver, and he claimed they had good relations with the Native people he met on the coast.³³ Later that year, McLeod's larger expedition, with Laframboise as interpreter, may not have been as well received. McLeod's journal suggests there was cause for Alsea hostility toward fur trappers.³⁴ On arriving at Yaquina Bay from the north, Yaquina people McLeod met near the Yaquina River encouraged him to trap there. Subsequently, his large party stayed in the area for twenty-three days. He divided the group into pairs of trappers who spread out along the river and down the coast. After the first eleven days, the camp was moved south to "the River Nackito" (Ne-Kitau or Beaver Creek) in Alsea territory.³⁵ McLeod noted "a good many Beaver" were caught at Nackito during the following twelve days. While at Beaver Creek,



Michel LeFramboise is pictured here with his family. After leading the HBC Southern Party for several years, he settled as a farmer at French Prairie in the Willamette Valley.

the McLeod party trapped many more beaver than they traded for, and they also hunted valuable deer, elk, and bear. Although McLeod noted that the Yaquina had encouraged them to trap beaver on their river, presumably in return for his trade, his journal does not mention negotiation for access to Alsea resources in the Beaver Creek area. McLeod's extensive trapping and hunting may have been viewed by the Alsea as theft and trespass. While the McLeod party was at Beaver Creek, a conflict relating to hunting rights occurred. One of the trappers accused an Indian elder of stealing some traps and apparently beat the man for the suspected theft; McLeod later determined that the man had not taken the traps.³⁶

One serious threat the party may have brought to the Alsea and Yaquina people was the presence and possibly the spread of deadly disease. A Hawaiian member of the McLeod party became ill with a lung ailment during their stay at Ne-Kitau, and Indians in the area were aware of his sickness. It is not known if the disease, which apparently spread to other members of the McLeod party, spread to the local people, but there was frequent interaction between members of the party and the Yaquina and Alsea. There is, however, some indication that tuberculosis became prevalent on the Oregon coast by the 1830s.³⁷ Whether or not the McLeod party's respiratory disease spread to the local people, the Alseas and others on the coast may have perceived its presence as another threat to their communities. Elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest, similar situations led to Native retaliation.³⁸

Together, the intense fur harvesting, violence, and contagious illness of the McLeod party probably resulted in the animosity of at least some local people toward the fur trappers. McLeod did not record any threats from Native people he met, though some of the groups they encountered nearby on the coast urged them to keep moving southward, where they said the beaver were plentiful.³⁹

Records of other trappers visiting the Yaquina and Alsea between 1826 and 1832 have not come to light. During those years, Laframboise trapped in the vicinity of the Umpqua and Coos rivers and was stationed for a time at Fort Vancouver.⁴⁰ Coastal areas north of the Umpqua River were apparently of low priority for HBC expeditions. McLoughlin noted in his March 1826 report to HBC Governor George Simpson that small groups of trappers wintering on the coast were unlikely to bring large returns: "I'm of the opinion sending a hunting party along the coast in the winter ought only to be done when no better employment can be found for the Men and that it can be done without any additional expense."⁴¹ Given the low priority of such expeditions, the wintering party at Beaver Creek in 1832 may have been the first such visit in six years.

News about the threats presented by trapping parties spread throughout the region during this time. The Jedediah Smith party conflict took place on the Umpqua River in 1828, when Lower Umpqua Indians attacked American trappers, killing at least fifteen trappers in the group. Subsequently, a large HBC party led by McLeod entered the area to retrieve Smith's goods but did no harm to the Lower Umpqua or their neighbors. The lack of HBC retaliatory violence in this case may have been because Smith and his associates were with a separate fur company, from the United States.⁴² Also during 1828, the HBC attacked a Klallum village and reportedly killed twenty-two in retaliation for the homicides of five trappers. Word of the HBC bombardment of a Clatsop village at the mouth of the Columbia River a year later must also have reached the Yaquina and Alsea, as some of their Tillamook neighbors were among those killed and injured.⁴³

During the late 1820s, McLoughlin began to send an annual trapping expedition, the Southern Party, into what is now southwest Oregon and northern California. McLeod was its first leader. Known for being well armed, they were often involved in violent conflicts with Native communities, and the vast majority of fatalities were Native people. In the spring of 1832, after serving as postmaster at Fort Vancouver for two years, Laframboise was given leadership of the HBC Southern Party.⁴⁴

HBC ACCOUNTS OF THE 1832 CONFLICT

John McLoughlin's letterbook of 1828–1832 includes a series of four letters written during the spring of 1832 that mention the killings of Pierre Kakaraquiron (elsewhere Kuraquiron) and Thomas Canasawarette and a retaliatory expedition to a Killimook village on the coast.⁴⁵ The name *Killimook*, a variant of *Tillamook*, was used by HBC staff and others by the 1830s to refer to tribes of the Oregon coast lying between the Clatsop and Umpqua rivers.⁴⁶

The designation included the Yaquina and the Alsea, although those tribes spoke languages in the group sometimes identified as Penutian, rather than Tillamook, which is a Salish language. McLoughlin's report of September 1832 provides additional detail. Together, the five McLoughlin documents describe a situation quite similar to Thompson's account of the Yaquina Bay homicides and have parallels with the Ludson and Bensell accounts as well. Among the McLoughlin accounts are minor inconsistencies, but they might be attributable to the passage of time and perhaps to the different audiences he was writing for.

In two letters written in April 1832, McLoughlin informed Laframboise that the trappers Kakaraquiron and Canasawarette had recently been killed by Indians on the coast and ordered Laframboise to lead the party under his command in a retaliatory expedition. Laframboise was as familiar with local Native society as anyone with the HBC. He had apparently resided in many localities in the region and reportedly boasted of having been married to women in several villages.⁴⁷ The Southern Party was in the Willamette Valley when he received the letters from McLoughlin, and they apparently traveled to the coast on horses.

Letter # 240. McLoughlin to Laframboise

This undated letter was entered between letters of April 3, and 4, 1832. You will proceed with the party under your command to the Killimook country for the purpose of punishing the atrocious murder of Pierre Kakaraquiron and Thomas Canasawarette who were savagely murdered by the above tribe twenty days since,

As it is impossible for me at a distance to point out the manner in which this can be effected with the least effusion of blood, I shall not shackle you with copious instructions, particularly as your experience in that part of the country, and your Knowledge of the Indian character, will point out to you the best mode of obtaining the object of your mission, permit me, however, to recommend that as 'tis likely some innocent beings may in such cases unavoidably become victims as well as the guilty the severity necessary, for our own safety and security may always be tempered with humanity and mercy.

