ABSTRACT

THE HISTORY OF THE FLATHEAD INDIANS
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By

Ellsworth Howard Brown

The dissertation sets forth the history of the Flathead Indian tribe of the Bitter Root Valley, Montana, during most of the nineteenth century. A major part of the story, however, concerns the relationship between these Indians and the white man. Closely examined are the roles of the traders, missionaries, and settlers who were prominent in Flathead history. The primary concern of the dissertation is with the years between 1855, when the Flatheads signed a treaty with the United States establishing a reservation, and 1891, when they actually moved to the reservation. The role of the United States government during this time is a matter of major concern, since the Flatheads were beset not only by illegal white settlement, but also by federal errors and irresponsibility. Removed to the reservation, the Flatheads remained a proud if struggling people who maintained an untarnished tradition of peacefulness with the white man.

The Flatheads came to depend on the white man during the early contacts between the races, from about 1812 to the 1840's. Traders furnished guns with which the Indians could partially redress the inequality between themselves and and the Blackfeet. The Jesuits, whom the Flatheads specifically sought, seemed to proffer a kind of "magical" power that was valued by the Flatheads and feared by the Blackfeet.

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Isaac Ingalls Stevens, first governor of Washington Territory, visited the Flatheads in 1853 and in 1855, promising them protection from the Blackfeet and the hope of an easier life through the benefits to be conferred by the United States. These benefits were set forth in the Stevens Treaty of 1855. In return, Flatheads and two other Salish tribes, the Pend d' Oreilles and the Kootenais, surrendered millions of acres of land and agreed to the establishment of a reservation. The three tribes could not agree to live together on one reservation however, and Stevens was forced to draw up a compromise: the Kootenais and Pend d'Oreilles would go to the reservation, and the Flatheads would remain in the Bitter Root Valley pending a survey to determine which area was better suited for them. Stevens soon ordered a survey and on its strength recommended that the Flatheads move to the reservation. The Senate did not ratify the treaty until 1859, however, and by that time Stevens' recommendation was forgotten, and the Flatheads had assumed wrongly that the delay was tacit approval of a special Bitter Root Valley reservation.

The delayed ratification was but one mistake of the government. Few improvements were made on the Flathead Reservation or in the valley prior to 1859, and services to the Indians were minimal; following ratification there was little change. The agency consisted of temporary buildings for some years; it was always understaffed and underfunded; agent turnover was rapid, and while some agents were guilty of fraud, others were simply incompetent--all were plagued by problems of frontier communication and a shortage of cash and laborers.

At no time prior to 1872 did the agency offer all of the services promised by the Stevens Treaty; the agency struggled to exist for its own sake, ill-equipped to minister to the needs of the Indians.

At the same time, white settlers and miners moved into the Bitter Root Valley. Their presence was illegal under the terms of the Stevens Treaty, but by the time the Flatheads realized that the government would not enforce restrictions on settlement, whites were present in force. They eventually managed to get the federal government to act in their behalf: a presidential order of 1871 and an act of removal of 1872 called for the removal of the Flatheads to the Flathead Reservation, about eighty miles north of their valley home. James A. Garfield, assigned the task of organizing their removal, persuaded Chief Arlee and some of his followers to move. Head-chief Charlot and many other Indians remained behind, however, their lot worsening as settlers flooded legally into the valley.

Meanwhile, the condition of the Flathead Reservation gradually improved. The standards of the physical plant were raised, and money shortages were less frequent. During the tenure of Agent Peter Ronan that commenced in 1877 the agency began to serve the Indians in the manner prescribed by the Treaty. St. Ignatius Mission, on the reservation, blossomed into a full-time boarding and industrial school for boys and girls.

By 1889 the condition of the Bitter Root Flatheads was described as "destitute." After Arlee died, Henry B. Carrington came to Montana to persuade the remaining Bitter Root

Indians to move north to the reservation. His work was well done, but a reservation ill-prepared for the Flathead removal, and a delayed, misadvertised, and unsuccessful auction of Indian land caused Charlot and his people to postpone removal until 1891.

The nineteenth century began hopefully for the Flatheads and ended in woe. Eager for the white man's help, the Indians soon found themselves dependent on the whites and resentful of Jesuit intrusions into the Indian way of life. Hopeful of prosperous times under the aegis of the United States and willing to live peacefully with the white man, the Indians were eventually forced from their homeland and constrained to adopt a life of farming. Although still strong in number, by 1891 the Flatheads were hard put to adapt to an unfamiliar existence.

The dissertation rests heavily on several key primary sources. The letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs between 1853 and 1892 have been most important. The papers of Isaac Ingalls Stevens and James A. Garfield, Montana newspapers, reports found in the Serial Set, and the Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs have been especially helpful. The two initial chapters, which focus on events prior to 1853, rely on the published journals of traders, trappers, and missionaries.

THE HISTORY OF THE FLATHEAD INDIANS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By

Ellsworth Howard Brown

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

1975

PREFACE

Professor Harry J. Brown, my advisor, first suggested the Flathead Indians to me as a subject for a dissertation. I selected the subject because the Flatheads typify the plateau tribes in a number of respects, because their attitudes toward white men were moderate in the face of provocation, and because several specific episodes in their history clearly delineate the kind of treatment they received at the hands of the government of the United States and the settlers of the Bitter Root Valley. Although the Flatheads have been well-studied by ethnologists, preliminary research showed that they had not been studied thoroughly by historians and that there was ample material for a dissertation.

This subject has proved to be fascinating. The scope of the dissertation includes most of the nineteenth century, and there has been a chance to follow the development of a frontier area and its people from its discovery by white men to the years immediately following statehood. The work includes a number of classic frontier elements: white settlement, the inevitable modification of traditional Indian ways, and federal Indian policy and its execution. While researching the dissertation I have become acquainted with a wide

variety of sources, from the National Archives material to the holdings of the Montana Historical Society, and I have examined the Flathead country to gain a better understanding of the subject.

The work on this dissertation has extended over a period of several years for a variety of reasons. The location of sources as far apart as Missoula and Helena, Montana and Washington, D.C., the broad scope of the research, and the necessary interference of full time employment have all contributed their problems.

Fortunately all of those with whom I have come in contact in the course of my work have been more than helpful. I owe the most to Professor Harry Brown for sharing his experience in research and writing, for offering his tempered advice, and for his insistence on total professionalism. His guidance through the labyrinth of Washington, D.C. sources and his criticism of this dissertation are deeply appreciated. Professor Madison Kuhn's criticism of the dissertation has also been helpful; he raised a number of questions that eluded me and contributed to the clarity of my work. I would like to thank Professors Gesner and Cleland for their willingness to serve on my examination committee.

I owe a special debt to my brother, Lawrence Brown, for boarding me during a summer of research in the National Archives.

Letitia Stormo, interlibrary loan librarian at Northern State College in Aberdeen, South Dakota, has been very helpful in my search for published material; and I appreciate the courtesy of Arthur Svennigen, Chief of the Federal Records Center in Denver, for making it possible for me to borrow many reels of microfilm. The staff of the Montana Historical Society was most cooperative during my visits there and was eager to supply me with material. I wish to thank Harriet Meloy, librarian of that Society, for answering specific questions for me and for arranging the loan of microfilms of Montana newspapers.

I wish to extend my thanks to the archivists in the National Archives, who were professional, courteous, and interested in my project.

My typist, Georgie Karsky, has worked rapidly and cheerfully under pressing circumstances, and I am extremely grateful for her attention to detail and for her cooperation. The staff at the Dacotah Prairie Museum has patiently endured my many brief absences in the course of my writing, and I wish to thank them for understanding the importance of this work. Sandy Carlsgaard, a friend, has proofread this dissertation more than once and deserves special thanks.

It is to my wife, Dorothy, that I owe a unique debt. She prodded gently at the proper times and was silent on the right occasions, and she did without me during hours of research and writing.

Ellsworth Brown
Aberdeen, South Dakota

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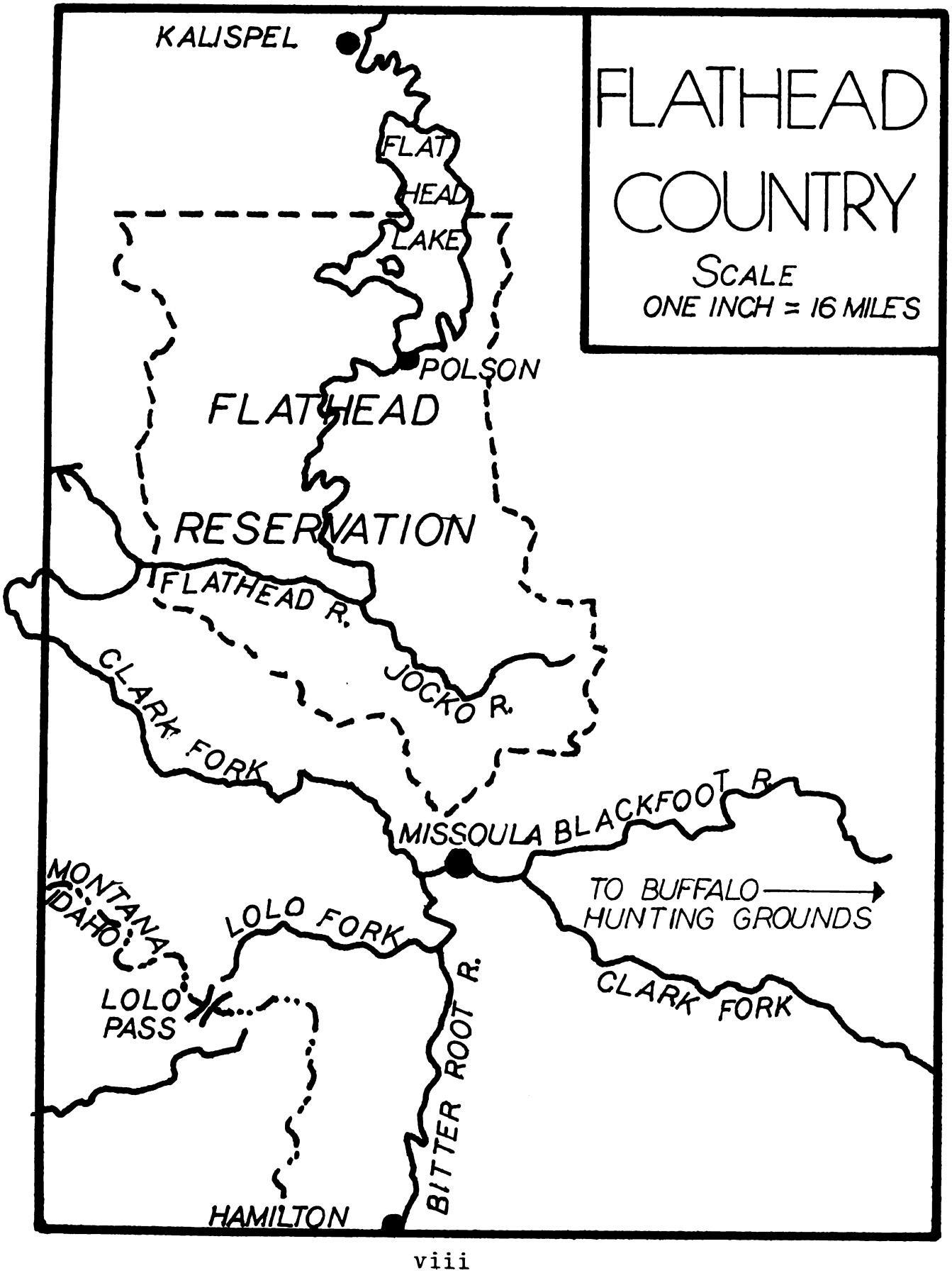
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE LAND AND ITS FIRST INHABITANTS, RED AND WHITE

Towns appear frequently along the blacktop highway: Lolo, Florence, Kenspur, Stevensville, Victor, Corvallis, Hamilton, Darby, and others, as one drives the seventy-five miles south from Missoula past Ravalli and Trapper Peaks, to the head of the Bitter Root River valley. The road, which parallels the Montana-Idaho border twenty miles to the west, leads to the Big Hole and Nez Perce passes high in the Rockies.

It is an appealing drive, through grazing land dotted with cattle, through grain fields and occasional orchards. And although the bottom of the valley has long since been given over to agriculture, the Bitter Root River still flows cleanly northward, and the slopes of the mountain ranges on either side remain bearded with dense stands of pine which suggest the ancient stillness that greeted a migrating, unnamed tribe of Indians centuries ago.

It is an imposing valley. The Bitter Root Mountain range on the west side looms high, and up to seventy-five miles wide. Areas of the range are still inaccessible, offering some of the most difficult terrain in the United States

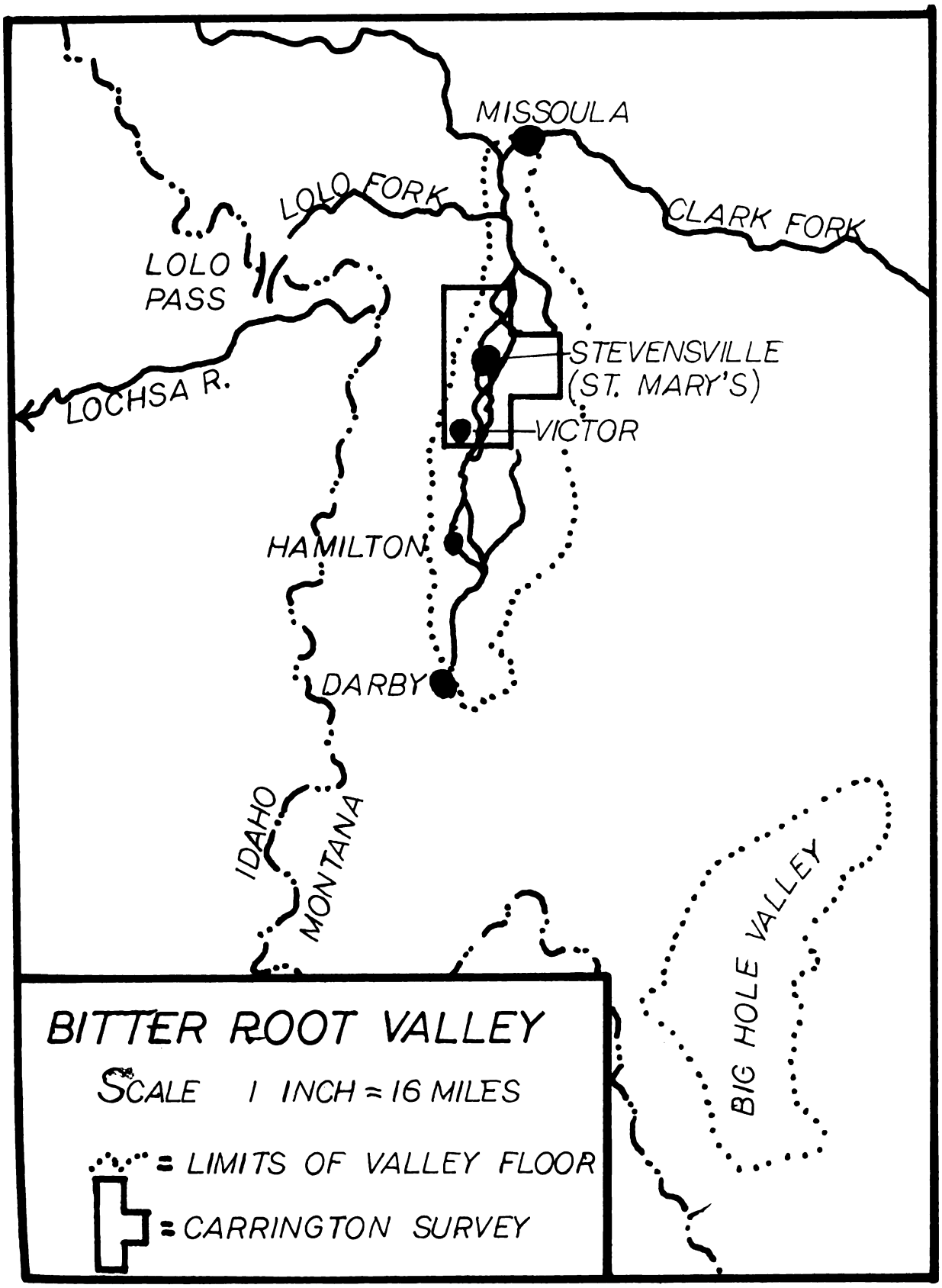
to traverse. And in pre-history, it was a sure barrier to any peoples attempting to enter the valley from the west.

Another range guards the valley on the eastern side, insuring that all movements into the area be from the south via the high mountain passes, or from the north through the Lolo Pass a few miles below the confluence of the Bitter Root River and the Clark Fork of the Missouri.