Letter # 242. April 14, 1832, McLoughlin to Laframboise

The Willamette people go to assist you to punish the murderers of our people and if you require it Mr [Thomas] McKay will give you three Horses but I expect you will not take them unless you are obliged by absolute necessity as we are very short of Horses.

A few weeks after sending Laframboise and his party to the coast, McLoughlin apparently received word that the retaliatory expedition had resulted in six dead at a Killimook village. None of Laframboise's party was lost, and they had threatened Native survivors and told them to kill the individuals who had killed the wintering trappers.

Letter # 246. May 8, 1832, McLoughlin
to P.C. Pambrun [clerk at Ft. Walla Walla]

Michel [Laframboise] and his party are returned from their Expedition after having Killed 6 of the Murderers of the late Pierre and Thomas — our people took a good many women and children, but of course did them no harm, and let them go.

Letter # 247. May 9, 1832, McLoughlin to Laframboise

I received yours of the 4th instant yesterday and I am happy to find that you have accomplished your object and that you have lost none of your party and I pray to God that we may not be exposed again to have recourse to violent measures at the same time I think it but right that you sent word to these sauvages — that what we have done is merely to let them see what we can do, and that as we do not wish to hurt the innocent we expect that themselves will Kill the remainder of the Murderers of our people.— if they do not we will return and will not spare one of their tribe — I think that in twelve days I will send a party after you so that you may go to the Verveau and the men I send will go to you wherever you are and bring to this place what skins you have.

In the last letter in the series, written to a clerk under his command, McLoughlin made somewhat contradictory statements about the target of the attack. While he only wanted to see the actual murderers killed, he mentioned instructing Laframboise to attack the first Killamook group they encountered. He also reiterated the threat of total annihilation for the tribe if they did not find and kill the guilty parties.

Letter # 248. May 15, 1832

McLoughlin to James Birnie [clerk, possibly at Cowlitz River]

Michel Laframboise and Party have been to War on the tribe that murdered Thomas and Pierre and we only wish to Kill them who had assisted or joined the murderers of our men I desire him to Kill a few men only of the first party of that tribe that he fell in with and tell those he allowed to escape that we did this to let them see what we could do and that as we only wished to Kill those who had killed our people we allowed them to escape to tell their Countrymen this and that they themselves must Kill those who had been concerned in the Murder of our people — if they would not we would come back and Kill every one of the tribe that came in our way and would not stop till we had killed every one of them, — we wished to be on good terms with them — we never allowed any of our men to do them the least harm — and it is they who brought this punishment on themselves, we would not allow any of our people to be hurt by them with impunity

Four months after the initial series of letters was written, McLoughlin wrote of the two incidents in his September report to company governor George Simpson. In the following excerpt, McLoughlin provided further details about the events, including the setting of the Southern Party assault,

the size of the party, and subsequent negotiations with survivors. Unlike Letter #246, this comparatively detailed report does not mention that hostages were taken.

Report from McLoughlin to Simpson, September 12, 1832

I am sorry to inform you that Pierre Kuraquiron and Thomas Canasawarette were murdered last year by the Killinook [sic] Indians. The two deceased had not given any provocation and the only reason why these villains perpetrated this atrocity was to possess themselves of the property of the two deceased. On hearing this melancholy intelligence, I immediately sent Michel Laframboise who was in the Willamette with his party on their way to their hunting grounds to proceed and attack the village of the murderers; which he did and killed 6 of them. But the village of the murderers was on the Bank of a large River and they had sent all their canoes to the other side except such as were necessary to escape in if when attacked by our people they were obliged to fly; and it was entirely owing to the situation in which the village was placed that any of the Natives escaped; and this was done so soon after the murder that the murderers, panic struck, sent all the property of the deceased after our people requesting they would have mercy on them and not come to war on them again; which Laframboise replied we wished to be on friendly terms with them but that we would not allow anyone to kill our people with impunity; that if they wished to be friends with us they must kill the murderers of our people. Since then we have no authentic accounts from that quarter. Indian report says that two of them who assisted to murder our people have been killed by the relatives of those our people killed.

After this Michel Laframboise proceeded with his party of 22 Men, including Willamette freemen to his hunting ground and by last account in July he was at the entrance of McLeod's River.⁴⁸

McLoughlin's letters and report reveal much about HBC policy regarding retaliation against attacks by Indian groups. Instructions and actions used in this situation did not involve negotiation between leaders for punishment of the individuals who did the initial killings. In this case, the policy seems to have been to kill people in a community at or near the place where the fur trappers were killed and to threaten the survivors with annihilation unless they punish the actual killers. As legal historian John Reid has observed regarding McLoughlin's accounts of the conflict, the chief factor pursued a strategy closer to payback vengeance than to British law: "McLoughlin was almost describing payback vengeance except for one thing. He expected the killings to deter these Indians from committing homicides in the future, and somehow, he thought they could be persuaded to kill the manslaughterers themselves."⁴⁹ Geographer Cole Harris has also examined the HBC strategy, concluding that fur-company retaliation against attacks by Native people did not involve

European adaptations of Native systems of vengeance, even less of Native laws. I suspect they have less to do with law, whether British, Mosaic, or Native, than with power, and are better thought of as particular strategies of power, together with the assumptions of social control lying behind them, broadly derived from Europe but framed in the particular circumstances of the fur trade.⁵⁰