The Lolo Pass is of historic importance. Long prior to its discovery by the Lewis and Clark expedition, it was the gate, the great aboriginal trail, through which streams of Indians passed enroute from mountain homes to the annual buffalo hunt on the great plains to the east. The westbound route through the pass ultimately leads to the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean.

Thus the Bitter Root Valley was a natural fortress, impregnable from the east or west, hardly traveled at its southern end, and easily guarded from within at its only useful outlet at the north, near the present site of Missoula, Montana.

The most complete early report of the valley was made in 1855 by Dr. Richard H. Lansdale immediately after the signing of the Treaty of Hell Gate, before the area was much changed by white settlement. Lansdale, who was examining the valley at the request of Governor Isaac I. Stevens of Washington Territory, carefully recorded his observations of the area from the Lolo Pass to a point fifty miles up the Bitter Root River, and from the peaks of the Bitter Root Mountains to the headwaters of feeder streams in the mountains to the east.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LOLO PASS
STEVENSVILLE (ST. MARY'S)
LOCHSA R.
VICTOR
HAMILTON
DARBY
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The average width of this area, he reported, was twenty-five miles, and "the larger portion is made up of mountains covered with forests of fir, long-leaved pine and trees of kindred growth."[1] The west side of the river was the least hospitable, at least for farming. Open land was generally less than two miles wide between the mountain forests and the river; the soil was of poor quality. Lansdale estimated that it would yield little that was better than the natural grass. Of the vast acreage west of the river, only twelve square miles promised to be arable, and the rest was rock, sand, grass, or timber. But at least the timber would be valuable, and water was in good supply.

East of the river the land was more open and fertile. There were numerous streams in the lower areas, and much gravel and sand. But there was an abundance of thick grass, ideal for pasturage; and on slightly higher ground there was a fertile strip about a mile wide, nearly a quarter of which was very rich. Lansdale estimated that total arable land on the east side of the Bitter Root River was about double that on the west side.

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[1]U.S., National Archives, Record Group 75, Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1853-1874 (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District, December 26, 1853-January 30, 1863), Richard Lansdale to Superintendent, October 2, 1855. M5 Roll 22 (1945). NOTE: In future references "U.S., National Archives," and "Record Group" will be dropped from the citation for convenience.

He further estimated that the total amount of good grazing land in the valley, wet or dry, was about three hundred square miles. He also noted that the extreme east side of the valley was nearly arid.[2]

Lansdale's report was made in a context quite different from that of the native Indians, the Flatheads, who lived in the Bitter Root Valley before the whites. Features other than those emphasized by the white man were important to these first inhabitants. For example, the fact that the climate of the valley was relatively mild was significant, for it made survival easier and contributed to a plentiful supply of food. Also, the proximity of the valley to the open plains and buffalo to the east, and its closeness to the Columbia waters and salmon, afforded the valley Indians a great variety of food.

The Lansdale report (which has historical significance to be considered later), on the other hand, directed its attention to farming, either as a future way of life for the Indians, or as a means of livelihood in the valley for westward-moving whites. The portent of this focus should not be lost on the reader, for it suggests the image of things to come: white settlement, and the Indians' failure to accept it readily or adapt to it.

Since white settlement and its conflict with Indian ways comprise the story to be told in this paper, one should first understand the nature of Indian life prior to white influence.

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[2] Ibid.

In the cultural roots of the Flathead Indians is to be found at least part of the explanation for their particular interaction with whites in the nineteenth century.

It may seem surprising that ethnologic studies have been made of the Flathead Indians, since they were not a particularly influential group insofar as their influence was felt upon other Indians, or for that matter upon whites. They were never a large tribe, and they were less warlike than many others in the area (e.g. the Crow, Nez Perce, and Blackfeet). Nevertheless, some studies of their pre-history culture have been made.

Three ethnologists, Clark Wissler, James A. Teit, and John C. Ewers, assert that the Flatheads were originally Plains Indians who had been forced west by inter-tribal pressure;[3] Ewers is particularly concerned with the role of firearms, which were disseminated through inter-tribal trade prior to white contact in the interior. The fusil musket or "North West gun" of Hudson's Bay Company fame reached the large, aggressive Blackfeet tribe in western Montana before it reached the Flathead tribe by a roundabout route. Hence the Blackfeet pushed the Flatheads, Kootenais, and Shoshonis from the Montana plains into the mountains.[4] This push occurred, Ewers theorizes, in the middle or latter part of the eighteenth century.[5]

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[3]Harry Holbert Turney-High, "The Diffusion of the Horse to the Flatheads," Man, XXXVI (1935), pp. 183-184.

[4]John C. Ewers, Indian Life on the Upper Missouri (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), p. 36.

[5]Ibid., p. 159.

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Thus Flatheads adopted some elements of the plateau or mountain culture while maintaining the basic structure of a plains tribe.

Others, however, say that the Flatheads were a plateau tribe with strong plains affinities. Harry H. Turney-High. their principal ethnographer, maintains that they migrated from the west, settled in the Bitter Root Valley, and annually ventured out onto the plains for a buffalo hunt, thus blending the cultures of the mountains and the plains.[6] Verne F. Ray, Alan P. Merriam, and to a large extent A. L. Kroeber and Julian Steward concur with this explanation.[7]

No conclusion on the matter is definitive or subject to hard proof, but this writer believes that the position of Turney-High is the most reasonable. Flathead and Kootenai informants consulted by Turney-High were dumbfounded or amused by the idea that their ancestors came from the east. Perhaps those Indians to whom Teit had spoken thirty years before had still harbored resentment against the Blackfeet and desired to strengthen their claim to the plains land. Evidence does suggest that the plateau element of their makeup is dominant; the plains traits are secondary and at any rate exercised influence during fewer months of the year.[8] It has been

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[6]Harry Holbert Turney-High, "The Flathead Indians of Montana," Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association, XLVIII (1937) p. 11.

[7]Verne F. Ray, "Culture Element Distributions: XXII, Plateau," Anthropological Records, VIII (1942); and Alan P. Merriam, "The Hand Game of the Flathead Indian," Journal of American Folklore, LXVIII (1955), p. 313.

[8]Olga Weydemeyer Johnson, Flathead and Kootenay (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1969), p. 135; and Alan P. Merriam, "The Hand Game of the Flathead Indian,"

established, too, that initial prehistoric settlement generally moved from west to east.

The Flatheads were not clearly and thoroughly representative of any one culture area. Because of the dual environment in which they lived, it becomes particularly easy to identify the influence of environmental factors in their cultural makeup. Thus one can resort to cultural ecology to explain their cultural characteristics. For a perspective which will contribute to an understanding of their future interaction with whites, two cultural core factors are especially important: the social and the political.

There is a sharp contrast between the valley and the great plains area to which the Flatheads traveled once a year in their quest for the vast buffalo herds. The plains, on which the tribe spent its winter months, lacked the vegetables of the valley and made demands upon equipment, transportation, and organization which were far different from those imposed upon the Indians by their valley habitat.

The vegetable resources of the valley were varied. The bitter root (Lewisia rediviva), a Rocky Mountain member of the lily family with a bulb which was edible, grew naturally throughout the valley (Flatheads did not cultivate anything before whites taught them to do so). Its harvest was usually in May, when its first blossoms made it easy to find and when its taste was at its peak. In June wild carrots were dug,

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Journal of American Folklore, LXVIII (1955), p. 313; and Verne F. Ray, "Culture Element Distributions: XXII, Plateau," Anthropological Records, VIII (1942).

though of far more importance was the camas root (Camassia quamash), another lily with an edible bulb which was sometimes confused with the poisonous death camas (Zigademus). Both the bitter and camas roots were occasionally eaten raw, although they were far better cooked--steamed in a fire pit for twenty-four hours until they resembled a sweet potato in appearance and taste. The Indians frequently pressed the cooked camas root into cakes, dried them, and stored them. Completing the summer cycle following the July harvest of camas were the mountain berries and nuts. Common was the service berry (Amelanchier), often called a Juneberry and resembling a large, mild blueberry. The bitter berry of the mountain ash (Sorbus) was also eaten, especially after a mellowing frost; during lean years it was sometimes dried and made into a meal. The nuts and berries were not of as much importance as the two roots which, when dried and stored, provided a substantial reserve of food.

While in the Bitter Root Valley, the Indians obtained meat from a variety of sources which, however, were not as abundant as the buffalo of the plains. Deer and elk were hunted in the late summer and fall when they were fat and their hides were prime. Moose and bear were also taken occasionally. The Indians were not averse to eating rabbits when children caught them, and fish were taken regularly from local rivers and streams.

At one time the Flatheads may have journeyed over the Great Divide to catch salmon on the Columbia River. This was

an activity which Turney-High questions, but it is known that the Flatheads had dried fish--perhaps, however, only through trade with Indians of the Columbia watershed.[9]

The principal animal resource was, of course, the bison. The nature of this animal and its usefulness is well-known; suffice it to say that it furnished robes and tanned skins, food, horn utensils, and even some vegetable food when the intestines were eaten. It was the Flatheads' winter staple, the source of dried meat in the summer, and the source of their shelter on the plains and sometimes even in the mountains.

One must consider the horse to be a part of the Flathead environment. It was a late-coming factor among the Indians, to be sure, probably reaching them about 1750.[10] Gabriel Franchere, active in Northwest trading between 1811 and 1814, reported seeing vast herds, sometimes numbering 1,000 to 1,500, running wild. The Flatheads, he said, procured their horses from these herds, which descended from those of New Mexico and Mexico. Franchere also reported direct Spanish influence in the form of occasional branded animals among the wild ones. The female Indians' saddles resembled those of the Spanish. In fact, he had heard reports of Indians who had seen silver bits further south.[11]

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[9]Turney-High, "The Flathead Indians. . .," pp. 113, 123.

[10]Ewers, Indian Life. . . , p. 4.

[11]Gabriel Franchere, Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America in the Years 1811, 1812, 1813, and 1814, ed. and trans. J.V. Huntington, Vol. VI, part 2 of Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (32 vols.; New York: AMS Press, 1966), p. 341.

The impact of the horse was tremendous. It enabled the Flatheads to move onto the plains in their search for food. It affected tribal organization, types of shelter, virtually every aspect of Indian life. It imposed a mild hardship upon the tribe, which had to move frequently to find new grazing for large herds--which were status symbols. William Clark reported in his journal in 1805 that the Flatheads as a group owned more than any other mountain tribe within the buffalo range.[12]

It is clear that the Flatheads at the time of their first white contacts may be classed as a hunting-gathering rather than an agricultural people. This is true partly because food within the two environments was plentiful enough to sustain such a society without regimented, systematized agricultural production. And yet, neither environment alone could easily support the Indians: hence the annual treks between the two areas.

The social organization of the Flatheads reveals much about them. Certainly one of the most noticeable traits of their society in the early nineteenth century was its strong tribal sense. This tribal unity, however, had not always been present. Prior to the introduction of the horse, the tribe was relatively stationary, remaining for the most part in the Bitter Root Valley. It was, moreover, sharply

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[12]Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806, Vol. III, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites, (8 vols.; New York: Antiquarian Press, Ltd., 1959), p. 53; and Washington Irving, The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, ed. Edgeley W. Todd (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), p. 98.

fragmented into small gathering bands. Teit estimated that there were four main groups, although he said this was really impossible to know with any certainty.[13] Turney-High cited the early use of the conical, mat-covered lodge as evidence of a pre-horse, more settled plateau type of life dependent upon local animals and plants for food.[14]

Even after the introduction of the horse, small bands were the rule while the people were in the Bitter Root Valley. This was essential if they were to utilize fully the widely scattered vegetables--a large concentration of people in one place would have exhausted the food supply quickly. Patrick Gass, a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition, noted that the Flatheads lived all along the Bitter Root River, about three to four lodges to a place, each location being about eight or ten miles from the next. He noted that they used willow lodges in summer and split-pine lodges in the winter, evidently bringing the logs down the river in rafts from the more timbered areas to the south.[15]

Following the acquisition of the horse, the Flatheads shifted to a semi-nomadic life that required greater social organization. This new life rotated between the plateau and

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[13]James A. Teit, "The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateau," Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, XLV (1927-1928), p. 341.

[14]Ibid., p. 98.

[15]Patrick Gass, A Journal of the Voyages and Travels of a Corps of Discovery (Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, Inc., 1958), p. 177.

the plains, and probably the most outstanding manifestation of the change was the gradual switch from mat-covered lodges to the more easily transported tipis of buffalo hides which were especially suitable for plains travel.

One must be careful, however, not to assign the horse as the direct cause of this shift to a semi-nomadic life-style. Rather, it was more correctly the means by which a tribal objective could be achieved. This was the Indians' quest for a higher level of existence, a greater ease and predictability of food acquisition, that seemed to pervade most Indian actions. The winter food supply, warm robes, skins, and other benefits of the bison were welcome additions to the supplies of the valley.

Plains living, however, posed a different set of problems for the Indians. The buffalo hunt assumed quasi-military proportions.[16] Mass hunting tactics were the most effective; and once the beasts were killed, the services of many besides the hunters were required to butcher and dry the meat and prepare the hides. The manufacture of the skin tipis was frequently a communal project also. Far more cooperation was necessary on the hunt than in the Bitter Root Valley.

Equally important, the journey onto the plains was an invasion of alien territory which required strong lines of defense and offense. Evidence of the bitter rivalry between

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[16]Melville J. Herskovits, Economic Anthropology (N. Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), p. 103.

the Flatheads and the Blackfeet abounds, and Meriwether Lewis summed up well the situation of the Flatheads:

> They never leave the interior of the mountains while they can obtain a scanty subsistence, and always they return as soon as they have acquired a good stock of dryed meat in the plains; when this stock is consumed they venture again into the plains; thus alternately obtaining their food at the risk of their lives and returning to the mountains, while they consume it.[17]

Zenas Leonard, writing twenty-six years later, said that "they [the Blackfeet] have always retained a most inveterate hostility to the Flatheads, against whom they wage a continual warfare, having at one time greatly reduced their strength, and on several occasions came well nigh exterminating the entire tribe."[18] Leonard may have exaggerated a bit, but not much! Father Pierre Jean de Smet, a Belgian Jesuit who made the first missionary contact with the Flatheads, observed that the greatest danger on the hunt was not the buffalo, but the Blackfeet, who made a practice of stealing game and horses. "Of all the mountain savages, the Blackfeet are the most numerous and wicked and the greatest thieves."[19]

Other tribes also posed a threat. For example, de Smet classed the Bannocks but one level below the Blackfeet in their danger to the Flatheads.[20] The buffalo range of the western

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[17]Lewis and Clark, Original Journals. . ., Vol. II, p. 374.

[18]Zenas Leonard, The Adventures of Zenas Leonard, Fur Trader, ed. John C. Ewers (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), p. 32.

[19]Hiram Chittenden and Alfred Talbot Richardson, Life, Letters, and Travels of Father de Smet, Vol. I (4 vol.; N.Y.: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), p. 363.

[20]Ibid. p. 365.

Montana Indians was generally the area along the upper valley of the Musselshell River, though it extended to the Missouri River as far as Fort Benton, and south to the Yellowstone River. Since this range was common to all area tribes, the winter hunt was usually tense and exhausting.[21]

Oddly enough, the scene was frequently one of ever-changing alliances. In a letter from the Flathead camp on the Yellowstone River, de Smet wrote that a Flathead party was reinforced by a "united" camp of forty-two Nez Perce and Blackfeet lodges in a fray against a party of overconfident Crow Indians who were roundly defeated.

The annual hunt imposed demands beyond battles and hunting. The oldest of the tribe were of necessity left at home in the valley, and some means of protecting them had to be arranged.

Thus the requirement of a strong, unified tribe was clearly understood by the Flatheads. To survive in the environment of the plains culture, tribal unity was an inescapable necessity; the bands began to disappear.

Evidence of this increasing tribal identity is easily found, particularly in the social organization during the hunt. Where once there had been only bands, on the hunt there were various groups such as scouts, camp police, assistants to the camp (generally older men), hunters/warriors, and horse herders. Plains activities led to the appearance of a new

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[21]Turney-High, "The Flathead Indians. . . ," p. 116.

group of chiefs whose responsibilities differed from those of the valley chiefs.[22] Beyond this, the group effort was enhanced by the custom of sharing the kill with unsuccessful members of the hunting expedition.[23] What is significant about this whole phenomenon of tribal development is that it grew out of a fragmented society as the environment changed and imposed its own rigorous demands.

One must not forget, however, the dual nature of the Flathead culture. That is, elements of the plateau culture and the old way of life there still lingered, dominated but not completely buried by the plains elements. These plateau elements were found in the valley living. It will be seen that even in the valley life was nomadic to a degree; but when it is remembered that the valley was but ten miles wide at its greatest point, and that the principal root-gathering spots were relatively concentrated, this nomadism will seem relatively minor in relation to the trip east every winter.

There were three reasons for the Flatheads' calling the Bitter Root Valley "home." One was simply tradition--they had "always lived there." Another was that the valley was a natural fortress, easily defended at the only useful portal, the north end. Here the Flatheads were safe from marauding Crows, Blackfeet, and other tribes. Here only a minimum amount of organization--in keeping with the food-gathering band structure--was required to ward off the enemy should he seek to enter the

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[22]Teit, "The Salishan Tribes. . .," pp. 375-376.

[23]Herskovits, Economic Anthropology, p. 104.

valley and attack. The third and most compelling reason for calling the valley "home" was the nature of Flathead food storage. Owing to the yearly trek eastward with horses, the Flatheads had long before abandoned the making of bulky stoneware, pottery, and baskets--if indeed they ever produced all of these things. They could not use the more versatile horse travois of the Plains Indians because of the mountain passes they traveled. Dried vegetables, however, could be stored in caches or hung from trees for a season. It was this method of storing surplus vegetables that enabled the Flatheads to maintain a fairly stable home ground in their valley. It could be suggested that they might as well have transported their valley food to the plains, rather than having brought heavy loads of dried meat back into the valley each year. Although the valley food supply was seasonal, when it was in season it was sufficiently plentiful and located in a much safer environment, and it could be stored.

Once back in the valley, political organization loosened noticeably into a relatively simple "chiefs and council" system. That is, there was a head-chief, an assistant chief or sub-chief whose duty it was to aid the head-chief, and a number of small chiefs presiding over the family units and composing the council.[24] The system was so informal that no definite sanctions for a head-chief's powers existed. Yet his function was extremely clear in the minds of the Flatheads. Obedience was instilled in childhood, and his power was indeed real.

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[24]Teit, "The Salishan Tribes. . . ," pp. 373-374.

Power was also limited. The principal public crimes were wife-stealing, murder, theft, and slander, and it was the head-chief's duty to punish the offender. A corp of able fighting men--called Grabbers by Turney-High--were drafted to act as police and to administer punishment at the direction of the head-chief.[25] The primary means of punishment was the whip, which was probably in existence before white men appeared on the scene. Beyond public crimes the chief did not extend his powers, and in fact it was social ridicule, not his own efforts, that was the strongest means of social control. "The mirrored self," says Turney-High, "is to Flatheads the most important self. Industry, bravery, and like virtues were rewarded with wealth and prestige. Their reverse gained only opprobrium."[26]

Significant in the discussion of leadership is the question of whether the chieftainship was assigned or earned. Ray maintains that the position was not even loosely hereditary, that it was achieved through prestige in some area of accomplishment. Some of his remarks, however, suggest that this pertained especially to plains activities.[27] Ross Cox notes, for example, that there was a special chief of the hunt who was usually the most able hunter and best warrior; this position was reconsidered annually in an election, and it may or may not have been awarded to the previous year's

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Turney-High, "The Flathead Indians. . .," p. 44.

[27] Ray, "Culture Element Distributions. . .," pp. 117, 228, 229.

chief.[28] Turney-High, on the other hand, declares that the nature of the chief's position made him a definite personage with specific functions and status which were passed to his oldest living son. "In this," he writes, "the chieftainship was stable and rather dynastic."[29] In other words, Turney-High means that the position was hereditary, although he admits that in unusual circumstances the tribal council could pass over a hereditary chief and select another person. This in fact occurred within historic times, when a council failed to confirm succession by an eldest son, says Turney-High. Evidence of the degree to which respect for the hereditary stature of a chief's son was engrained in the community was visible even in this instance, however, since the son was still accorded more attention and respect than most citizens.[30] Once a person became a chief, he could not be deposed. This was partly because of the parent-filial relationship of the chief to the tribe (he was considered the father of his tribesmen, and they his children).[31]

The pattern which Turney-High describes was found especially in the plateau culture, and it coincides closely with the best historical example of chieftainship in the

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[28]Ross Cox, The Columbia River, ed. Edgar I. and Jane R. Stewart (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), p. 136.

[29]Turney-High, "The Flathead Indians. . .," p. 49.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., p. 50.

nineteenth century, that of Charlot. This chief succeeded his father, head-chief Victor, and became the single recognized chief of the Flatheads. It may have been that he was the model of hereditary chieftainship to which Turney-High refers; the records indicate that his assumption of the role was long-expected (Victor suffered a long illness before dying) and normal, the continuation of a dynasty. Near the end of the nineteenth century Arlee was designated head-chief by the federal government, when he moved to the reservation and Charlot refused to do so. But even this period of tribal disruption did not keep many Flatheads from recognizing Charlot as their head-chief, and after Arlee's death Charlot was formally reinstated as head-chief by the government.

Beyond the head-chief, however, all positions were open; and as Ray suggests, they went to the most worthy people. Flathead society was not stable enough, nor far enough removed from survival necessities, to enjoy the luxury of completely assigned status. Those who produced usually prevailed.

The historical patterns of culture just discussed were a determining factor in the course of Flathead-white relations from about 1830--and especially from 1855. For example, the fact that the head-chief's power rested heavily upon obedience traditions rather than upon hard tribal law meant that when the framework of tradition was broken down by the reservation system and the influence of white society, the chief's power decreased to the point that the last traditional

nineteenth century chief, Charlot, had virtually no power and relatively little influence. This new development allowed a government-initiated split in the chieftainship (between Charlot and Arlee), and it led directly to an increase in the influence of the Catholic mission on the reservation and the Flathead agent over the Indians. The traditional limits of the head-chief's powers also caused tribal friction when whites introduced problems that the chieftainship was not designed to handle, problems that required a chief to speak absolutely for his people when historically he did not do so. Areas of inadequacies included the negotiation of treaties, as well as government of the tribe under white laws which incorporated concepts unfamiliar to Indians.

Consider, too, the white movement into the Bitter Root Valley and the fact that the Flatheads never really did resist this, except verbally. One reason for this--and there are others to be discussed in future chapters--was that social organization in the valley was weaker than that of the plains culture. There was little chance to organize resistance of a military, or even a passive, kind. Unity was slight.

Indeed, the Flatheads sometimes actually wanted certain benefits that came from the whites. For example, Christianity held the nebulous promise of magic on the hunt and in battle. The Indians believed that the cross gave them superiority over enemy tribes, superiority which the small Flathead tribe desperately needed. De Smet hinted that the power of Christianity was actual, reporting that just prior to his first rendezvous with the Flatheads, they had met the Blackfeet in battle and,

outnumbered two hundred to sixty, still killed fifty of the enemy while losing none of their own![32] Certainly the Indians believed that the magic of Christianity worked for them.[33]

Other things were desired from the whites too. To insure success on the plains hunts, what could be better than the white man's promise to make a treaty that would bind the hated Blackfeet to peace on the common hunting grounds? This lure was used as leverage by the whites in negotiating the Hell Gate Treaty with the Flatheads in 1855. Ironically, the Flatheads exchanged their rights and some freedom in this treaty for peace on the hunt, not realizing that the treaty was a large step toward the demise of the hunt altogether. Firearms, ammunition, warm clothes and blankets, trinkets and jewelry, steel traps and knives were all avidly sought by the Flatheads. In the age-old quest for a less rigorous life, these Indians, not yet a generation out of the stone age, would be susceptible to the machinations of the white man.

The pre-history way of life of the Flatheads, the way observed by Lewis and Clark, would continue for about half a century after the Indians met the whites. In the 1840's, when the Jesuit Blackrobes reached the Indians of the valley, through the 1850's and the first treaty between the Flatheads and the whites, and even for awhile during the reservation period, the old ways continued. Gradually, for many on the

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[32]Pierre Jean de Smet, S.J., Letters and Sketches, Vol. 27 of Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (32 Vols.; N.Y.: AMS Press, 1966). p. 137.

[33]Ibid.

reservation, farming supplanted gathering. But until the buffalo was gone, hunting was still a way of life for them.

The presence of whites would, however, make initial inroads into the old culture quickly, and indeed the trinkets of trade were common among the Flatheads prior to the Lewis and Clark expedition. Clark observed on initial contact that the Indians wore copper, brass, and shell ornaments sparingly.[34] Patrick Gass, one of the men accompanying the expedition, noted in his journal that these Indians possessed "a great many beads and other articles, which they got from white men at the mouth of this river; or where the salt water is."[35] Gass was speaking of trade on the Columbia River, which whites had reached earlier by sea. It is doubtful, however, whether the Flatheads actually traveled that far from their homeland. It is more likely that they traded for these items at a point on the Columbia much closer to present Montana. Certainly they were in contact with the Indians of the lower Columbia, since the Flatheads often traded for dried salmon with them.

Whatever slight influence the early Columbia and westerly Indian trade had on the Indians of the Bitter Root Valley, the expedition of Lewis and Clark was the initial thrust of white culture into their homelands. Alexander MacKenzie had crossed the continent to the Pacific in 1793,

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[34]Lewis and Clark, Original Journals. . . , Vol. III, p. 78.

[35]Gass, A Journal of the Voyages and Travels. . ., p. 172.

but considerably farther north than the Flatheads ever roamed. Three years later Duncan McGillivray, working for the same North West Company which sent MacKenzie west, penetrated into the area north of Flathead country. In 1800 the great North West trader and map maker David Thompson met some Kootenais (a tribe related to the Flathead) on the Red Bear River near the east-west continental divide.[36]

Lewis and Clark were the first white men to meet those now called Flatheads, and this meeting was undramatic. Clark noted that the Indians were friendly and that they gladly shared their berries--the only food they had. He also noted that they appeared strong and lighter-complected than most Indians.[37] It is evident from what one of the chiefs said that the newcomers were the first white men to be seen in their valley: "The Chief harangued until late at night, Smoked in our pipe and appeared Satisfied. I was the first white man who ever wer on the waters of this river."[38]

The Lewis and Clark expedition stayed in the Flathead area a few days to rest its horses before continuing through the Lolo Pass with a Flathead guide. Gass reported that the country appeared "poor and mountainous," and he concurred with Clark that the Indians were friendly. They "received us kindly, appeared pleased to see us, and gave us such

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[36]Johnson, Flathead and Kootenay, p. 160.

[37]Lewis and Clark, Original Journals. . . , Vol. III, pp. 52-53.

[38]Ibid., p. 53.

provisions as they had," he said, despite the fact that the interpreter with the expedition could not speak their language. These provisions were what one would expect: berries, some dried fish, and especially roots. Gass and Clark both mentioned the roots, which were probably camas and which were made into a kind of bread by steaming, pounding, and baking in a kiln. The results were quite good, according to Gass, tasting something like pumpkins. Clark agreed, adding that the Indians also made soup from the root.[39]

Lewis and Clark left the Indians with the name Flathead, an unfortunate misnomer to say the least. Confusion about the name "Flatheads" stems directly from the generic use to which it was put by Lewis and Clark. They observed that most of the Indians west of the Rockies flattened the foreheads of their infants into a straight line from the top of the head to the nose by binding them up with a board. They also observed that the Indians east of the Rockies called all Indians west of the Rockies "Flatheads." So Lewis and Clark applied the same label to the Indians of the Bitter Root Valley who spent time on the plains.[40]

In fact, the Indians of the Bitter Root Valley did not flatten their heads. Washington Irving, writing about the

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[39]Gass, A Journal of the Voyages and Travels. . ., pp. 160, 168-169; and Lewis and Clark, Original Journals. . . , Vol. III, p. 78.

[40]Lewis and Clark, Original Journals. . . , Vol. IV, pp. 183-184.

trading post Astoria, which was operating in 1811, cautioned that the Flatheads of the Bitter Root Valley were not to be confused with the Flatheads of the Columbia. The former did not flatten their heads, and the latter did.[41] Ross Cox, a trader in the Northwest between 1811 and 1816, wrote thus:

> I could not discover why the Black-feet and the Flat-head received their respective designations; for the feet of the former are no more inclined to sable than any other part of the body, while the heads of the latter possess their fair proportion of rotundity. Indeed it is only below the falls and rapids [of the Columbia] that real flat-heads appear, and at the mouth of the Columbia that they flourish most supernaturally.[42]

Other explanations have been advanced for the misnomer. Edgar and Jane R. Stewart, editors of Cox's story, suggest that the Bitter Root Valley Flatheads may have appeared flat-topped to Plains Indians: that is, they may have been brachycephalic. But this is a novel idea which has no supporting evidence.

Zenas Leonard, writing about 1832, described the process of binding and flattening heads and added that the Montana Indians largely discontinued this after contact with whites. He was actually describing the practice of the Chinook Indians near the mouth of the Columbia. His assignation of it to early Flatheads may have been based on hearsay, or he

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[41]Washington Irving, Astoria, ed. Edgeley W. Todd (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), pp. 251-252.

[42]Cox, The Columbia River, p. 142.

may have noted flattened heads on older men of a tribe he mistook for Flatheads. His accuracy must be questioned, at any rate, since he also erred when he said that the Flatheads hunted buffalo at the head of the Columbia River when in fact they hunted them on the eastern side of the Continental Divide.[43]

Final authority for the matter probably rests with Dr. Carling I. Malouf, who noted that skulls excavated in the traditional Montana Flathead areas by archaeologists had normal frontal bones.[44]

John C. Ewers, in his introduction to the narrative of Zenas Leonard, suggests that the Indians had a thriving trade of their own long before white traders made their appearance. The tribes that attended the trapper and trader rendezvous of the 1820's and 1830's were very likely the same Indians who had earlier participated in the great Indian fairs. Through these fairs the Flatheads may have received some of their beads and brass ornaments, for there were reports from trader Francois Larocque (trading in the Dakotas and Montana as early as 1804) that Crows, Flatheads, and Shoshonis, as well as other tribes, met regularly to exchange European goods obtained the preceding summer at the great Mandan trading center for Spanish articles from the Southwest.[45]

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[43]Leonard, Adventures of Zenas Leonard. . ., pp. 33-34.

[44]Johnson, Flathead and Kootenay, p. 165.

[45]Leonard, Adventures of Zenas Leonard. . . , p. xiii; and Francois Antoine Larocque, The Journal of Francois Antoine Larocque, trans. and ed. Ruth Hazlitt, No. 20 of Sources of Northwest History, ed. Paul C. Phillips (20 vols.; Missoula: State University of Montana), pp. 5-9.

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The white fur trader, however, brought the art of trading to a fever pitch in a short time. David Thompson, unable to reach the Columbia area before Lewis and Clark, later spent several extremely active years there. It was he who built the first permanent trading center within easy trading distance of Flathead country. This was Kootenay House, constructed in 1807 on present Toby Creek on the west side of Lower Columbia Lake. From here, Thompson ranged widely through the Northwest, even to Clark Fork country, which was closer to the Flatheads. Through Thompson and his companions (e.g. Finan McDonald), as well as through Larocque, the Flatheads must have learned the use of efficient steel traps and acquired a desire for firearms, knives, and other items. Although Larocque must have been pleased with the intense desire of many Indians to trade, he must also have fretted at their blatant attempts to prevent his trading with other tribes. But trade contacts expanded and the traders added new posts to their list: Kully-spell House, on the Clark Fork near present East Hope, Idaho, and Saleesh or Flathead House, near Thompson Falls, Montana, both founded in 1809.[46]

Ross Cox was another trader who influenced the Flatheads in the early nineteenth century. He was sent out in 1812 by the Pacific Fur Company, for which he first worked as a clerk, to establish a post among the Flatheads. He was in competition with Finan McDonald of the North West Company,

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[46] Johnson, Flathead and Kootenay, pp. 173, 185-186; and Larocque, The Journal of. . . , pp. 5-10, 21.

who with Thompson was already in the area. Cox and Russell Farnham started out with twelve men and fourteen loaded horses, and when they arrived in Flathead country they established a post about forty miles to the west of Saleesh House.

Cox noted his impressions of the Flatheads, at that time mostly old men, and women and children left behind while the main band was on the hunt. "We were quite charmed," he said, "with their frank and hospitable reception, and their superiority in cleanliness over any of the tribes we had hitherto seen." He was particularly pleased that they were "free from the vermin we felt so annoying at the lower parts of the Columbia."[47] In other words, he was happy to avoid lice for once!

In 1812 the Flatheads lived much as they had for generations. Cox said that they lived in tipis of buffalo and moose skins, and that they were able to sell much dried buffalo meat to his party. Evidently the plains hunts were furnishing them with regular and plentiful food.[48]

Although the Flatheads may have lived much as their ancestors, they were by this time familiar with what the traders wanted. When the main band returned from the hunt, Cox was able to buy a number of beaver skins brought back especially for trade with the white man.[49]

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[47]Cox, The Columbia River, p. 111.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid., p. 112.