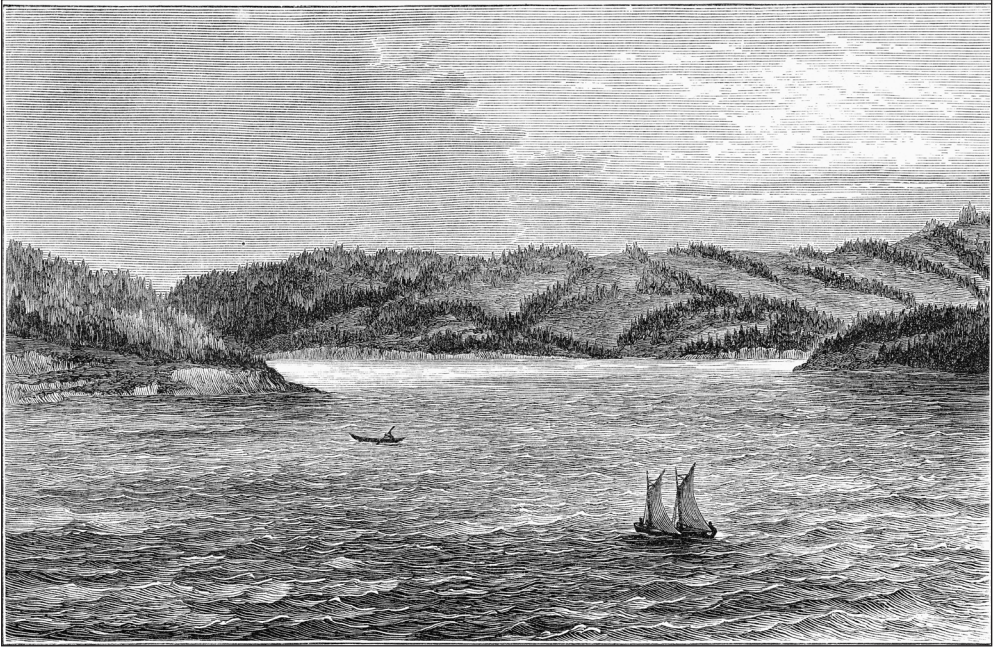
The strategy of colonial power as the HBC applied it in the Columbia District involved sending a clear message to Native people throughout the region: harming HBC employees meant death for several innocent people. HBC retaliatory attacks in prior years and numerous killings by the Southern Party during the 1830s and 1840s suggest that generalized vengeance homicide was accepted HBC policy.⁵¹ Strategies of power used by the HBC stand in contrast to traditional international relations in a region of numerous diverse nations.

Historian Jonathan Dean has argued that there was no clear policy of generalized vengeance for the HBC in Oregon Country and that violent, retaliatory expeditions were often deemed too costly in economic terms. He observes that HBC “reports to superiors tended to exaggerate the psychological impact of armed brigades.”⁵² Yet, in light of the Yaquina narrative, it is hard to imagine the HBC attack having much greater perceived impact among the survivors. Recorded oral narrative of the legacy of the HBC assaults on the Klallum and Clatsop also suggest that those attacks had lasting psychological impact on survivors, their relatives, and their neighbors.⁵³

For the Southern Party in 1832, the hurried response — lacking delay for the purposes of negotiation and selective punishment of transgressors — appears to have been motivated in part by economic efficiency. After the Yaquina assault, Laframboise avoided extended negotiations and immediately resumed the expedition to Alta California. Along with other accomplishments on the 1832 expedition, Laframboise’s efficiency in the retaliation strengthened his leadership of the Southern Party, a position he maintained for several years.⁵⁴

COMPARING THE SOURCES: MOTIVES, BELIEFS, AND ACCEPTED LEVELS OF RESPONSE

There are numerous aspects of Coquelle Thompson’s account of the conflicts at Yaquina Bay and Beaver Creek that appear to match circumstances described in John McLoughlin’s letters of spring 1832. Both men described the killings of two trappers followed by retaliation by a large group on horseback. McLoughlin did not specifically mention guns, but HBC employees of the period were typically armed with muskets or rifles and sometimes with sidearms.⁵⁵ In both accounts, the two trappers were



A Native canoe and a schooner cross Yaquina Bay (engraving based on a drawing by Wallis Nash, published in Nash, Oregon: There and Back again in 1877).

killed in late winter or early spring. In both accounts, the retaliation was performed swiftly by a large, mounted party of trappers, and the attack involved Native men, women, and children, those present at a single village on the north bank of a large river on the coast south of the Columbia. Both accounts also acknowledge that probably none of the actual killers of the two wintering trappers were among those killed at the village by the river. Finally, Thompson recounted that two Alsea men did the initial killings, and McLoughlin's intelligence informed him that two local Indian people involved in the initial killings were later killed by relatives of those slain by Laframboise's party.

Key aspects of the less detailed Ludson and Bensell accounts can be related to the McLoughlin texts. In the Ludson account, the Yaquina were "finished off" by a group of people who "came down" from an unspecified location. The blood feud element of the Ludson oral history account may also relate to the survivors' retaliation that McLoughlin's report to Simpson described. Of the three Native-source accounts, only the Bensell account specifically names the HBC.

Thompson's and McLoughlin's accounts attribute different motives to the killing of the two wintering trappers. McLoughlin claimed the trappers were killed by people who wanted to take furs and equipment that belonged to the HBC, though he mentioned no information supporting this accusation. Thompson implied that the two Alsea men killed the two trappers because they had been amassing Alsea resources without permission. It is noteworthy in this matter that Thompson's narrative was not told to justify the Alsea attack on the trappers, as Thompson was critical of the actions of the Alsea. He observed that they killed the trappers without consulting Alsea and Yaquina leaders, who presumably may have resolved the problem without violence. The different motives attributed by Thompson and McLoughlin reveal the different perspectives of fur company staff in 1832 and individuals in local Native communities several years later. McLoughlin seems to have been unconcerned that sustained trapping by the HBC might be regarded as a threat, and the territorial rights of Native nations were often disregarded by the HBC.

The outstanding difference between the Native and HBC sources is the scope of the retaliatory attack by the large party of trappers. According to Thompson, nearly an entire Yaquina community was destroyed, including men, women, and children, representing a substantial portion of the Yaquina people. It was an unjust attack, he explained, and the victims were entirely unaware of the wintering trappers' homicides. The Ludson account indicates the attack actually "finished off" the Yaquina people (either the inhabitants of Yaquina village or the entire tribe). Bensell's source attributed some four hundred deaths to the HBC assault. In contrast to these sources, McLoughlin reported that only six men were killed, and that others, including women and children, either escaped or were taken hostage and later released.

It is conceivable that the HBC Southern Party killed more than six people during their retaliation. Although firearms used by trappers during the 1830s did not always provide a great advantage over bows and arrows, the apparent surprise of the attack and the advantages the party's horses provided could have set the stage for numerous homicides.⁵⁶ The attackers likely would have been able to kill as many people as they wished, except for those who were able to hide, escape in the woods, or cross the river. All sources indicate this was a one-sided assault. Even if the McLoughlin records are accurate in terms of the number of people killed during the attack by the Southern Party, the HBC correspondence does not begin to represent the scope of the violence and loss this event represented for the Yaquina people, if not immediately then certainly in later years.