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There is some question whether Cox was actually in Flathead country when he claimed he was. Alexander Ross said he was not, stating that Farnham was sent into the area, but that Cox was not with him at the time. It is true that Cox did not mention the name of the post he and Farnham were supposed to have built, and he did not mention Saleesh House, though he should have known about it. For that matter, he never mentioned having seen large Pend d'Oreille Lake in northern Idaho. But there is, according to the editors Stewart, some evidence of an early trading post and a large Indian village near the site of Dixon, Montana, that does fit Cox's description. Moreover, his observations about the Flatheads are accurate and conform to the descriptions by others. We may conclude that, allowing for possible exaggeration, his work has historical value.[50]

At all events, Cox was not the only trader in the area. There were McDonald, Thompson, Larocque (who traded from the east), and Farnham, all of whom have already been mentioned. There was Alexander Ross, employed by the Pacific Fur Company and active in the Northwest between 1810 and 1813. John Work ranged the area for years, into the 1830's, and most of the major fur companies had men in the area at one time or another. According to Washington Irving, Nathaniel Wyeth passed several months in a traveling camp of Flatheads and commented (as others had) on their unusual honesty, devotion, and

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[50] *Ibid*.

pleasantness.[51] John Ball, a member of the Wyeth party, recorded the Pierre's Hole meeting of his group with a trading company headed by William Sublette. The Sublette company was engaged in trade with the Flathead and Nez Perce Indians in 1832.[52] Indeed, the battle of Pierre's Hole in that year, a famous encounter well-covered in Western literature, pitted a party of Blackfeet Indians against a dominant coalition of traders and Flatheads.

The Bonneville expedition, which has received much attention, also made contact with the Flatheads. Irving recounts how this group, which had earlier been involved in the Pierre's Hole battle, joined a group of frightened Flathead hunters fleeing from some Blackfeet. Whites and Flatheads went to a Flathead village, where the whites stayed "awhile"--actually several months.[53]

Bonneville attempted to trade with the Flatheads and other tribes, but he complained that the Hudson's Bay Company enjoyed advantages over other companies in the Rockies. The British company, he said, maintained in the Flathead country a permanent, year-around post occupied by a resident trader with whom the Indians were accustomed to doing business.

Although the fur trade fell on hard times by the late 1830's, chiefly because of its rapid exploitation of the

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[51]Irving, The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, p. 344.

[52]Larpenteur, Forty Years a Fur Trader. . ., pp. 33-34.

[53]Irving, The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, p. 97.

resources, some activity continued through the 1840's. Charles Larpenteur, for example, tried during the winter of 1847-1848 to form a partnership with James Bruguiere for trade in the Bitter Root Valley, where St. Mary's Mission was by then well established. Both men had an aversion to returning to the states permanently, partly because they had Indian wives. Several attempts were made to reach the mountains from Fort Benton, but weather played the foe each time, and the project was finally abandoned in the winter of 1848-1849 when the Blackfeet announced that they would be raiding the Flatheads and advised Larpenteur against traveling just then.[54]

Fur trading flourished all around the Bitter Root Valley; and although the Flatheads furnished the whites with many pelts, the most intense trading and trapping actually occurred just west and northwest, and south of these Indians. The Flathead country was rich in beaver, and the Hudson's Bay Company did maintain a regular post there,[55] but the country was never penetrated heavily or often directly by traders; the Indians had to travel appreciable distances to trade. Several expeditions went into the area one year and out again the next, never to return. Of course, this does

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[54]Larpenteur, Forty Years a Fur Trader. . . , pp. 257-258.

[55]Hiram Martin Chittenden, The American Fur Trade of the Far West, vol. II (3 vols.; N.Y.: Francis P. Harper, 1902), p. 891.

not negate the white influence on the Flatheads, who were nomadic and had many contacts with whites.

It has been suggested that the traders and trappers looked favorably on the Flatheads, and their comments invariably suggest that the Flatheads were a remarkable tribe. Alexander Ross said that they "regard intoxicating drinks as poisons, and drunkenness as disgraceful."[56] Joseph Whitehouse, of the Lewis and Clark expedition, claimed that at trading sessions and at council the Flatheads "are the likelyest and honestst Savages we have ever yet Seen." (Lewis and Clark bought twelve horses and ten or twelve pack saddles from the Flatheads).[57] Ross Cox described the Flatheads in even more glowing terms when he said this:

> The Flat-heads have fewer failings than any of the tribes I ever met with. They are honest in their dealings, brave in the field, quiet and amenable to their chiefs, fond of cleanliness, and decided enemies to falsehood of every description. The women are excellent wives and mothers, and their character for fidelty is so well established, that we never heard an instance of one of them proving unfaithful to her husband. They are also free from the vice of backbiting, so common among them. Both sexes are comparatively fair, and their complexions are a shade lighter than the palest new copper after being freshly rubbed. They are remarkable well made, rather slender, and never corpulent.[58]

Captain Benjamin Bonneville, in an 1833 letter from the Wind River, declared that the Flatheads were the only Indians in

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[56]Franchere, Narrative of a Voyage. . . , p. 325.

[57]Lewis and Clark, Original Journals. . . , vol. VII, p. 150.

[58]Cox, The Columbia River, p. 135.

the area who had never killed a white man. They were, he said, "the most honest and religious people I ever saw."[59] He was impressed by the absence of polygamy and by the observance of religious holidays. In fact, he asserted, whites were completely safe only among Flatheads and Nez Perces.[60] In 1833 Zenas Leonard was saying much the same as Bonneville: "The Flatheads are well accustomed to the manners and customs of the white race, and in many respects appear ambitious to follow their example." They were, he said, hospitable to strangers and were "tried friends of the white people," whom they always welcomed into the villages and whom they frequently guided.[61]

During the 1850's the Flatheads were still amazing the whites. Lieutenant John Mullan, a friend of the Flatheads who lived with them for nearly two years, wrote that when he arrived in the Flathead camp for the first time, the chiefs assembled for him and at a given signal, they all prayed aloud. Although this was several years after St. Mary's Mission had been established among them, Mullan was astonished. "I asked

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[59]Letter from Captain Benjamin Bonneville to Major-General Alexander Macomb, General in Chief, U.S. Army, 29 July 1833, cited in Irving, The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, p. 385.

[60]Ibid., p. 385.

[61]Leonard, Adventures of Zenas Leonard. . . , pp. 33-34.

myself: Am I among Indians? Am I among people whom all the world call savages? I could scarcely believe my eyes. The thought that these men were penetrated with religious sentiments, so profound and beautiful, overwhelmed me with amazement."[62]

The Flatheads continued to draw similar praise from the whites throughout most of the nineteenth century, always claiming that they had never spilled a drop of white blood. This claim continued to be true long after the whites had given them provocation for violence.

If the Flatheads wanted the magic powers of Christianity, as has been suggested, they also wanted what the trader--often a decidedly irreligious fellow--offered. Through him the first heavy inroads on Indian culture began.

Ross Cox grasped the situation clearly in 1813. There was, he said, bitter enmity between the Flatheads and the Blackfeet. The numbers of the former had been greatly reduced by the Blackfeet in the last few years because of perpetual warfare between the two. He ascribed much of this warfare to the love of buffalo and the mutual claims upon the buffalo grounds. But, he noted, the problem was now deeper: the Blackfeet had firearms; the Flatheads had only arrows and fewer warriors besides.[63]

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[62]Lt. John Mullan, quoted in de Smet, Life, Letters, and Travels. . . , p. 308.

[63]Cox, The Columbia River, p. 134.

It was precisely this condition that made the Flatheads joyful at the arrival of traders, because they brought the "villanous [sic] saltpetre."[64] The curse of saltpetre was double, for not only did it heat up the Indian rivalry of long standing, but it brought down upon the whites the hatred of the Blackfeet, who promised death to all traders from the west who came upon their lands.

The Flatheads' desire for guns was largely a product of their well-documented rivalry with the Blackfeet, stories abounding in trader literature of Blackfeet depredations upon them (seldom was the reverse true). Cox tells of Flathead hunters being surprised by Blackfeet, who killed several of the former and took many prisoners to be tortured as a form of entertainment.[65] Gabriel Franchere said that "sometimes. . . they are so harassed by the Blackfeet, who surprise them in the night and carry off their horses, that they are forced to return light-handed, and then they have nothing to eat but roots, all the winter."[66] Irving expressed similar views, saying that the simple, honest Flatheads were "especially maltreated by the ruthless Blackfeet, who harass them in their villages, steal their horses by night, or openly carry them

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., p. 112.

[66] Franchere, Narrative of a Voyage. . . , p. 340.

off in the face of a day, without provoking pursuit or retaliation."[67]

It is not surprising that the Flatheads greeted the traders with joy and the pelts of beavers, the animals which they once held dear as being a fallen race of Indians. The whites, by giving arms to the Blackfeet, had caused the Flatheads to need guns to survive; a dependence was created. And once the firearms were received, the dependence was furthered: guns needed ammunition. This was one contribution of the white man, though alone it did not alter the Indian mode of living completely. The pattern of hunting, fighting, and food gathering was ages old.

Peace among Indian tribes would improve trade opportunities, and thus white values and urgings for peace also impinged on inter-tribal relations. Cox and his companions, disliking the beating being administered to the Flatheads annually by the Blackfeet, and being repulsed by the torture rituals of this rivalry, tried in 1813 to persuade the Flatheads to remain in the mountains, living off the game to be found there. This failing, they suggested that the Flatheads try to make up with the Blackfeet. This must have seemed absurd at first to a tribe that nursed an historic hatred. But after threats of a withdrawal of arms trade by the whites--undoubtedly most hollow threats--the Flathead warrior chief agreed to follow this suggestion should the "peace chief" agree. All the while the Flatheads emphasized the untrustworthiness of their

[67]Irving, Astoria, p. 252.

enemy. Nothing came of this proposal. Peace never arrived, and of course trade never ceased.[68]

Cox and his companions had proposed a peace agreement quite foreign to the Indians' experience, while at the same time creating false hopes among the Flatheads. The arrangement that the whites suggested was the product of white war experience, which recognized prisoner exchanges and other conventions of European civility. The Indians practiced no such refinements of war. But despite Flathead scruples about such a peace, they did indeed desire it in order to stop decimation of their numbers. Their willingness even to consider such a proposal attests to this. If the bait of peace between the tribes could be made strong enough, if the Flatheads thought the whites could actually achieve inter-tribal peace, then what concessions would the Flatheads make to have it? The whites realized their advantage, and they would not hesitate to use Indian hopes as leverage in the making of the 1855 Hell Gate treaty.

Cox was not the only white to suggest inter-tribal peace to the Indians. In the early 1830's Captain Bonneville tried to make peace between the two warring tribes. Bonneville made the attempt, Irving said, because the Flatheads seemed "amicable and inoffensive," and because they were suffering at the hands of their enemy. What Bonneville proposed was a meeting between the Flathead and Blackfeet chiefs in a grand conference. The Flatheads and the Nez Perces (who

[68]Cox, The Columbia River, p. 134.

were invited to join in the conference) held a council for two days and finally rejected Bonneville's proposal--wisely, said Irving. The reason for the rejection? According to the Flatheads the Blackfeet were evil and needed punishing; and besides, battle kept the young Flathead warriors strong and alert![69] In the future, however, the Flatheads would be more amenable to such a conference.

The Flatheads were ill-equipped to cope with the competition of whites and their codes of behavior. The "goodness" of the Indians, their pride in never having killed a white man, restrained them from mounting effective protest and resistance to white incursions into their land. The traditional bounds of Flathead chieftainship prohibited the leaders from governing effectively when whites sought to expand the chief's power and role. The drive for food and the requirements of defense caused an extreme reliance upon whites for firearms and created a hope for peace which could be achieved only at high cost for the Indians. The rough vanguard of transient mountain men and traders initiated a pattern of circumstances quite beyond the Indians' control, until they depended upon the white traders for their lives and upon the missionaries for their strength and salvation. Ultimately the Indian was to lose his grasp on his own destiny and become the victim of white greed, insensitivity, and thoughtlessness. The Indians were to be dealt an unfair and harsh blow as their ancient patterns of life were ended

[69] Irving, The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, pp. 102-103.

while they were yet unable to adapt to the ways that whites sought to substitute. It is these Indians' plight and story to which this paper addresses itself.

CHAPTER II

MISSIONARIES: RISE AND FALL OF INFLUENCE

One of the most outstanding things about the Flathead Indians was their unusual devotion to Catholicism during much of the nineteenth century and especially from the 1830's to 1850. Many traders of the Northwest and Pacific Fur Companies, who were among the Flatheads as early as 1811 and 1812, were Canadian half-breed Iroquois Catholics who shared basic Christian tenets. According to traditional accounts--the most influential of which is that of Lawrence B. Palladino--these new Northwest travelers introduced Christianity to the Flatheads, who were beset with trouble from the Blackfeet and who must have been impressed by the confidence of the newcomers.[1] Palladino had much to say about the Flatheads, for he was a Jesuit historian and priest among them intermittently for more than fifty years, beginning his service at St. Ignatius Mission in 1867.

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[1]Lawrence B. Palladino, S.J., Indian and White in the Northwest (Lancaster, Pa.: Wickersham Publishing Co., 1922), pp. 9-10; Hiram Chittenden and Alfred Talbot Richardson, Life, Letters, and Travels of Father de Smet, (4 vol.; N.Y.: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), Vol. I, p. 19; Pierre Jean de Smet, S.J., Letters and Sketches, Vol. 27 of Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (32 Vols.; N.Y.: AMS Press, 1966), pp. 14-16.

In particular, according to Palladino and Bishop Rosati, it was Ignace Shonowane (also known as Big Ignace or Old Ignace), leader of a band of twenty-four Catholic Iroquois, who wielded outstanding influence among the Flatheads and convinced them of Christianity's merits. Settling in Flathead country sometime between 1812 and 1820, Ignace and his followers were received into the Flathead tribe, and eventually persuaded their fellow tribesmen to send a deputation to St. Louis for "Blackrobes." Thus, according to the traditional accounts, the Flatheads became the first tribe in history to request directly the services of the Jesuits. Although the traditional account does not say whether the Indians who made the first trek to St. Louis with the plea for Blackrobes were Flatheads or Nez Perce living with the Flatheads, it does say that four Indians made the trip in 1831, traveling with a party of traders bound for St. Louis.

The four Indians reached their destination and made known their wishes to church officials. Although the Indians' faith may have been strong, they were ill-equipped to confront the dangers of a new society, and all four became ill, two perishing.

That a delegation of four Indians did go to St. Louis from "Flathead Country," and that two died in the city is not questioned. In a recent and more complete account, however, Alvin Josephy, Jr. considers the matter in depth and provides the background of the introduction of Christianity to the

Flatheads and then follows the delegation to St. Louis.[2]

Josephy discounts the early influence of the Iroquois, pointing out that as late as 1825 there was no evidence of the intense religious fervor that missionaries noted ten or twelve years later. Rather, the Christian word first came to the Flatheads in an effective way from two Indian boys, a Kootenay and a Nez Perce, who were sent to the Church of England Missionary Society School in Red River, Manitoba, in 1824 for four years of schooling and religious instruction. Upon their return to their tribes in 1829, these boys--particularly the Nez Perce--preached from influential positions and thus caused a Nez Perce representation--not a Flathead group--to go to St. Louis in 1831. Two of the four Indians did die in that city, says Josephy, and the other two died en route to their homeland.

Whatever the identity of this forlorn delegation, its impact was not lost on Americans. Their missionary spirit was kindled to a new intensity by the Christian Advocate, which spread the news eastward and issued a call to action. Because the Jesuits, whom the Indians specifically sought, were too insolvent to respond to the 1831 call, the Methodists and then the Presbyterians made the first responses. Jason Lee, accompanied by his nephew Daniel, responded to the call of the missionary society of the Methodist Church and left for the Northwest in 1834 to establish a Flathead

[2]Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 87-89, 667-670.

mission. Shipping their mission supplies to the mouth of the Columbia River by trader Nathaniel Wyeth's ship, the May Dacre, they traveled overland through Flathead country with Wyeth's company men and ended their journey at Fort Vancouver, a Hudson's Bay Company outpost. Dr. John McLoughlin of that British company, probably eager to keep Americans out of fur trading operations, furnished guides who showed the missionaries the fertile, American-occupied Willamette Valley. The Methodists quickly decided that the prospect of a mission to the Flatheads was less attractive than one among the settlers on the Willamette.[3]

In 1835 Flathead Chief Insula went to the Green River rendezvous area to meet missionaries who he hoped would be Blackgowns. To his disappointment, the missionaries were Samuel Parker and Dr. Marcus Whitman, sent by the Presbyterian church. The Nez Perce seemed satisfied with these men, but Palladino believed (probably correctly) that the Flatheads did not like the looks of the Protestants. When Whitman, who had returned to the states to secure more missionaries, returned with his bride and W. H. Gray, the Flatheads were not around to meet them. Whitman and Gray continued on to an ill fate in Oregon.[4]

It was these unsatisfactory contacts with Protestants, who neither wore black robes and crucifixes, nor displayed

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[3]Ray Allen Billington, Westward Expansion (N.Y.: Macmillon Co., 1960), pp. 518-519; and Josephy, The Nez Perce, pp. 670-672.

[4]Palladino, Indian and White, pp. 20-21; and Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, pp. 28-29.

the ritualism of Catholicism, nor practiced celebacy, that probably prompted the second delegation of Indians to leave for St. Louis in 1835. This time the Indians were Flatheads. On the return of Chief Insula to his tribe, Old Ignace, with two sons to be baptized, made the journey to the St. Louis Jesuit headquarters. His trip was partially successful: his sons were baptized, with the names Charles and Francis, and the request for a Jesuit missionary was made. All three returned home in the spring of 1836, but to their dismay, no Jesuit followed.

In the summer of 1837 another delegation was sent to St. Louis by the Flatheads, thus testifying to the persistence of the tribe and demonstrating its eagerness to have whatever instruction the Jesuits could furnish. Old Ignace was again among the delegates, who included three other Flatheads and one Nez Perce. This group was joined by W. H. Gray, who met them at Fort Laramie. None of the Indians reached the Jesuits, all being killed by Sioux while fording the South Platte River.

Finally, two adopted Iroquois--Pierre Gaucher and Young Ignace--made the trip in 1839, perhaps attracted by the promise of adventure. They left with some Hudson's Bay Company trappers or traders going to St. Louis by canoe via the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers. The party stopped at the St. Joseph mission in Council Bluffs, where they met Father Pierre Jean de Smet, who noted that two Catholic Iroquois came to visit him on 18 September 1839, saying that they had lived for twenty-three years among the Flatheads and Pierced Noses.

"I have never," said the priest, "seen any savages so vervant [sic] in religion." They observed Sunday and prayed and sang canticles several times a week.[5] De Smet gave them letters of recommendation to the Father Superior in St. Louis, Bishop Rosati. Upon arriving in that city, the two Indians were overjoyed to learn the heartening news that they might have a priest the following spring (1840).

The Jesuits had long been eager to establish a mission among the Flatheads, whose persistent and courageous requests had aroused their interest; the Flatheads seemed to need them. Bishop Rosati wrote at once to the Father General of the Society in Rome, detailing his plans and saying that these people had "defended it [the Catholic Church] against the encroachments of the Protestant ministers. When the [Protestant] missionaries presented themselves among them our good Catholics refused to accept them."[6]

One of the Indians left St. Louis for the Bitter Root Valley immediately to bear the tidings, delivering the news early in the spring of 1840, while the other remained behind to guide the missionary to Flathead country in the spring. The man he was destined to accompany was one whom he had met earlier: Father Pierre de Smet. The Belgian priest volunteered to make the trip, alone if necessary, to minister to the Flatheads.[7]

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[5]Quoted in Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, pp. 29-30.

[6]Quoted in Palladino, Indian and White, p. 129.

[7]Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, p. 31.

De Smet was a man of exceptional devotion, a priest well-suited for the Flatheads. His energy drove him throughout the plains and Northwest to minister to a variety of tribes and to establish several Jesuit missions. He appeared to be fearless, traveling alone or with a few companions through the heart of country surveyed carefully by hostile as well as by friendly Indians.

He possessed a remarkable optimism, that very necessary trait on the harsh frontier, and this optimism was strengthened by sympathy for the red man and the pressures put upon him by whites. "Since the discovery of America a system of extermination," de Smet is quoted as saying, "of moving the Indians, thrusting them further back, has been pursued and practiced by the whites. . . . The Curtain will soon fall upon the poor and unhappy remnants of the Indian tribes, and they will henceforth exist only in history." The Indian wars of the Great Desert area, he added, had "like so many other Indian wars, been provoked by injustices and misdeeds on the part of the whites and even the events [injustices] of the government. For years and years they have deceived the Indians with impunity in the sale of their lands, and by embezzlement, or rather open theft, of immense sums paid by the Government therefor."[8]

It was this Jesuit who volunteered to answer the Flatheads' call for spiritual help; and having received approval at last for an initial trip to Flathead country, he began his

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[8]Quoted in Ibid., p. 119.

journey on 29 March 1840, traveling by steamboat to Westport (Kansas City), where he joined an American Fur Company expedition which left on 30 April 1840 and reached the Green River two months later, whereupon de Smet became ill with what he called malaria.

Anticipating his coming, ten Flathead Indians met de Smet at the Green River, and ill as the priest was, the following Sunday he celebrated formal mass--the first, he said, in the Rockies north of Mexican possessions.[9] Palladino says that the altar was decorated with boughs and garlands of wild flowers, and that the spot came to be known as "The Prairie of the Mass."[10] Both Indians and whites (chiefly hunters, trappers and traders) attended the mass.

The mass was but the first of a series of inspiring events, for when de Smet and his ten Indian companions crossed the Teton range into Pierre's Hole they discovered a camp of 1,600 Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles who had come to meet this Blackrobe! Their initial act upon greeting him was to present a bell with which he could call them to prayer throughout the day. De Smet met with the Flathead chief, called Big Face, and writes of him that "he had a truly patriarchal aspect, and received me in the midst of his whole council with the liveliest cordiality."[11] Big Face addressed

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[9] Ibid., pp. 31-34.

[10] Palladino, Indian and White, p. 31. Note that Palladino wrongly placed the date of de Smet's arrival at Pierre's Hole on 30 June 1838.

[11] Quoted in Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, p. 223.

the priest, saying "Blackrobe, you are welcome in my nation. Today Kyleeyou [the Great Spirit] has fulfilled our wishes. I have always exhorted my children to love Kyleeyou. We know that everything belongs to him, and that our whole dependence is upon his liberal hand. . . . We have several times sent our people to the great Black-robe at St. Louis. . . . that he might send us a Father to speak with us. --Blackrobe, we will follow the words of your mouth."[12] Each morning Big Face was up before the others and rode through camp to "harangue" his people. According to the amazed priest, "these 1,600 persons, thanks to his fatherly care and good advice, seemed to form but a single family, in which order and charity reigned in a truly surprising manner."[13] De Smet preached to the Indians four times a day, noticing that their zeal increased steadily. He offered a medal to the first who could recite without a mistake the Pater, Ave, Credo, Ten Commandments, and the four acts. Immediately a chief arose and did so on the spot.[14] De Smet's enthusiasm colored his account of these events, but his amazement was real enough and the general tenor of his writing should not be doubted.

In a few days the Indians started for Flathead country, but de Smet chose not to accompany them, thinking it best to report to St. Louis and secure assistance for a permanent

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[12]Quoted in Ibid., pp. 223-224.

[13]Quoted in Ibid., p. 224.

[14]Ibid., pp. 223-224.

mission among them. He arrived back in the city on the last day of 1840.

It was in St. Louis that de Smet learned the disheartening news that the Jesuits had scarcely half the money necessary for a return expedition. Ever the crusader, he went at once to New Orleans and almost single-handedly raised the necessary money. (He was so successful at this business that in the future he was sent as far as Europe to solicit funds for the Church). In a letter to the editor of the Catholic Herald, written from the Steamboat Oceana on the Missouri in May, 1841, de Smet said that in New Orleans, in the course of but three or four days and with the blessing of the Bishop of New Orleans, he had raised $1,100 in cash and secured six boxes of useful articles for the Indians. He also reported receiving $440 from other sources.[15]

One need only read de Smet's comments about the Flatheads to know why he worked so hard to raise the money required to mount a full-scale expedition to them. He encountered many Indians in his travels, but he never met any more readily moved by religion than the Flatheads, and he never met any more moral "by Indian Standards." He first noticed this when he met the small Flathead delegation at Council Bluffs, and he continued to write of them in this optimistic way.[16] For example, after his first visit to them he said "never in my life have I enjoyed so many consolations as during my stay among these good Flatheads and

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[15] Ibid., p. 274.

[16] Ibid., p. 19.

Pend d'Oreilles; the Lord has amply compensated for all the privations and sufferings that I have endured in this long and laborious journey. . . ."[17] That first meeting between priest and Flatheads, he says, was not a meeting of strangers,

> but of friends; it was like children running to meet their father after a long absence. I wept with joy at embracing them, and they also with tears in their eyes, welcomed me with tenderest expressions. With a truly patriarchal simplicity, they told me all of the little news of their nation, their almost miraculous preservation in a fight between sixty of their warriors and 200 Blackfeet, a fight that lasted five days, and in which they had killed fifty of their enemies without losing a single man.[18]

The money raised by the priest, and what additional resources the Church could muster, were enough to equip an expedition that left St. Louis in late spring, 1841, and arrived at Fort Hall, on the Snake River, in mid-August. De Smet's outfit consisted of mounts for all members, a few pack animals, and three carts and a wagon drawn by ox teams. These wagons, says Palladino, were the first brought to Montana; an arduous journey it must have been.[19] In addition to de Smet, those comprising this party were Father Nicholas Point, a forty-two year old French Jesuit who had been in the United States for about five years; Father Gregory Mengarini, an Italian Jesuit who had recently arrived from Rome; and three lay brothers.

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[17]Quoted in Ibid., p. 220.

[18]Quoted in Ibid.

[19]Palladino, Indian and White, p. 38.

It was at Fort Hall that the Flatheads and the priest met for the second time. The white group had planned to meet ten lodges of Flatheads--an advance party--at the foot of the Wind River in July, as arranged earlier. Unfortunately, the whites were a half-month late and the Indians left to find food. The meeting, when it occurred, was filled with emotion and gladness despite the Indians' inability to express their feelings in English. "Though the Flatheads were less demonstrative at the meeting," says Point, "it was easy to tell, from their manner of shaking hands, that they were, indeed, delighted." "Flatheads have vivid imaginations and intense feelings, and these, before us, were the elite."[20]

The combined group of whites and Flatheads left Fort Hall and headed up the Snake River and across the continental divide to the headwaters of the Beaverhead River, where they made contact with the main body of Flatheads on 30 August 1841. All went to Deer Lodge Valley, then to Garrison, and finally down "St. Ignatius River" (renamed Hell's Gate River) to the place where the city of Missoula now stands. There, at the confluence of the Bitter Root River and the Clark Fork of the Missouri, they turned south and went up the Bitter Root Valley twenty-eight miles and established themselves on the site where the first Catholic mission in Montana would shortly stand.[21] One of the first things de Smet did was to

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[20]Nicolas Point, S.J., Wilderness Kingdom, trans. and ed. Joseph P. Donnelly, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1967), pp. 37-38.

[21]Palladino, Indian and White, pp. 38-40.

announce the mission's name, which was St. Mary's because the founding coincided with the Feast of the Blessed Virgin, and he promptly attached it to the nearby river, valley, and surrounding mountains as well. It was a name, says Palladino, that sounded much better than "Grasshopper, Dry Gulch, Crow's Nest, and Deadhorse."[22]

The missionaries were the third wave of whites into Indian country. Before them had come explorers and traders, but the Jesuits were the first to come for the purpose of "civilizing" the Indians. When they established St. Mary's Mission in 1841 none of the Indians had yet seen a white prospector, farmer, or woman in his homeland. None had pledged allegiance to a European power, and treaties with the United States were fourteen years away. Buffalo still roamed freely, and inter-tribal patterns, although somewhat altered by white trade, were much as they had been earlier.

The newness of this missionary enterprise, the strong anticipation of the Jesuits, and the need to impress superiors in St. Louis led to extremely exaggerated reports from the field, especially by de Smet. One needs to be cautious when reading his reports. For example, one cannot take the following at face value: "The Flatheads are disinterested, generous, devoted to their friends and brethren; irreproachable, and even exemplary, as regards probity and morality. Among them, dissensions, quarrels, injuries, and enmities

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[22] Ibid., p. 41.

are unknown."[23] Nicholas Point too was full of praise, saying that "the most marked characteristics of the Flatheads were a rare combination of goodness, courage, and generosity. There was not a single one of their chiefs who did not become staunchly and fervently religious."[24] It is true that even the hard-bitten trappers and traders praised the Flatheads and considered them unusual, but the uniform and absolute nature of the priests' remarks, and the frequency of them, is amazing--particularly coming from men as well-educated as they were. Virtually every communication and diary entry was packed with praise for these seemingly superhuman people.

Despite the nature of Jesuit writing, however, a fairly balanced picture of Indian life--though not of the missionaries' effect upon it--can be found, particularly in Point's work. He was appointed official diarist for the de Smet party, and he was faithful to the extreme, painting and writing. When he left for St. Louis on 19 May 1847 he packed hundreds of invaluable paintings and notes with him on his barge. More will be said of Point and his contributions later.

The Jesuits wasted no time. Once the site for St. Mary's was selected, a few hundred yards from the river, a cross was erected. An old Indian watched the event and was the first to be buried in its shadow since, says Point, he

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[23]Quoted in Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, p. 321.

[24]Point, Kingdom, p. 13.

showed every sign of being a Christian.[25] Construction began shortly thereafter on the church itself, and Palladino later learned details from Brother William Claessens, the construction foreman. The church was twenty-five feet wide, thirty-three feet long, and had an eight feet by thirty feet gallery on each side.[26] De Smet, exaggerating as usual, claimed enthusiastically that it would seat four hundred to five hundred souls, and he added (somewhat more accurately) that the tribesmen worked willingly on it and that with only an axe, a saw, and an auger, they fashioned the pediment, colonnade, and gallery, as well as the balustrades, choir loft, and seats.[27] The little church was nearly ready on 2 December 1841 when a violent storm struck, blowing in the windows, as well as destroying three nearby cabins and uprooting trees. The church stood, however, and although the interpreter, the church prefect, and the sacristan fell ill at this time, services were held nonetheless on 3 December, Francis Xavier's day. Two hundred and two catechumens gathered in the chapel, reported Point, and they all knew their answers well and were baptized that day. Best of all, the apparition of St. Francis Xavier was seen by a catechumen of the Cree tribe named Micheal. Point says that his story was so simple that it was impossible to doubt his good fortune![28]

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[25] Ibid., p. 39.

[26] Palladino, Indian and White, p. 43.

[27] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, p. 331.

[28] Ibid.; and Point, Kingdom, p. 42.

The new chapel, far too small, was replaced a year later by one that was thirty feet wide and sixty feet long. The building stands today much as it was first constructed. It is a crude structure of cottonwood logs, shingled with wood, held together by wooden pegs, and chinked with clay. Rough floor planks were either whip-sawed by hand or thinned with an axe.[29] The front foyer, perhaps added later, supports a bell tower and is covered with clapboards. Even this new chapel, however, would be strained past capacity by five hundred people.

Initially the whites lived much as the Indians did at St. Mary's. Their party had arrived too late in the year to plant a garden, and their food, given to them by the Flatheads, consisted of small game, roots and berries, buffalo meat and tallow. Palladino says that when de Smet's group first came to Flathead country in 1841, the Indians brought them seventy eighty-pound bales of dried buffalo meat.[30] Even the Indians' dangers were shared, for Blackfeet lurked in the underbrush, waiting for days to capture ponies and kill Flatheads. So frequent were these raids that Flatheads had to stand guard to protect themselves and the missionaries, who were particularly on edge in the early fall of 1842, when the Blackfeet, having lost two of their number, were expected to attack. On 12 September, while Father Anthony Ravalli and

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[29]Palladino, Indian and White, p. 43.

[30]Ibid., pp. 60-61.

Brother Claessens were alone, "a savage yell rent the air, and a large body of Blackfeet were seen advancing toward the stockade." The missionaries resigned themselves to death, but the thought of raiding a mission must have been too much for the attackers. "They whooped and yelled, going round and round the premises, but made no attempt to force their way into the enclosure. . . ." Suddenly they left, satisfied that they had run off several horses and taken the lives of two boys who had been foolish enough to leave the stockade.[31]

In considering the far-reaching effect of the Jesuits upon the Indians, one may question whether the missionary effort was very successful; but it was certainly the most important thing in the minds of the whites. De Smet, perhaps guilty of knowingly exaggerating, claimed as early as 30 December 1841 in a letter to the Reverend Father in St. Louis that the entire Flathead nation had been converted! This was but twenty-seven days after the first baptisms. Indeed, not only had he converted the Flatheads, but also four hundred Kalispels, eighty Nez Perce, seven Coeur d' Alenes, and many Kootenais, not to mention a number of Blackfeet, Snakes, Bannocks, and others.[32] On Christmas Day, 1841, one hundred and fifty Flatheads were received into the Church, while at the same time there were thirty-two "rehabilitations of marriage; so that the Flatheads,

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, p. 339.

some sooner and others later, but all, with very few exceptions, and, in the space of three months, complied with everything necessary to merit the glorious title of true children of God."[33]

If salvation was a primary concern, instruction in Christian marriage was another. De Smet was nearly as proud of having effected the thirty-two "rehabilitations of marriage" as he was of having baptized the one hundred fifty on Christmas Day.[34] The reason for such concern about marriage was the Flatheads' casual attitude toward it. Many an Indian had left his first wife for another, or for two or three. According to the priests, if the Indian was to be Christian, he must return to the first wife. What of the successive marriages? They were, says Palladino, null and void.[35] It is interesting that none of the priests ever declared this problem completely solved. Logically, of course, acceptance of Christian marriage was a pre-requisite to salvation, but the number of claimed salvations runs much higher than the number of claimed rehabilitations of marriage, and one can conclude that the pragmatism of the priests caused them to overlook a situation that they could not hope to control.