AFTERMATH: THREATS AND RESPONSES 1832–1856

The extent of the 1832 violence as reported in Yaquina oral history provides insight into Native perceptions of colonial power in their history. Very few voices were left to speak for the Yaquina by the late nineteenth century, due to a long process of colonization, but it was the 1832 vengeance killings that Natives came to see as the event that destroyed the Yaquina nation.

Whatever losses they may have sustained during 1832, Yaquina communities continued to live in their homeland during the decades following the 1832 violence.⁵⁷ There is little direct information about the people of Yaquina Bay between the mid 1830s and the mid 1840s, when the HBC's Southern Party, led by Laframboise, was involved in several conflicts with other Native communities on the coast. Some visitors and short term residents in the region wrote of these attacks as atrocities, though scholars often dismiss the accounts of individuals such as Captain Josiah Spaulding and Reverend Herbert Beaver as exaggerated or politically motivated.⁵⁸ Still, journal entries by HBC employees also mention numerous Southern Party attacks on Indian people, and these have been interpreted by historian Nathan Douthit.⁵⁹ Between 1832 and 1843, HBC accounts mention forty-five Native people killed and six HBC staff killed. A statement by Laframboise given to Charles Wilkes in 1841 denies that actual battles took place but shows that the Southern Party maintained some level of gun violence as they pursued furs across the region:

I questioned [Laframboise] relative to the stories respecting the shooting of Indians on the route to and from California, and he told me they had no battles, but said it was necessary to keep them always at a distance. On my repeating the question . . . [he] answered "Ah, monsieur, ils sont des mauvaises gens: il faut en prendre garde et tirer sur eux quelquefois."

This translates to English as 'Sir, they are bad people. You have to always be at ready, and shoot at them sometimes.' Laframboise may not have admitted that larger conflicts took place, but numerous sources indicate they continued through the 1830s and 1840s.⁶⁰

Altogether, documentary records indicate that HBC attacks were a continuing threat to Oregon coast peoples through the 1830s. The Yaquina may or may not have been involved in further conflicts with the HBC, but they were aware that the threat of attacks remained. There is no indication that the Yaquina responded to outside threats militarily, as did some groups in southwestern Oregon.⁶¹ Instead, they opened new communication channels, becoming more aware of potential threats. Learning Chinook Jargon would have been key to successful communication with fur-company employees



Soon after President Andrew Johnson opened Yaquina homelands to U.S. settlement, recreational visitors began camping near what is now Newport (engraving based on a drawing by Wallis Nash, published in Nash, Oregon: There and Back again in 1877).

and other outside groups. Between McLeod's visit in 1826 and a visit by the Talbot party in 1849, most of the Yaquina had apparently learned to speak the jargon. McLeod met few or no Chinook Jargon speakers in 1826, but when the Talbot party visited a community at Yaquina Bay in 1849, Talbot observed, "most of them talk the Chenook jargon."⁶² HBC records indicate that, after 1832, coastal tribes such as the Yaquina may have become more involved in the fur trade. In 1842 McLoughlin wrote, for example, "On the lower parts of the Columbia, and on the Coast, the Indians are so independent, the skins pass through so many hands before they come to us." By the late 1840s, HBC trappers had reportedly taken up residence at Yaquina Bay.⁶³

A new line of communication was opened between the Yaquina, people involved in the fur trade, and other groups during the mid-1840s, when a horse trail was cut through the Coast Range from the Willamette Valley. Talbot's party reached Yaquina Bay by following a trail that he learned Klickitat Indians had cut in recent years. The Klickitats originated east of the Cascades and north of the Columbia, but several with ties to the HBC began living in the Willamette Valley around 1830, including a large com-

munity in King's Valley, inland from Yaquina territory and well positioned for trade.⁶⁴ Though the population was considerably less than the estimate of seven hundred given to William Clark in 1806, Talbot found that the eighty or so Yaquina people appeared in good health when he arrived in the area in 1849. Census data from the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs indicate that the Yaquina population remained at approximately eighty persons through the mid 1850s.⁶⁵

THE LAST YEARS OF THE YAQUINA AS A NATION

Yaquina efforts to survive faced overwhelming outsider incursions after mid century. U.S. encroachment burgeoned as the regional economy expanded to support the California gold rush and an influx of agrarian settlers. In 1855, ten Yaquina leaders, including Yaquina John, signed a treaty with the federal government, represented by Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs Joel Palmer. The treaty confederated all of the tribes west of the summit of the Coast Range in Oregon and stipulated that the lands surrounding Yaquina Bay would become part of the Coast Reservation.⁶⁶ The following year, the U.S. military forcibly relocated many Native people from tribes on the coast and the interior to the shores of Yaquina Bay and to the nearby valley of the Siletz River, making way for Euro-Americans to settle in their former homelands to the south and east. Some Bureau of Indian Affairs agents in charge of the agency over the years were corrupt, and they sold allocations of food, medicine, and other resources elsewhere. Even when responsible individuals served as agents, supplies were limited due to logistics and bureaucratic inefficiency. The result was a high rate of starvation and mortality among the people forced to live on the reservation.⁶⁷

Soon after the reservation was established in 1855, Lieutenant Phil Sheridan and his detail received orders to build a blockhouse on the shore of Yaquina Bay, and Sheridan chose the site of a Yaquina cemetery containing some fifty burial canoes. Sheridan recorded in his journal that he spoke with a group of Yaquina people, and

they finally consented to hold a council next day on the beach, and thus come to some definite conclusion. Next morning they all assembled, and we talked in Chinook language all day long, until at last they gave in, consenting, probably, as much because they could not help themselves, as for any other reason. It was agreed that the following day at 12 o'clock, when the tide was going out, I should take my men and place the canoes in the bay, and let them float out with the tide across the ocean.⁶⁸

After losing that cemetery, the Yaquina soon lost more of their land as the U.S. military brought Native people from other parts of western Oregon to Yaquina Bay.⁶⁹ There were conflicts over resources between the Yaquina



Leona Ludson (Alsea/Yaquina) is pictured in the center of this photo, with her husband Major Ludson (Alsea/Chetco) at left, Thomas Jackson (Alsea) above, and an Alsea relative of Thomas Jackson at right.

and some of the larger, newly arrived Native groups. Several Yaquina warriors died in a battle between the Yaquina and a Rogue River tribe over the use of a salmon fishing site at D River.⁷⁰

In 1865, a land-hungry constituency lobbied President Andrew Johnson, in violation of both ratified and unratified treaties, to open the 200,000-acre Yaquina Bay portion of the Coast Reservation to non-Indian settlement. During the land rush that followed, many Native people were forcibly evicted from their homes by U.S. citizens, squatters from the Willamette Valley who took the land and the sturdy cedar-plank houses for themselves.⁷¹ Seven years later, Palmer reported that the Indians who had been forced out of their homes at Yaquina Bay were the most destitute of those residing on the Siletz Agency.⁷² Some of the Yaquina joined Alsea relatives at villages along the south shore of Alsea Bay, where they continued to fish and hunt using

traditional methods. During the 1880s, they too were forced to move to the remaining Siletz Agency, despite its diminished size due to congressional acts and executive orders.