One of the least successful areas of Jesuit influence was the buffalo hunt. Nicholas Point was the only priest

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[33]Point, Kingdom, p. 46.

[34]Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, p. 359.

[35]Palladino, Indian and White, pp. 48-49.

who ever went on a hunt with the Flatheads, and despite his initial high hopes, his well-intentioned efforts proved to be nearly disastrous. On 23 December 1841, only a few months after the Christian work was begun, forty lodges of Flatheads left for their annual hunt on the plains and asked that one of the fathers accompany them to continue religious instruction. Point, who was assigned the task, was not ungrateful. He saw not only the chance to continue his missionary work among the Flatheads, but also to add to his collection of notes, drawings, and water colors, to extend his ministration to other tribes (especially the Coeur d'Alenes, the most promising prospects for a new mission) and to act as a moderating influence on both Flatheads and Blackfeet. (The latter were the most threatening to missionary operations). In fact, Point hoped to make a treaty with the Blackfeet. The Flatheads, on the other hand, hoped not only to receive religious instruction, but also to gain from Christianity some magical power that would serve them on the hunt and in battle. Further, they hoped that the presence of the priest among them would lessen his authority with other tribes while insuring that the Flatheads retained most of the "power" to be had.[36]

The hunt commenced on a note of hardship, but the Flatheads soon gained a new-found confidence in themselves. They had delayed the start of the hunt as long as possible in order

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[36]Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, pp. 360-361n.

that all might be baptized, and the delay resulted in famine. De Smet notes that prior to the hunt the dogs were eating the tethers of the horses at night for want of meat and bones.[37] When they did leave, they wound their way over the fifteen parallel travois trails of the "great hunting trail" to a winter of severe cold and snow blindness. Despite these hardships, they continued to perform the required religious ceremonies, says Point. He claims that this hunt was conducted with great piety, that twice a day and at great effort they assembled for prayer, and that they even attended services as circumstances allowed.[38] Contrary to Point's hopes, however, the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles gained a new self-assurance that led them to attack Blackfeet when threatened, even though the Blackfeet outnumbered them. "The Blackfeet," says de Smet, "fearing the 'medicine of the Black-robes,' skulked around their enemies, avoiding an open fight."[39] The priest lamented this and realized that rather than bringing the Indians peace, he had reinforced the Indians' concepts of Blackrobe power. In the manner of the Jesuit missionaries, however, he attributed even this to the Almighty. De Smet observed that

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Point, Kingdom, p. 43.

[39] Quoted in Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, p. 574.

> it is by these and similar exploits, wherein the finger of God is visible, that the Flatheads have acquired such a reputation for valor, that notwithstanding their inferior numbers, they are feared much more than they on their side dread their bitterest enemies.[40]

A similar attitude on the part of both priest and Indians was shown toward success in hunting. The priest made a point of associating such success with religion. For example, de Smet cited an incident which he said he had read about in Point's journal: On 6 February 1842 circumstances looked bad for the Flatheads. It was cold--about thirty-two degrees--and there was no grass for the horses, some of which had been driven off by the Nez Perce. On the following day conditions were worse. But at noon on the seventh, the sun appeared, the cold abated, and the Indians saw an immense plain filled with buffalo and grass. By sunset that day one hundred fifty-five buffalo had been killed. "One must confess that if this hunt were not miraculous," says Point, "it bears a great resemblance to the draught of fishes made by Peter when [,] casting his net at the word of the Lord, he drew up 153 fishes."[41] On another occasion, when three hunters fell from their horses among the buffalo, one managed to survive by seizing a buffalo's horns in time to escape being gored. Another hunter, fleeing from the buffalo on horseback, felt his horse stopped as its braided tail caught in a buffalo's

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[40]Quoted in Ibid., p. 366.

[41]Quoted in Ibid., pp. 362-363.

horns, which thus narrowly missed their mark of horse and rider.[42] These narrow escapes were interpreted by Point and the Indians as favorable acts of God, and thus the Indians' belief in Christian powers was reinforced.

As previously noted, Point claimed that his mission onto the plains was successful and that the Flatheads responded with extraordinary piety. They may indeed have made an effort to worship, but little was really changed and Point's estimate of his efforts was but another example of overzealous reporting. Palladino says that the presence of the missionary on the hunt "was anything but advisable." The Indians, he says, were generally too busy or too excited for much religious instruction. Not only had Point strengthened the Flatheads' role in inter-tribal power struggles, but he had also reinforced their belief in the magic of Christianity.

Worse still, Point meddled in Flathead-Blackfeet relations, to the detriment of the former, causing a loss of confidence of the Indians in the Blackrobes. Once, when seventeen captured Blackfeet appealed to Point for their freedom, he insisted that they be released, thus highly incensing the Flatheads. On another occasion, after a battle between the Indian rivals, Point restrained the Flatheads from renewing the fight. They became so upset that they threatened to abandon him![43] Point and de Smet must have

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Palladino, Indian and White, p. 52.

realized that for all the ceremony and prayers on the hunt, much of their influence was either lost or misdirected.

Others also meddled in Indian affairs. De Smet often tried to make treaties with the various tribes, reasoning that the government could not object to this, inasmuch as it too was reaching for the same goals. He presumed that the United States would honor the results of his negotiations. His motives were two-sided, of course. First, he realized that the Flatheads were threatened by the Blackfeet, whether the former had the prestige of the missionaries behind them or not; second, he also realized that his mission was threatened by the Blackfeet, and so long as war existed between the tribes, the effectiveness of his instruction of the Bitter Root Indians was limited.[44] Accordingly he visited the Blackfeet in 1845. At the time, the Flatheads, some Nez Perce, and some Blackfeet were in the Yellowstone Valley on the border of Crow country. De Smet, hearing of an imminent Crow attack upon the mixed group, tried without success to calm the Crows, who advanced on the allied camp. Forewarned, the well-fortified defenders successfully resisted the attack, and the valiant conduct of the Flatheads made an impression on the Blackfeet, thus paving the way for de Smet's peace efforts. As he writes, "Shortly after my arrival the Blackfeet came in a body to my lodge, to express in a manner truly eloquent their admiration of the Flatheads, with whom

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[44]Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, pp. 51-52.

in the future they desired to live on terms of the closest friendship."[45] The way was also paved for a mission among the Blackfeet. Unfortunately, little came of the pause in enmity. In fact, interference in inter-tribal matters eventually led to a dissipation of Jesuit influence among the Flatheads, as will be discussed later.

Jesuit attempts to introduce farming to the Indians led to the same nebulous results as their preaching. Future chapters will show that the Flatheads never turned to farming with much of a will, and when they did, it was usually because the decreasing supply of buffalo and the requirements of reservation life imposed it upon them. The Jesuits, however, did try to instruct the Indians in farming. They cultivated their own fine gardens and gave free seed to the Indians. But the mill at St. Mary's--the first grist mill in Montana--could not have accomodated a large harvest of wheat. Father Ravalli, upon leaving Antwerp for his missionary work in North America, was presented with a set of buhrstones about twelve inches in diameter, which he brought by boat to St. Xavier's on the Willamette River, Oregon, and thence to St. Mary's on horseback. The mill using these stones was run by water and was barely sufficient for the available wheat.[46]

The inventiveness of the Bitter Root missionaries was amazing. In addition to rigging a water wheel for the grist

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[45] Quoted in Ibid.

[46] Palladino, Indian and White, pp. 59-60.

mill, they made a crude saw mill. Four steel wagon wheel tires were welded together to form a crank to work the saw, and the blade was fashioned from a fifth tire, flattened and hardened, toothed by a cold chisel, and sharpened with a file. A sledge hammer, which presumably was used in making the saw, was fashioned by melting tin cans. And Father Ravalli, a doctor as well as a priest, made a miniature still which extracted good alcohol from the camas root for "medicinal purposes."[47]

The Jesuits who came to the Bitter Root Valley with high hopes could scarcely claim that their hopes had been realized among the Indians who had wanted the Blackrobes so much. They were unable to effect peace among the tribes, their admonitions for Christian conduct were often misinterpreted, farming did not become an acceptable way of life for the Flatheads, and formal schooling for the Indians never reached the immediate planning stage. At best the priests could claim the baptism of many Indians. Prayers were learned, rituals enjoyed, but the Indians changed their lives only superficially.

The demise of St. Mary's Mission was a sad testimonial to this limited achievement. The reason for closing the mission in the fall of 1850 was the gradual estrangement of the Flatheads. The shine of newness had worn off the Christian message and rituals, and the demands of the priests upon the

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[47] *Ibid*.

Indians began to chafe. Hostility toward the interfering priests grew. Further, intratribal scheming and plotting for personal gain may have undermined their influence. Certainly the seeds for this were sown early when the church reinforced elitism within Indian ranks. The mission established four societies, for fathers, mothers, and children of both sexes. The chief of the tribe was, says Point, the head of one society, his wife was the "president" of the women's group, and his children headed the remaining two groups. All were elected by a majority vote, proof, says Point, "that merit alone was the determining factor in the elections. . . ." The opportunity to augment one's influence by rising within church ranks could well have led to scheming, despite earlier insistence by de Smet that the Indians were not capable of this. Another reason for the fall of the mission was perhaps poor economic administration. Palladino denies this, although he does say that "Father Mengarini's course may have been the occasion of some discontent among a few of the Indians. . . ."[48] In fact, the mission could not make good some of de Smet's promises for tools, other manufactured items, and animals. It has also been suggested that de Smet was quarreling with his superiors.[49]

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[48] Ibid., pp. 64-65.

[49] Gilbert J. Garraghan, The Jesuits of the United States, (3 Vols.; N.Y.: America Press, 1938), Vol. II. p. 376; and John Owen, The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen, Pioneer of the Northwest, 1850-1871, ed. Seymour Dunbar and Paul C. Phillips (2 Vols.; Helena: Montana Historical Society, 1927), Vol. I, pp. 5-6.

The most severe problem for the missionaries was caused by intruding squatters, settlers passing through, and trappers and traders. Ravalli, one of the most able Jesuits in Montana and a priest and doctor at St. Mary's intermittently after 1845, describes the worst trouble-makers as Canadians (some Iroquois, and a few half-breeds dismissed from Hudson's Bay Company service).[50] Palladino's "evil-doers" who worked for the closing of the mission included, in addition to those mentioned by Ravalli, eight or ten emigrants who wintered en route to Oregon in 1849-1850 and sought food from the Indians. These intruders, in the eyes of the priests, generally led scandalous lives, and when the missionaries rebuked their immoralities, they retaliated by slandering the priests--especially Mengarini, thus creating suspicion and ill feeling among the Flatheads toward their mentors.[51] Another corruptive influence was that of non-Christian Indians whom the Flatheads saw during the hunts.

The total weight of estrangement finally became too much for the Jesuits to labor under, and Fathers Joseph Joset and Ravalli, the two remaining priests, packed up and left in 1850 after signing a lease with John Owen, a new trader in the area. The land itself was not leased; the bill of lease and conditional sale, dated 9 November 1850, was for three hundred dollars and pertained to the improvements only,

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[50]Garraghan, The Jesuits, II, p. 376.

[51]Palladino, Indian and White, pp. 64-65.

with the provision that all property would be returned by Owen should the fathers come back within three years, as they hoped to do.[52] From then until 1866, when the mission was reopened by Father Ravalli, the Indians were visited only occasionally by missionaries, even though they repeatedly asked the fathers to return. By 1866, however, the focus had shifted to other matters: treaties, settlers, reservation life, and a new mission called St. Ignatius. St. Mary's Mission never regained the stature that it held for the first five years of its existence.

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[52]Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, p. 122.

CHAPTER III

THE STEVENS TREATY

Isaac Ingalls Stevens, afield in Washington Territory in June of 1853, was described as a man of incredible energy, "a smart, active, ubiquitous little man, very come-at-able, [who] wears a red shirt and helps pull on the rope when we get stuck in a mud hole."[1] He was also a man deficient of humor, a lack for which he compensated with an air of grave dignity which served him well. Stevens began his career as a second lieutenant of engineers in the United States Army after graduating first in his class at West Point. His distinguished service as an engineer under General Winfield Scott in the Mexican War helped him secure an appointment as executive assistant in the United States Coast Survey, a post which he held from 1849 to 1853. From this position in Washington, D. C. he cultivated his association with politicians--particularly Democrats--as he represented the army in a number of matters before Congress

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[1]George Suckley to John Suckley, Lightning Lake, Minnesota Territory, 30 June 1853, in George Suckley Papers, Yale Collection of Western Americana, quoted in William H. Goetzmann, Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 278-279.

and the President. When Washington Territory was formed in March, 1853, Stevens immediately resigned his Coast Survey position to accept the governorship. As Governor of Washington Territory and its Superintendent of Indian Affairs, he soon proposed a comprehensive survey of northern railroad routes to the Pacific, a task which was fully accomplished by 1858 when the final report was written. Meanwhile, he was faced with the complex problem of opening 100,000 square miles of land to settlement; to do this he negotiated at least ten treaties with tribes of the Territory, extinguishing their title to thousands of square miles. His wholehearted support of western development and settlement, and his enthusiastic touting of the Territory's advantages were the source of a movement which finally caused confusion, poverty, disenchantment, distrust, and rivalry among the Flatheads, Kootenais, and Pend d'Oreilles.[2]

The purpose of Stevens' proposed overland survey, broached to the federal government on 22 March 1853, is made clear in three letters. In two of these, both virtually identical, to W. L. Marcy, Secretary of State, and Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, he said that the interests of Washington Territory would be served best by his "proceeding thither on a new route, exploring the country for

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[2]Dictionary of American Biography, 1935 ed., s.v. "Stevens, Isaac Ingalls;" and Hazard Stevens, The Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1901), vols. I and II.

an Emigrant Route and making the necessary surveys to determine the practicability, cost and time of constructing a Rail Road from the sources of the Miss. River to Puget Sound." He argued further that a large amount of useful information could be presented to the country regarding agricultural, mineral, commercial, and manufacturing resources which, coupled with a railroad, would invite settlement and "do much towards filling up the Territory and developing its resources." Furthermore, he wrote,

> I need not call the attention of the Department to the great influence which this exploration will exercise over the Indian Tribes, nor of the exceeding efficiency which it will give to me in the discharge of my duties as Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Territory, nor of the interesting information which it will enable me to collect in relation to their numbers, customs, locations, history and traditions.[3]

Stevens pointed out that such a survey was possible by virtue of a $150,000 appropriation for it by Congress at its last session. Stevens also wrote to Secretary of Interior Robert McClellan on the same day, but in a slightly different vein. There was no mention of the railroad route; instead he said that he would be examining a possible route for the army. Perhaps Stevens did not know where the department stood regarding the building of a railroad through the territory. He did delineate his own route for McClellan, however: he would leave Washington, D. C. for the headwaters of the Mississippi, from whence he would go west via the great bend of the

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[3]Isaac Ingalls Stevens to W. L. Marcy, 22 March 1853, Letter Copy Book Regarding the Pacific Railroad Survey, 1853, pp. 7, 9, Microfilm Roll 4, Isaac Ingalls Stevens Papers, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, Washington. (Originals are at the University of Washington Libraries).

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Missouri, the Cascade mountains, and the North Fork of the Columbia. He suggested that the Department of State confer with the Department of War, which he had asked to outfit and man his expedition, in order to determine which department would be in overall control. His chief goal, Stevens told McClellan, was not to locate a route (although that was the implication of the letters to the other departments), but rather to visit tribes and confer with them to "secure their good will and to make such treaties as may be called for by the Instructions of the Department or by the necessity of affairs," and also to gather information about the Indians.[4] In sum, Stevens wanted to further migration to the Territory via a road or railroad and systematically place Indians on reservations through treaty negotiations, thereby gaining the bulk of their land for white settlement.

Stevens' proposal was accepted, and his party headed west in late spring, 1853. He was allowed to write his own instructions, which specified that the group would investigate passes, general geography, meteorology, avenues of trade along the Missouri and Columbia Rivers, and anything bearing on the practicability of a railroad. The group was also to give considerable attention to Indian tribes and to

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[4]Stevens to Robert McClelland, 22 March 1853, from Washington, D.C., Letter Copy Book Regarding the Pacific Railroad Survey, p. 11. This letter may also be found in U.S., National Archives, Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, M-234, Roll 907.

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survey their attitudes toward the question of a railroad.[5] The main party was commanded by the Governor and included five hand-picked lieutenants, two civilian engineers, and special scientific assistants. In addition, Stevens indirectly supervised a subsidiary group under Captain George B. McClellan which operated from the Pacific Coast.

The ultimate report and evaluation of the exploration heavily favored a northern railroad route. Stevens' political fortunes were tied up in development of the Northwest, and it is easy to understand why he neglected to mention several serious obstacles such as two-mile-long tunnels, huge gullies, and high passes.[6]

It was this trip which provided Stevens with his first contact with many tribes, including the Flatheads. St. Mary's Mission was the site of an assembling point and supply base for up to four parties, including advance members of McClellan's group, which would branch out from there into Blackfoot country and the surrounding area before moving west. Stevens sent Lieutenant Mullan ahead of him to the Bitter Root Valley to make arrangements with the Indians and advance parties; Mullan was instructed to meet an encampment of Flatheads en route and hire several Indians as guides for the long journey over the mountains. He was also instructed to remain at St. Mary's through the winter of

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[5]Goetzmann, Army Exploration, p. 279.

[6]Ibid., p. 282.

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1853-1854 to set up a meteorological post and, in the spring, to explore surrounding mountain passes.[7]

Stevens reached St. Mary's on 28 September 1853 and prepared for a conference with the Flatheads. Lieutenant Mullan brought a delegation of Flatheads to Stevens on 30 September: Pacha, Finissiant, and Palassois, three lesser Flathead chiefs; Cohoxolockny, a Nez Perce; and Adolph, an important Flathead chief. Victor, Flathead head-chief, was not present. The conference commenced at once and adjourned on 1 October. Stevens commented in his report of the meeting that although he had instructed Mullan to gather some important Indians for a conference, he was surprised that Mullan had done so well:

> His mission was even more successful than I had anticipated. These Indians are remarkable for their honesty and religion and were rejoiced at the measures I had taken to protect them from the invasions of the "Blackfeet Indians, [ ] and to a man agreed to meet the Blackfeet in counsel next year. Although they are a very brave people, their numbers are so small in proportion to the Blackfeet, that notwithstanding their courage, they have been able to cope only at a great expenditure of life. . . .[8]

Stevens mentioned that Mullan had sought out the Flatheads on a buffalo hunt and had persuaded them to come to St. Mary's at some inconvenience to meet with Stevens.

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[7]Stevens to William Stevens, Belfast, Maine, 10 September 1853, from Fort Benton, Microfilm Roll 3, Isaac Ingalls Stevens Papers; and Stevens to Commissioner, 6 December 1853, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

[8]Stevens to Commissioner, 6 December 1853, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

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By sending Mullan west earlier, Stevens had laid the foundation for successful negotiations; and he reaffirmed what Mullan had promised the Flatheads on his behalf. According to Mullan, the Indians had been promised a peaceful home in their Bitter Root Valley and the rebuilding of the village of St. Mary's so that it would again "turn with beauty." The renewed valley life of the Indians would be a "super structure that all the Indian Tribes of North America could look upon and imitate. . . ." In an intentional appeal to old Flathead fears, the Indians had also been promised protection from the warring Blackfeet, and at the end of the conference Stevens said he would leave Lieutenant Mullan and ten to fifteen men in the valley through the winter for this purpose. (There was no mention of the explorations and meteorological post at this point.) The Flatheads had also been encouraged to look forward to an intertribal conference of Flatheads, Nez Perce, Blackfeet, Spokanes, and Snakes in which the peaceful use of buffalo lands would be arranged--a goal for which the Flatheads would be willing to sacrifice much.[9]

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[9]John Mullan, quoted by Stevens in Stevens to Commissioner, 6 December 1853, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907; and Stevens, "Reports of Explorations and Surveys, to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, 1853-1855," H.R. Ex. Doc. No. 56, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 12, No. 1, p. 125.

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A few other formalities were observed as the conference drew to a close. Stevens mentioned that a day before the conference he had told Chief Arlee that John Owen had been given a license to trade with the Indians (as he had been doing for several years). He also assured the Indians that the Great White Father wished them to farm and hunt more to avoid starving times. Stevens' trip to the Bitter Root Valley must have been trying, for pencilled on the back of a letter dated 3 October 1853 was this note:

> Since writing the above, I have met Victor the Chief of the Flatheads and 9 lodges of Flathead Indians. He starts in two days across the mountains on a Buffalo hunt and will return in November. His people remain till Christmas. So much for these horrible mountains.[10]

He presented Victor with a flag, as Victor would pointedly recall nearly two years hence.[11] The groundwork for future treaty negotiations had been well-done.

The results of the westward trek are easily catalogued insofar as they had a bearing on the Bitter Root Valley. First, the valley was highlighted as a key area in Northwest development. Mullan wrote to Stevens in January, 1854, that he recommended a route from Fort Laramie to (and through) the valley. He said that a good wagon road could be constructed over which emigrants could move through the valley into

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[10]Stevens to James Doty, 3 October 1853, from St. Mary's Valley, Microfilm Roll 3, Stevens Papers.

[11]Albert J. Partoll, "The Flathead Indian Treaty Council," Pacific Northwest Quarterly 29 (July 1938), pp. 308-309.

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Washington and Oregon, helping to people the area between the Cascades and the Rockies. This might also make a good commercial freight route, he added, saying that the establishment of such a road would provide a fine market for Bitter Root farmers, who were raising extraordinarily plentiful crops.[12]

A second result was a preliminary estimate of tribal populations in the northern areas west of Minnesota. According to Stevens, there were about five hundred "Spokanes or Flatheads."[13] This estimate, made in advance of the trip, was confirmed by other people in ensuing years, and one can only hope that Stevens eventually learned to distinguish between Spokanes and Flatheads.

In January, 1854, Mullan, who was wintering in the valley, wrote to Stevens proposing the establishment of a Flathead Agency--the third result of the trip. Mullan mentions an order from Stevens dated 30 October 1853, directing him to determine the cost of erecting agency buildings in the valley and maintaining them. Mullan recommended an agent's home, a dwelling for an Indian farmer, a council room, storehouse, smith's shop, houses for a blacksmith and two employees (who could help the Indian farmer), and a room for the interpreter. He also suggested that the agency serve the Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles, and Kootenais and that it be

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[12]Mullan to Stevens, 25 January 1854, from Bitter Root Valley, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

[13]Stevens, Memorandum, no date but marked "received" 10 May 1853, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

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located near the "Hellgate" (present-day Missoula). Mullan thought the entire project could be initiated for $5,000, including buildings, cattle, horses, and pay for personnel. Another $5,000 annually would keep the agency going.[14]

Mullan's proposal is significant for several reasons. It was innovative: no treaty had been struck with the tribes; no Indians had requested an agency; and no other agencies existed in the area. Furthermore, money for such an agency had not been appropriated or discussed in Congress, and the Territorial budget could hardly have borne the cost of an agency system had Mullan's idea been accepted. The Flatheads' hopes for government benefits were being encouraged prior to any prospect of fulfillment. (It is true that the Washington Superintendency records show the existence of an Eastern District, which included the Flatheads, but nothing had been done by January, 1854.) Finally, such a proposal was a step toward white settlement of the area. Many of Mullan's men hoped to remain there and farm, and the agency would insure the stability and peacefulness of the Indians.

Lieutenant Mullan earned a special place in the hearts of the Flatheads.[15] Not only was he the first to promise a

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[14]Mullan to Stevens, 25 January 1854, from Bitter Root Valley, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

[15]Lieutenant John Mullan, later a captain, was the author of Report on the Construction of a Military Road. . . (Washington: 1863), and Miners and Travelers' Guide. . . (N.Y.: 1865). The Mullan Military Road was named after him.

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new era of intertribal relations, but he was also the man ostensibly placed among the tribesmen to protect them. He stayed the winter of 1853-1854, as he had been directed to do, camping ten miles above present Stevensville and winning the trust and friendship of the Indians. He was friendly and open toward them and always made a point of telling them where he was going and how long he would be gone when he went on a journey. He bought their cattle for his party's food and kept them abreast of news about the proposed pan-Indian treaty council. The Indians much regretted his leaving in the fall of 1854, after a summer in which he explored many passes and routes throughout the area.[16] Indicative of the relationship between Mullan and the Flatheads and of the kinds of services he rendered was his request, a year after leaving the valley, for pay as a civil Indian agent. Not only had he acted as an agent to the Kalispels, Pend d'Oreilles, and Nez Perce as well as to the Flatheads, but he had also written a history of the Flathead Indians which, he said, would appear with a vocabulary in Stevens' next annual report. (No trace of it has been found by this writer.) Mullan pointed out that he had been acting in a civil rather than in an official capacity, doing voluntarily what an Indian agent or sub-agent would have done.[17] His letter of request was filed; no response appears to have been made.

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[16]Stevens, "Reports of Explorations and Surveys," pp. 181-182.

[17]Mullan to Commissioner, 5 August 1855, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

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The promise of an intertribal council appears to have been a keystone to securing and keeping the strong friendship and dependence of the Flatheads, and Mullan frequently found the opportunity to urge its organization. Writing from "Camp Stevens" in the Bitter Root Valley, he discussed the proposal. The Flatheads, he said, were especially eager for the change in Indian relations which was supposed to result from the meeting. After all, he wrote,

> the Flatheads as a nation have more reason to complain of a want of attention and care on the part of the Government than any other tribe of Indians probably in North America. Their number have been so greatly diminished during the last few years by being murdered by the Blackfeet, that at present there remains but a handful of the noblest of the Indian tribes of North America to tell the tales of woe, misery, and misfortune that they have suffered at the hands of the Blackfeet, these hell hounds of the mountains.[18]

Mullan did not stop here but continued his tirade against the Blackfeet, apparently exaggerating for effect. He added that it was because of this Blackfoot threat that Victor had gratefully promised Mullan that his tribe would cooperate and not make war with its enemies save when lives were threatened. Since the government had promised to protect him, said Victor, he would refer all Blackfoot matters to Stevens. Mullan called this promise "an act of bravery, nobleness, & honesty . . .that is seldom if ever met with among any other tribe of Indians. . . ."[19]

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[18]Mullan to Stevens, a report regarding Blackfeet outrages, 18 November 1853, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

[19]*Ibid*.

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Lieutentant Mullan continued to urge a conference with the Blackfeet. On 14 December 1853 he reported to Stevens on behalf of the Flatheads that they were eager for the council, which they had been told would be held at Fort Benton, saying that "They received the intelligence of the council with much joy & exaltation" and looked forward to a new period of happy Indian relations. Mullan said that the Flatheads had admitted to him that they were "a helpless & miserable race of beings but now their hearts were glad to hear that the Government had not neglected them, but that it intended to send an agent among them who would superintend their interest & welfare."[20] Mullan may have overstepped his bounds by promising an agent for the Flatheads. No money had been appropriated for an agency, and no instructions to Mullan to make such a pledge have been found. In fact, it was only in this report (in which he implied that he had promised an agent) that he also recommended formally that a reliable man be appointed, adding that a Catholic would best suit the position.[21] A man very friendly to the Flatheads and enthusiastic about their homeland, he recommended that the agency be located in the Bitter Root Valley. Once more, in January, 1854, he wrote of Flathead eagerness for the conference and of Blackfoot depredations. He noted that the

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[20]Mullan to Stevens, a report, 14 December 1853, from Ft. Hale, Oregon Territory, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

[21]*Ibid*.

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Flatheads were making daily reports of warring Blackfeet coming within a few miles of the Bitter Root Valley homes, stealing horses, and murdering. Mullan again called for action from Stevens.[22]

Despite Mullan's impact, however, the most significant thing about the expedition was that Stevens contacted many tribes and took advantage of the circumstances to sow the seeds of treaty negotiations and government aid in the minds of the Indians. This factor was a key element in the 1855 Flathead treaty negotiations. He was well aware of the fear which the mountain-plains bands had of the Blackfeet, as his first meeting with the Flatheads shows. He wrote Manypenny in June, 1854, that a conference of the Flatheads, Pend d' Oreilles, and Kootenais with four bands of Blackfeet (the Blackfeet, Gros Ventres, Blood, and Piegans) and the Crows would benefit over twenty-five thousand Indians. In the meantime, he hoped that news of his plan would cause the mountain-plains Indians to look to him for peace. Certainly the Flatheads did.

In 1854 Stevens began a year-long swing eastward through Washington Territory on a treaty-making mission. Drawing on the contacts made in 1853 and the hopes of Indians for peace, he treated successfully during the first months with the Nisqualli, Puyallup, Swamish, Suquamish, S'Klallam, Makah, Wallawalla, Cayuse, Hakima, Nez Perce, and the Quinaiel.

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[22]Mullan to Stevens, 15 January 1854, from Camp Stevens, Bitter Root Valley, Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, M-234, Roll 907.

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The treaties were similar in that they included land cessions by the Indians, usually in exchange for the promise of formal reservations and supervision by an agent.[23]

Finally, on the last leg of his mission, the Governor returned to negotiate with the Flatheads, meeting them at their camp near Hell Gate on 7 July 1855. Given his promises of 1853, and Mullan's ensuing efforts, it is easy to see why they welcomed negotiations.[24] Stevens was accompanied by Thomas Adams, who was appointed special agent by the Governor in 1854 and who remained in the Bitter Root Valley until 1864, when he left for the East; by James Doty, Stevens' secretary of treaties, who helped him bring the Blackfeet to a treaty council; and by Lieutenant Mullan. The men selected their camp and council ground site on the Bitter Root one mile from the Indian camp and near the north bank of the Missoula River, about six miles west of present Missoula, Montana. The site has since been known as Council Grove.[25]

On the afternoon of the first day of Stevens' arrival he met with Victor, Head-chief of the Flatheads, Alexander of the Upper Pend d'Oreilles, and Michelle of the Kootenais,

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[23]Charles Joseph Kappler, Indian Treaties, 1778-1883 (N.Y.: Interland Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 661-725.

[24]The best readily available transcript of the proceedings is Partoll's "Flathead." He edited the records and presented them with an introduction and some explanations. The proceedings are also available from the files of the Office of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

[25]Partoll, "Flathead," p. 285.

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as well as with a number of the headmen of the several tribes. After the usual ceremonial smoke, Stevens spoke to the tribesmen, pointing out that he had already made treaties with many tribes and reminding them that he had promised to arrange a grand, intertribal peace council:

> You have heard I suppose of the Council at Walla Walla and what was there said to the Indians. The treaties made there were fully explained. We made treaties with the Nez Perce and others, numbering in all some 6000 Indians, and placed them on reservations. I wish to make with you treaties similar to those made at that place. . . . The business here being concluded, I shall push on to Fort Benton to collect the Blackfeet for council. We expect many of the Nez Perces here in a few days in charge of an agent and Interpreter to meet you and go with you to the council near Fort Benton, where we expect to make a treaty which will keep the Blackfeet out of this valley, and if that will not do it we will then have soldiers who will. . . . I saw you two years ago and told you I would come to make a treaty, I hoped the next year. Two years have passed, but in the meantime, as you know, we have done all we could. Lt. Mullan, Mr. Adams, Mr. Doty--these two you see here now, were left among the Indians to promote peace and we are determined to push this matter through.[26]

Stevens set Monday, 9 July, as the formal commencement of the conference, and Victor agreed to this, saying that "the Blackfeet have troubled us very much." Twelve men had been killed while hunting since Stevens was last in the valley, the chief said, and he added that he could not begin to count the number of horses lost to the Blackfeet during that time. Victor was not completely pleased by the requirement that Stevens mediate intertribal quarrels and that Flathead-Blackfoot rivalries be settled amicably, however, and he had the last word in the preliminary meeting when he said, "Now I listen and hear what you wish me to do. Were it not

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[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 285-286.