At Siletz, the Yaquina and Alsea people were forced to give up year-round bay fishing and other traditional livelihoods, and the agents sent children to boarding schools. Through the late nineteenth century, disease and starvation continued to take a large toll on the Yaquina, and only a small number of the displaced people appear to have survived. In 1942, Alsea elder John Albert told Harrington that the Yaquina Indians were “long since all dead,” though tribal records indicate several people with some Yaquina ancestry, such as Leona Ludson, her siblings, and their descendants, had become part of the Siletz community. Some married people from other tribes within the confederation, and their descendants are among the members of today’s Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.⁷³

Yaquina John was taken from his ancestral home to Lower Farm at Siletz in the first years of the Coast Reservation, and he later lived at Alsea Bay, where Yaquina John Point still bears his name. He married twice and had several children, including Leona. By the late-nineteenth century, the village where he was born had become the thriving city of Newport. Yaquina John died in the late 1890s at Yaquina City, a short walk along the bay shore from the site of Tcil-ki'tik, where he once camped with his family and many others during the spring fish runs.⁷⁴ One of the last direct observations of a Yaquina community by the bay was made by Coquelle Thompson, who told Harrington, "I can remember [an] Indian town at the site of present day Toledo, Oregon, a Yaquina village, where Indians fished for Chinook salmons. But the government silently took this away from the Indians and then gave it to the white people. It is a good place for a saw mill."⁷⁵

YAQUINA JUSTICE AND COLONIAL POWER

The Yaquina nation was one of the first to suffer direct effects of colonial power in what is now western Oregon. The losses brought about by the HBC's violent assault on the Yaquina were magnified through United States empire expansion. In traditional oral narrative, the fur trappers' assault subsumed later waves of violence, bad faith negotiations, and homeland appropriation by outsiders, a set of processes that ultimately brought about the demise of the nation. In light of that later Yaquina history, one of John McLoughlin's 1832 letters includes a particularly salient statement. Writing to James Birnie after learning of the assault by Laframboise, McLoughlin related that Laframboise had informed the Indian survivors that, if they did not in turn kill the individuals who took the lives of the two trappers, "we would come back and Kill every one of the tribe that came in our way and would not stop till we had killed every one of them." This stated threat of annihilation is consistent with McLoughlin's orders to Laframboise, and it is very likely that its meaning was clearly conveyed to the survivors of the HBC vengeance assault. The fur trappers' threat may have been memorialized in retellings of the 1832 events, and later, as outsider incursions overwhelmed Yaquina communities, the threat and outcome may have merged in survivor retellings of the narrative. That the threat and outcome originated with different powers — British and United States — may have meant little to the Yaquina of the mid nineteenth century. Prior to 1865, incursions into Yaquina homelands largely involved forced relocation of tribes from elsewhere, aside from the soldiers and agents sent to enforce these new circumstances.

A theme that unifies indigenous narrative of the events of this period — the Thompson and Ludson accounts in particular — is the awareness of injustice, and the breakdown of the principles of negotiation by leaders in

international relations. Traditional dispute resolution practices were ineffective when the HBC Southern Party committed vengeance homicides at a community both unaware of the two Kitau homicides. Sheridan offered no compromise after negotiations with Yaquina leaders and ordered his soldiers to destroy the cemetery at Mit'-ts'ul-stik. As Yaquina homelands filled with Coast Reservation camps and starvation was rampant, bloodshed rather than negotiation decided the use of traditional fishing sites. And there were no negotiations with Yaquina leaders or other Siletz reservation tribal leaders when, a decade after the reservation was formed, the 1855 treaty was rescinded by executive order and the last Yaquina homes were taken by United States settlers in a land rush.

Analysis of Yaquina narrative and related documentary records reveals an unfolding perspective on colonization. The three sources depicting conflict at Yaquina Bay are positioned distinctly. A generation after the conflicts of 1832, when the Yaquina were still an autonomous nation in their traditional homelands, the narrative of conflict with the fur trappers may not have portrayed the annihilation of the tribe. The brief Bensell account depicts a large battle with the HBC in which the lives of many Yaquina warriors were lost. This 1864 journal account records memory of a battle of epic proportions, and that year the Yaquina were still fighting to maintain at least a portion of their homelands. After the United States overran Yaquina homelands in 1865, and the displaced survivors suffered years of sickness and poverty at Siletz Agency, Yaquina John's narrative, as told by Coquel Thompson, portrayed the killings of men, women, and children, all but a handful of this once prosperous nation. This is echoed in the Ludson account, which relates the tribe's losses to internal conflict and diminishes the role of the attack by outsiders. This account of the conflict may reflect an Alsea perspective on the cause of the violence, but the outcome was of a scope similar to what was depicted in Yaquina John's narrative.

The unfolding narrative process is intriguing as a study of oral tradition, but these narratives and their historical context are most relevant as a multivocal history of the effects of colonization beginning with the initial land-based fur trade-era. The collective history contributes to the portrayal of the principles and structured relationships that held together small nations on the Northwest coast but were incompatible with the interests of colonial powers. The Yaquina never warred with Britain or the United States, yet the agents and central governments of these large nations extracted resources, battled, and finally displaced Yaquina communities. Diminished as a nation and displaced from their homelands, Yaquina survivors memorialized their losses in oral narrative that reveals the depth of impacts throughout the colonization process, and the injustice of colonial power relations.

NOTES

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1. See Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 1997); Kent Lightfoot, *Indians, Missions and Merchants: The Legacy of Colonial Encounters on the California Frontiers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

2. General sketch based on: Melville Jacobs, "Coos Ethnographic Notes," Melville Jacobs Collection 1931–34, University of Washington Libraries [hereafter MJC]; John Peabody Harrington, John P. Harrington Microfilms: Alaska/Northwest Coast, ed. Elaine Mills, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution [hereafter JPHM]; Leo Frachtenburg, "Alsea Notes on Ethnology," MSS 2516, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution [hereafter NAA]; Philip Drucker, "Contributions to Alsea Ethnography," *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 35:7 (1939): 81–101 (reprint, New York: Kraus, 1965).

3. Robert Boyd, ed., *Indians, Fire and the Land in the Pacific Northwest* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1999).

4. Franz Boas, "Notes on the Tillamook," *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 20: 1 (1923): 3–16 (reprint, New York: Kraus, 1965); *Coos Bay, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indian Tribes v. The United States of America* (U.S. Court of Claims, Nov. 1931); Robert J. Suphan, "An Ethnological Report on the Identity and Localization of Certain Native

Peoples of Northwestern Oregon," in *Oregon Indians I*, ed. H.C. Taylor, Jr., and R.J. Suphan (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974), 230.

5. See Julie Cruikshank, *The Social Life of Stories* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 2.

6. The notes have been compiled and microfilmed by Elaine Mills. Elaine Mills, *The Papers of John Peabody Harrington in the Smithsonian Institution 1907–1957: Volume One, A Guide to the Field Notes: Native American History, Language, and Culture of Alaska/Northwest Coast* (New York: Kraus International Publications, 1981). On Harrington's research approach and interview methods, see Colleen E. Boyd, "That Government Man Tried to Poison All the Klallam Indians: Metanarratives of History and Colonialism on the Central Northwest Coast," *Ethnohistory* 53:2 (2006).

7. William E. Kent, "The Siletz Indian Reservation 1855–1900" (M.S. thesis, Portland State University, 1973); *Siletz* is also the name of a tribe of the Coast Salish language group that resided in the Siletz River valley before the reservation period. Mark A. Tveskov, "The Coos and Coquille Indians: A Historical Anthropology of the Northwest Coast" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oregon, 2000). See also Robert Kentta, "The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians: Diverse People Brought Together on the Siletz Reservation," in *The First Oregonians: Second Edition*, ed. Laura Berg (Portland: Oregon Council for the Humanities, 2007).

8. Jacobs, "Coos Ethnographic Notes," MJC, notebook 2, pp. 122–26, and notebook 101, pp. 28–30; Robert Kentta personal communication with author, 2008.

9. On Thompson's legacy for today's tribes, see George B. Wasson, "The Memory of a People: The Coquilles of the Southern Oregon Coast," in *The First Oregonians*, ed. Carolyn M. Buan and Richard Lewis (Portland: Oregon Council for the Humanities, 1991), 83–87; Patty Whereat, "Cultural Legacy: Traditional Athabaskan Legends of

Southwest Oregon,” in *Changing Landscapes: “Sustaining Traditions,” Proceedings of the Fifth and Sixth Annual Coquille Cultural Preservation Conferences* ed. Scott Byram and Donald B. Ivy (North Bend, Ore: Coquille Indian Tribe, 2002); and Tveskov, “The Coos and Coquille Indians.” Ethnographer Cora Dubois saw Thompson as “a thoroughly trustworthy informant,” a view widely shared among ethnographers. See Dubois, “The 1870 Ghost Dance,” *University of California Anthropological Records* 3:1 (1976): 25.

10. Harrington, “Alaska/Northwest Coast,” JPHM, reel 26, frames 75 and 95.

11. Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition November 2, 1805–March 22, 1806* vol. 6 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 476; Theodore Talbot, *Report to General Smith, Fort Vancouver, Oregon, Oct. 5, 1849*. 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1850, Senate Executive doc. 47.

12. J. Owen Dorsey, “The Gentile System of the Siletz Tribes,” *Journal of American Folklore* 3 (1890): 229; William Everette, 1882–83, “Study of Indian Languages,” MSS 78, NAA.

13. Harrington, “Alaska/Northwest Coast,” JPHM, reel 20, frame 322, 590, reel 23, frame 817, and reel 24, frame 995. U.S. Congress, Senate, 53rd Cong., 1st sess., 1893. Senate Executive doc. 25, pp. 8. Elizabeth Jacobs’s interview with Coquel Thompson, MJC, notebook 116, pp. 52–58.

14. Harrington, “Alaska/Northwest Coast,” JPHM, reel 20, frames 322, 590, 614; Dorsey, “The Gentile System”; Henry Zenk, “Alseans,” in *Handbook of North American Indians 7: Northwest Coast*, ed. by Wayne Suttles (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 568. Other variants of Yaquina include Aconne, Yacona, and Yakon. Note that Drucker (1939) groups the Yaquina as part of the Alsea tribe. This view is not shared by most other ethnographers, including those who worked in the area earlier, when there were more Yaquina people still living. See Dorsey, “The Gentile System”; Livingston Farrand, “Notes on the Alsea Indians of Oregon,” *American Anthropologist* 3:2 (1901): 239–47; and Frachtenburg, “Alsea Notes,” NAA. Though there was much com-

munication and intermarriage between the two tribes, the Yaquina and Alsea had distinct languages and territories. This view was also held by Coquel Thompson.

15. Where possible, following the interpretations of Harrington’s abbreviations given by Elaine Mills, *The Papers of John Peabody Harrington Volume One*, 85–94.

16. Harrington, “Alaska/Northwest Coast,” JPHM, reel 26, frames 95–99.

17. See J. Owen Dorsey, “Yaquina Vocabulary,” Southwest Oregon Archival Research Project, MSS 4800-393, University of Oregon Library [hereafter SWORP]. Today, Oysterville is on the south side of the bay.

18. On Northwest Native principles of justice in international relations, see John P. Reid, *Patterns of Vengeance: Crosscultural Homicide in the North American Fur Trade* (Pasadena, Calif.: Ninth Judicial Circuit Court Historical Society, 1999). Ethnographic overviews for the Yaquina/Alsea (Zenk, *Alseans*) and other Oregon coast tribes detail specific instances of these negotiations. See Jay Miller and William Seaburg, “Athapascans of Southwestern Oregon,” in *Handbook of North American Indians 7: Northwest Coast*, 580–88.

19. See Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670–1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980); Jennifer S. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980); and Richard S. Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade on the Pacific 1793–1843* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 33, 118.

20. Thomas Canasawarette was Iroquois. See John C. Jackson, *Children of the Fur Trade: Forgotten Metis of the Pacific Northwest* (Missoula, Mont.: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1995), 31–32; Harriet Munnick and Stephen D. Beckham, *Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest: Grande Ronde Register and St. Louis Register* (Portland, Ore.: Binford and Mort, 1987), A-45. Pierre Kuraquiron may also have been Iroquois. On Southern Party Native ancestry, see Doyce B. Nunis, “Michel Laframboise,”

in *The Mountain Men of the Fur Trade of the Far West*, ed. LeRoy R. Hafen (Glendale, Calif.: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1968), 50–151; Alice B. Maloney, ed., *Fur Brigade to the Bonaventura: John Work's California Expedition, 1832–1833* (Fresno: California Historical Society, 1945), 104–105.

21. Yvonne Hajda, “Regional Social Organization in the Greater Lower Columbia, 1792–1830” (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1984), 65.

22. Harrington “Alaska/Northwest Coast,” JPHM, reel 20 frame 475, and reel 21, frame 457. See also Hajda, “Regional Social Organization,” 65.

23. For alternative spellings and pronunciations of *Kitau*, see Frachtenburg, “Alsea Notes,” MSS 2516, NAA, p. 166; Dorsey, “The Gentile System,” 229; and Moulton, *The Journals of Lewis and Clark* vol. 6, 476. For a description of the River Nackito (Beaver Creek), see K.G. Davies, “McLeod’s Journal,” in *Peter Skene Ogden’s Snake Country Journals, 1827–28 and 1828–29*, ed. Glyndwr Williams (London: Hudson’s Bay Record Society, 1971), 161. The prefix “ne” indicates a place name or village. The presence of sea mammal haulout and Indian cod fishery at Seal Rock are described by George Davidson, *Pacific Coast: coast pilot of Alaska: from Southern boundary to Cook’s Inlet* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1869), 412.

24. Robert Kentta, Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, personal communication with author, 2008.

25. Drucker, “Contributions to Alsea Ethnography,” 81–101.

26. Drucker, Field Notebook 4, MSS 4516, Southwest Oregon Archival Collection, SWORP. My added words appear in brackets.

27. Drucker, “Contributions Alsea Ethnography,” 34; Horner Barnett, “Cultural Element Distributions, VII: Oregon Coast,” *University of California Anthropological Records* 1:3 (1937): 155–204.

28. Royal A. Bensell, *All Quiet on the Yamhill: The Civil War in Oregon*, ed. Gunther Barth (Eugene: University of Oregon Books, 1959), 141, 194.

29. Bensell, *All Quiet on the Yamhill*, 141.

30. Burt Brown Barker, ed., *Letters of Dr. John McLoughlin Written at Fort Vancouver 1829–1832* (Portland, Ore.: Binfords and Mort, 1948), 332–50. Workings of HBC in the region detailed by Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*; and E.E. Rich and W. Kaye Lamb, *The Letters of John McLoughlin, from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, First Series, 1825–38* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1941).

31. My research is based on the published versions of these letterbooks and Hudson’s Bay Company Archive transcriptions by Burt Brown Barker at the University of Oregon Knight Library, Oregon Collection.

32. Frederick W. Howay, ed., *Voyages of the “Columbia” to the Northwest Coast 1787–1790 and 1790–1793* (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1941).

33. Michel Laframboise (1793–1861), based in Oregon Country from 1811 until his death in 1861, worked with the Pacific Fur Co., Northwest Company, and HBC before settling at French Prairie in 1838. See Nunis, “Michel Laframboise,” 149; and Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 32–33.

34. Davies, “McLeod’s Journal,” 157–62.

35. The settlement of *Kitau* was apparently at Seal Rock, and may have been seasonal rather than year round. See Dorsey, “The Gentile System,” 229; Frachtenburg, “Alsea Texts and Myths,” *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 67 (1920), 166–67. The Harrington notes indicate that the Alsea had a different name for Beaver Creek than McLeod reports, but McLeod’s name for Beaver Creek, *Nackito*, is similar to the Alsea community name, indicating the stream was within *Kitau* territory. See Harrington, “Alaska/Northwest Coast,” JPHM, reel 23, frames 176–87.

36. Davies, “McLeod’s Journal,” 160.

37. *Ibid.*, 161, 167. The inference regarding tuberculosis was made by Milhau, doctor at Fort Umpqua. See George Gibbs, “Observations of the Coast Tribes of Oregon,” MSS 196-A, SWORP.

38. Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States’ Exploring Expedition, during the years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842* (London:

- Whittaker, 1845), 225; Robert C. Boyd, "The Pacific Northwest Measles Epidemic of 1847–1848," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 95:1 (1994): 36–37.
39. Davies, "McLeod's Journal," 156–57.
40. Nunis, "Michel Laframboise," 149.
41. McLoughlin to Simpson, March 20, 1826, biannual report, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, D.4.b 119–1824–26, Archives of Manitoba, Canada [hereafter HBCA].
42. Analysis of this and related conflicts in the Pacific Northwest often portray the conflict as whites versus Indians (see Reid, *Patterns of Vengeance*, 187) or Anglo-Native (see Jonathan R. Dean, "The Hudson's Bay Company Use of Force, 1828–1829," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 98:3 (Fall 1997): 262–95), but as addressed here, HBC fur-trapping parties included numerous Native and Métis people. It is more likely that the victims' fur company and social group affiliation were the critical factors in field leaders' decisions whether or not to retaliate violently after attacks on trappers. The risks of a retaliatory attack would have been more acceptable to party members who knew and worked with the victims.
43. S.A. Clark, *Pioneer Days of Oregon* (Portland, Ore.: J.K. Gill, 1905), 179. See, for example, Tsin-is-tum's remembrance of the bombardment of the Clatsop village in 1829. Oregon Historical Society, *Proceedings of the Oregon Historical Society* (Salem, Ore.: W.H. Leeds, 1900), 22.
44. Nathan Douthit, *Uncertain Encounters: Indians and Whites at Peace and War in Southern Oregon, 1820s–1860s* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2002); Nunis "Michel Laframboise," 149.
45. Barker, *Letters of Dr. John McLoughlin*, 268, 269, 271–73.
46. Commissioner of Indian Affairs [Joel Palmer], *Annual Report*, reel 7, Oregon Superintendency Records, September 11, 1854, copy available at the Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland.
47. Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 118.
48. Burt Brown Barker manuscripts, University of Oregon Knight Library, Eugene, transcript of HBCA manuscript B.223 b.8–1832/33.
49. Reid, *Patterns of Vengeance*, 132.
50. Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 56.
51. Reid, *Patterns of Vengeance*, 132, 141; Douthit, *Uncertain Encounters*, 55–56; Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia*, 54; Dean, "The Hudson's Bay Company Use of Force, 1828–1829."
52. Dean, "The Hudson's Bay Company Use of Force, 1828–1829."
53. Oregon Historical Society, *Proceeding of the Oregon Historical Society*, 22; Mary Ann Lambert, "Mystery Solved," in *Shadows of Our Ancestors: Readings in the History of Klallum-White Relations* ed. Jerry Gorsline, (Port Townsend, Wash.: Empty Bowl, 1992).
54. Nunis, "Michel Laframboise," 153.
55. Joan B. Townsend, "Firearms Against Native Arms: A Study in Comparative Efficiencies with an Alaskan Example," *Arctic Anthropology* 20:2, 1–35; Carl P. Russell, *Firearms, Traps and Tools of the Mountain Men*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1967), 52–77.
56. Townsend, "Firearms Against Native Arms," 26–28.
57. W.H. Barnhardt, "Oregon Indian Census of 1877," MSS 2360, NAA; Harrington, "Alaska/Northwest Coast," JPHM, reel 26, frame 95; Talbot, *Report to General Smith*.
58. William A. Slacum, "Slacum's Report on Oregon, 1836–7," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 13:2 (June 1912): 175–213; US. Congress, House, 27th Cong., 2nd sess., 1842. H. doc. 830, pp. 59; Leslie M. Scott, "John Work's Journey from Fort Vancouver to Umpqua River, and Return in 1834," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 24: 3 (September 1923): 256–57; Nellie Pipes, "Indian Conditions in 1836–38," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 32: 4 (December 1931): 337–38. For an example of dismissive accounts, see Thomas E. Jessett, ed., *Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver 1836–1838* (Portland, Ore.: Champoege Press, 1959), xi.
59. Douthit, *Uncertain Encounters*, 55–56. See also Pipes, "Indian Conditions in

1836–38,” 332–42.

60. Wilkes, *Narrative*, 143, translated for this article by Christophe Descantes.

61. Stephen Dow Beckham, *Requiem for a People: The Rogue Indians and the Frontiersmen*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971).

62. Davies, “McLeod’s Journal,” 167; Talbot, *Report to General Smith*, 111.

63. Rich and Lamb, *The Letters of John McLoughlin*, 70. George Boone told Eva Emory Dye of a trapper named Jacques Bamber who, with his Indian wife and other trappers, had lived at Yaquina Bay by 1849. See Eva Emory Dye, “Boone Family Reminiscences,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 42:3 (September 1941): 220–28. A John Bamber appears in the 1860 Oregon Census, residing at Toledo, on Yaquina Bay, and LaBombarde was a French-Canadian name appearing in the Catholic Church Records of the 1840s for St. Louis, in the Willamette Valley. See Harriett Munnick and Stephen Dow Beckham, *Catholic Church Records, St. Louis Register*, A-5.

64. Talbot, *Report to General Smith*, 109; Robert Newell, *Memoranda: travels in the territory of Missouri; travel to the Kayuse War; together with a report on the Indians south of the Columbia River* (New York: Champoege Press, 1959), 151–52; Don Whereat, “Dick Johnson,” *Newsletter of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw*, 1996; David Fagan, *History of Benton County Oregon* (Portland, Ore.: A.G. Walling, 1885), 328–29.

65. Barnhardt, “Oregon Indian Census.”

66. The 1855 treaty signed by Yaquina chiefs was never ratified. Treaty of August 11, 1855, signed by Joel Palmer of the Office of Indian Affairs, representing the U.S. Government. The Yaquina, (or Yah-quo-nah) treaty signers included Jim, Con-chu, Toch-a-lie, Pah-ki-ka-u, No-cos-curt, Tlate-hal, He-akah, Sa-may, Ke-etch, and John. Transcribed and printed in 1893 in Senate Exec. Documents 25, 53rd Cong., 1st sess., 6–12 (serial no. 3144).

67. Kent, “The Siletz Reservation 1855–1900”; E. A. Schwartz, “Sick Hearts: Indian Removal on the Oregon Coast, 1875–1881,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 92:3 (Spring

1992): 228–64; Bensell, *All Quiet on the Yamhill*, 184; Robert Kentta, “A Siletz History Part X: Executive Order, December 21, 1865,” in *Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians*, available online at <http://www.ctsi.nsn.us/chinook-indian-tribe-siletz-heritage/our-history/part-x#content> (accessed February 2008).

68. P.H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan, General, United States Army* (New York: Charles L. Webster and Company, 1888), 102.

69. Kent, “The Siletz Indian Reservation 1855–1900,” 19, 24; Kentta, *Siletz Indians*.

70. For accounts of Siletz elders Ione Baker and Mollie Dick, see *Oregonian*, June 11, 1933, pp. 4. See also Earl Nelson, *Pioneer History of North Lincoln County Vol. I*, (McMinnville, Ore.: North Lincoln Pioneer and Historical Association, 1951), 86. Accounts of this conflict are retold in Siletz oral tradition. Robert Kentta, personal communication with author, 2008.

71. Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1867, Oregon Superintendency, by J. Perit Huntington, 65.

72. Kent, “The Siletz Indian Reservation 1855–1900,” 19, 24; Kentta, “A Siletz History Part X: Executive Order, December 21, 1865.”

73. Harrington “Alaska/Northwest Coast,” JPHM, reel 23, frames 803, 811; Munnick and Beckham, *Catholic Church Records Grande Ronde Register Vol. I*. Siletz tribal records provided by Robert Kentta.

74. Yaquina John, along with other Alsea and Yaquina people, stayed at Alsea Bay into the 1880s, a few years after agency closure. Leona Ludson and others are listed in the Benton County Census of June 1880, Oregon Genealogical Society, Springfield, 6. See also Harrington, “Alaska/Northwest Coast,” JPHM, reel 20, frame 614. On Yaquina John’s children, see Harrington “Alaska/Northwest Coast,” JPHM, reel 24, frame 995. On his later years and his death, see Harrington, “Alaska/Northwest Coast,” JPHM, reel 20, frames 322, 590, and 614.

75. Harrington, “Alaska/Northwest Coast,” JPHM, reel 26, frame 107. One of the owners of this mill was retired corporal Royal A. Bensell. Bensell, *All Quiet on the Yamhill*, 194.