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for you I would have had my revenge ere this. They (the Blackfeet) have stolen horses seven times this spring."[27]

Two days later the formal council began with the smoking of tobacco that had been distributed by Stevens. The governor then made the opening statement, in which he indicated concisely the pattern of land cession by the Indians and the creation of reservations that had been established by his earlier treaties:

> I wish to make a treaty with the Flatheads, Upper and Lower Pend Oreilles [sic] and Kootenays all as one nation. We wish you four tribes to sell your land to the Great Father and live on one tract of land; that tract of land to be large enough for your cattle and farms. The climate of the tract to be mild enough for your animals to graze in winter.[28]

Stevens went on to explain that the Indians would be able to continue hunting on any land not actually occupied by settlers, and that benefits of moving to a reservation would include having a school, hospital, doctor, blacksmith, wheelwright, wagon and plow maker (carpenter), an agency farmer, and saw and grist mills. These benefits, he said, would be provided to the Indians for twenty years, at the end of which time they would be able to care for themselves; during the twenty years annuity goods and cash would also be provided.[29]

The significance of Stevens' statement lies not in the promises, which no doubt tempted the Indians (although at no time during negotiations did their formal words ever suggest

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[27] *Ibid.*, p. 286.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 287.

[29] *Ibid.*

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that they were pleased or eager for these things). Rather, it is to be found in the way he begged the question by assuming from the outset that the Indians would turn to farming and ranching, forms of livelihood virtually unknown to them in 1855. It was made clear that the Indians would be expected to conform to this new way of life in the near future; the Indians were thus placed at an initial disadvantage which they never seemed to comprehend. Stevens explained other provisions of the proposed treaty and then asked, "Will such a treaty suit you? If it will suit you then we have to agree where the reservation shall be and what the amount of these things shall be. I wish now the chiefs to tell me whether they are pleased with this kind of a treaty. I wish to hear from them."[30]

Victor, who guarded his words and opinions carefully throughout the conference, spoke first and said little--chiefly that his tribe had only meagre amounts of poor land, although the areas included both the Bitter Root Valley and land around Flathead Lake. He hoped, so it seems, that the whites would not want any of it, but he said he would think about the matter.

Alexander, a Pend d'Oreille chief, was much more to the point. He said that since he was poor, and that since he was an Indian, he was not supposed to be able to appreciate the intricacies of life. ("I am an Indian. I cannot look around me.") He thought that he had been doing what was right

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[30]*Ibid.*, p. 289.

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for his people. Yet the white man had come to his place and told him what he had been doing was not good, and that the new way was the proper way. Alexander also protested the introduction of white law: "If I take your own way, your law, my people then will be frightened. . . . Perhaps I do not know your laws, perhaps if we see a rope, if we see how it punished we will be frightened." When the priests tried to teach his tribesmen, he said, the Indians all left the priests. He added diplomatically that he was "very glad to see the white men," and that he was content with his situation but would talk about the disposition of the land another day.[31]

Stevens concluded the first formal assembly by reemphasizing his desire for a single reservation. With two reservations (one for the Flatheads in the Bitter Root Valley and one near Flathead Lake for the others), services would be split, and the effectiveness of a reservation would be diminished. "Talk the matter over amongst yourselves," he said, setting the next meeting for 10 July.[32]

The next day, at 2:30 in the afternoon, the second session of the council began when Stevens asked the Indians what they thought of the single reservation idea. Big Canoe, a Pend d'Oreille, spoke first and at length, voicing opposition to the surrender of Indian land and continuing the polite, friendly, but firm resistance which had been evident

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[31] Ibid., pp. 289-291.

[32] Ibid.

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on the preceding day. He said that his people were wary of his counciling with Stevens, whom he considered "a very smart chief." He had replied to them, "It appears to me you have two ways--how is it? When we talk you tremble, ashamed of yourself, are you afraid of him? We are not talking bad--we are councelling [sic]. . . ." In other words, Big Canoe was by no means committed to the surrender of land when he came to the council. In fact, his remarks about his land rights are very pointed:

> It is our land--when I first saw you, you white man, when you was travelling through, I would not tell you take this piece it is our land--when you came to see me I believe you will help me. If you make a farm I would not go there and pull up your crops. I would not drive you away--farm it--it is our land both of us. If I go to your place on your land--If I get there [and say] give me a little piece. I wonder would you say here take it. I will wait till you give it. I will be amongst you, very good, I am with you. It is the way with you white man. I expect that is the same way you want me to do here, this place. You want to settle here me with you.[33]

Big Canoe was the most eloquent of all the Indians in the council and spoke best for them. He complained that they did not have the facilities, training, or experience of the whites, and that they were handicapped in having to speak only through interpreters. "When I lay down my heart is sad [;] now my chief you say not I am blind if I want to talk. Here are my eyes, my heart, my brain, I study. You white man; there are your eyes lying all over the table, that is the reason you are smart, you always look at your papers. . . ."[34]

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[33] Ibid., p. 292.

[34] Ibid.

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Big Canoe also wondered with surprise why any treaty was necessary, for the whites and the Salish Nation had always been friendly and would continue to be so. It would be foolish, he said, for the Indians to shoot the whites with their own powder and ball, for if nothing else, the whites would surely halt the delivery of ammunition to the Indians. What prompted these remarks from Big Canoe was the fact that the Indians had been accustomed only to treaties of alliance or peace and were unfamiliar with treaties between friendly parties to extinguish land rights. His earlier remark, "you want to settle here me with you," suggests that the Indians did not comprehend that the whites came to displace them.

Addressing himself to the matter of Blackfoot depredations, the Pend d'Oreille echoed Victor's protest that following Stevens' instructions had restricted Salish counter-attacks, saying:

> Now when a chief will talk to the white chief don't be frightened--we are not going to fight each other, keep on that way; when I will let go my heart and speak to my children. I am not afraid of my enemies--you white man, you talk so smoothly, so well, therefore I tell you I am not ahead of you--I listen to you my father--we all like children, take pity on them. Here this spring the Blackfeet put my daughter afoot--she packed the goods on her back--it made me feel bad; then I think of what I heard from you my father, and take my heart back and keep quiet. If I had not listened to your express [Stevens' entourage, which had passed through Big Canoe's country] I would have gone on war parties over yonder. I thought I would listen good--that is the reason I always checked those people--heart said so--I don't want you to be put to trouble--I don't know your minds, you white men--I will stop talking. I am thinking I am talking saucy. I have got a good deal more to say--I am tired now.[35]

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[35] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

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Big Canoe's oration has been considered because it represents the Indian mood of good will, respectful obedience to the whites' wishes, and a recognition of their more polished ways and experience; and yet it suggests humble independence and a very real frustration. It also suggests the complexity of the situation, the dilemma of the Indians who needed protection from the Blackfeet but who wanted to maintain their own freedom and land rights while living among the whites to whom they bore no malice and whom they did not really want to eject from the area. Other tribesmen (Victor, for example) did not speak up in a manner similar to Big Canoe's because they thought that Big Canoe had adequately expressed their sentiments.

There is another reason for considering Big Canoe's words. Immediately after the moving appeal for a Salish-white alliance and for cooperative use of the land, Governor Stevens said:

> I will not ask my children if they understand fully what I said yesterday. I asked you if you could agree to go on one reservation. I ask you now, can you all agree to live on one reservation? Do you wish to have me speak further on the question?[36]

This was not a polite or considerate reply to Big Canoe's statement, but it was a good negotiating technique. Stevens continued, finally saying, "Yes, I understand the Big Canoe to say, 'we are ready all three tribes to go on one reservation, let us know where it is, let us see whether it is large enough.' I ask the Big Canoe if I heard him right?"[37]

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., p. 296.

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Nowhere in the transcript of Big Canoe's oration is there any hint of such a statement. He did not suggest that even his own tribe wanted to settle on the reservation, nor did he say that he would think about the matter. He did speak favorably of joint use of all land by whites and Indians alike, but one must conclude that Stevens either misunderstood what Big Canoe said--not likely--or deliberately ignored him and purposely pressed the question of a reservation, hoping to force the issue. At this point Big Canoe could only reply, "I do understand you right."[38] Stevens then turned to Victor and said, "I now call again upon Victor, Alexander and Michell and ask them whether they have agreed whether it will be better for all the tribes to go on one reserve if a suitable one can be found?"[39] The effect of Big Canoe's lengthy speech was negligible; Stevens ignored his words, and the questions which were raised by the Indian were not discussed.

Stevens' approach worked. From this point on the only questions to be decided were whether all Indians would unite on one reservation, and where that reservation would be. This was partly because Stevens would discuss nothing else, and also because Victor, when asked to speak his mind, said that he would consider one reservation but would not live in the Flathead valley where the St. Ignatius Mission was located.

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

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Alexander and Michelle agreed with the principle of one reservation.

When it became clear that the remaining block to the treaty was the location, Stevens asked the Indians to discuss the matter and decide whether they wanted to remove to the Flathead Lake area or settle as one body in the Bitter Root Valley above Fort Owen. This was a departure from his previous, mild preference for the Flathead Lake area, the home of the Pend d'Oreilles and some of the Kootenais. Of Pierre the Iroquois, who had farmed both areas, he asked if crops would grow better in the valley or in the northern area. Pierre said he did not know. With this, Stevens realized that the Indians needed more time for thought, and the council was adjourned until Wednesday, 11 July.[40]

On Wednesday the Governor asked whether the Indians had agreed upon a place to live, and Victor answered, "I am content with the valley."[41] Alexander, however, said that the Kootenais and Lower Pend d'Oreilles would remain in the Flathead Lake area. Stevens countered:

> I will speak; I think the best place for you is this valley, from John Owens /sic/ up the valley. There is much more land there for you, the land is better, the climate is milder, you are nearer to camash and bitter root, it is more convenient for buffalo, you will be much better off there, therefore I say, all go there and you will be glad by and by, if you are not glad now.[42]

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[40] Ibid., pp. 296-298.

[41] Ibid., p. 298.

[42] Ibid., p. 299.

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This statement is particularly significant in light of future events. Stevens, probably in the interest of achieving a settlement, came out strongly in favor of the Bitter Root Valley as a reservation. He was now unequivocal, even though in his earlier statements he had favored the Flathead Lake area. He now asserted that the Flathead River area was not suitable. It was smaller, and the soil was not as good. Although "it would please the white settler to place you at the mission," he declared, "we wish you to go where the Great Father thinks it is best for you to go,"--to the Bitter Root Valley.[43] The Indians being unable to agree, Stevens adjourned the meeting and gave them two hours to think about the matter, using some of the time to lobby among them for the one reservation concept. He resisted the temptation to resolve the question quickly when Alexander said he would agree to a reservation at St. Mary's if the Governor said he could not go to heaven at his own place![44]

The last, short session on Wednesday was inconclusive. In addition to intertribal jealousy and a fondness for familiar home grounds, there was another reason why the tribes objected to settling down together. St. Ignatius Mission exerted a strong pull over the Kootenais and Pend d'Oreilles. The Flatheads, on the other hand, had more or less abandoned the Catholic priests just a few years before at St. Mary's and

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., p. 300.

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were not interested in renewing the direct influence of the Church. To counter this Flathead reluctance, Stevens directed Father Adrian Hoeken of St. Ignatius (and formerly of St. Mary's) to join the council. Having taken this action, the Governor adjourned the Wednesday meeting on a decisive note, saying that

> you must live on one reservation in order to have the aid of the government; that reservation must be there (above Fort Owen). These are the terms of the government; on these we can help you much; you have asked for aid; we have come to give it. You have asked to be protected from the Blackfeet; you shall be protected from the Blackfeet, but you must do your part.

He left the chiefs with a parting query: if Alexander and Victor could not live together on earth, how could they live together in heaven?[45]

Following a day of feasting (which had been suggested by Stevens) the council reassembled on Friday, 13 July. Stevens reminded the assemblage of the benefits to be gained by living on a reservation, but the difference of opinion between Alexander and Victor continued. Although there is no way of knowing for certain that their differences were anything more than the result of personal and tribal rivalry, there is a possibility that they were role playing with the hope of foiling Stevens' plan, for neither tribe was especially pleased about living on a reservation.

Finally Stevens tried to force the issue, announcing after continued discussion that "now we will sign the treaty." Victor objected, saying "Where is my country: I want to

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[45] Ibid., p. 301.

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speak." Stevens replied, saying that Victor could speak when called upon to sign the treaty and that now he wished to hear from Alexander. Not to be put off, Victor said, "I was talking to you, and I told you no." Victor was given the floor, only to let Ambrose, a Flathead headman, speak for him--and the disagreement continued. Later Victor said he did not actually insist on staying in the Bitter Root Valley, but he held to this position because Stevens had picked out that valley as best (as he indeed had).[46]

It was Victor who finally resolved the problem, opening the way for future misunderstanding. On Monday, 16 July, a week after the conference had begun, he spoke decisively for the first time. First, he objected to Stevens' offer of land for a reservation near St. Ignatius, because Victor claimed that his tribe owned that land as well as the Bitter Root Valley. Second, Victor said he believed that the Flatheads had already made an alliance with the whites when Stevens presented him with a flag two years ago. Third, said Victor, the area in the Bitter Root Valley above Stevensville was too small, even for the Flatheads alone. If he was to stay in the valley, he desired all land from the Lo Lo fork south. Finally, Victor said he would sign the treaty under the condition that

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[46]*Ibid.*, pp. 304-305.

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> we will [send] this word to the Great Father our chief--come and look at our country: perhaps you will choose that place if you look at it. When you look at Alexander's place and say the land is good, and say come Victor--then I would go. If you think this above is good land, then Victor will say come here Alexander; then our children will be content. That is the way we will make the treaty, my father.[47]

Whether this idea was planted in Victor's mind by Stevens is not known; nothing from the transcript suggests that it was.

Unfortunately, Alexander and Michelle would not agree to this proposal; they would allow Victor to move north to their homeland, but they did not want to move to the Bitter Root Valley under any circumstances, and they made this clear to Stevens. After a short pause, Stevens said,

> My children, Victor has made his proposition, Alexander and Michelle have made theirs. We will make a treaty for them. Both tracts shall be surveyed; if the mission is the best land Victor shall live there. If this valley is the best land Victor shall stay here. Alexander and Michelle may stay at the mission. I cannot say that the President will think it good. The President will think it very strange Alexander and Michelle are not willing to leave it to him. I will however sign the treaty with them. If the President thinks it good then we shall carry it out--if he thinks it is not good then we shall not carry it out. I am now ready to sign.[48]

Stevens had been faced with a complete impasse when Alexander and Michelle refused to accede to Victor's idea, and if any treaty was to be struck a way out had to be found. Thus he proposed a solution which, he suggested, was less than ideal and perhaps not even acceptable to the President. Certainly Stevens would not have been pleased by the prospect of two reservations, either. The Indians were quite happy with the solution, however, and signed the treaty which Stevens had

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[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 308-309.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 310.

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amended with the addition of Article Eleven to include the new understanding:

> It is, moreover, provided that the Bitter Root Valley, above the Loo-lo Fork, shall be carefully surveyed and examined, and if it shall prove, in the judgement of the President, to be better adapted to the wants of the Flathead tribe than the general reservation provided for in this treaty, then such portions of it as may be necessary shall be set apart as a separate reservation for the said tribe. No portion of the Bitter Root Valley, above the Loo-lo Fork, shall be opened to settlement until such examination is had and the decision of the President is made known.[49]

There are two reasons why Stevens may have agreed to such a potentially unsatisfactory solution. First, it was expedient to do so, thus averting an extended period of negotiations. He probably sensed that this was one difference of opinion which could not be readily mediated. Second, although the letter of the article made a second, Bitter Root Valley reservation possible, Stevens undoubtedly knew that there was little chance of this happening. As governor, he could exercise an appreciable influence over whoever examined the two areas. He also knew that the surveyor would be inclined to find in favor of the Flathead Lake area anyway, since settlers preferred that all Indians leave the Bitter Root. Further, the priests at St. Ignatius, able and willing to lobby against the Flatheads, had established an inviting mission that would speak strongly to the whites in favor of Flathead removal. Victor, in his trust and naivete, thought that the President would make a personal visit to the Bitter Root, but as the next chapter confirms, the matter was well

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[49]Kappler, Treaties, p. 725.

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One result of the treaty was the establishment of the Flathead Nation--at least in the eyes of the government. Actually, it was an invention of Governor Stevens, a device by which three tribes could be dealt with simultaneously and by which a large amount of land could be gained in one stroke. The Indians did not recognize the formation of a Flathead nation, despite their signing of the treaty, and it is significant that the treaty provided no governmental organization for the "nation." Future reference to the Indians by agents, citizens, and the Indians themselves still made use of the old tribal names. Anthropologists have frequently grouped the tribes by language, calling the Flatheads, Kootenais, and Pend d'Oreilles the Salish, but this is a loose grouping which was not used during the nineteenth century.

Other results of the treaty are told by statistics. About 1,433,600 acres (or about 2,240 square miles) were reserved for the three tribes in the Flathead area (no reservation was established in the Bitter Root Valley). Perhaps a more telling statistic is this: 14,720,000 acres of Indian land acrued to the federal government, for about $485,500, or less than three and a half cents per acre.[50]

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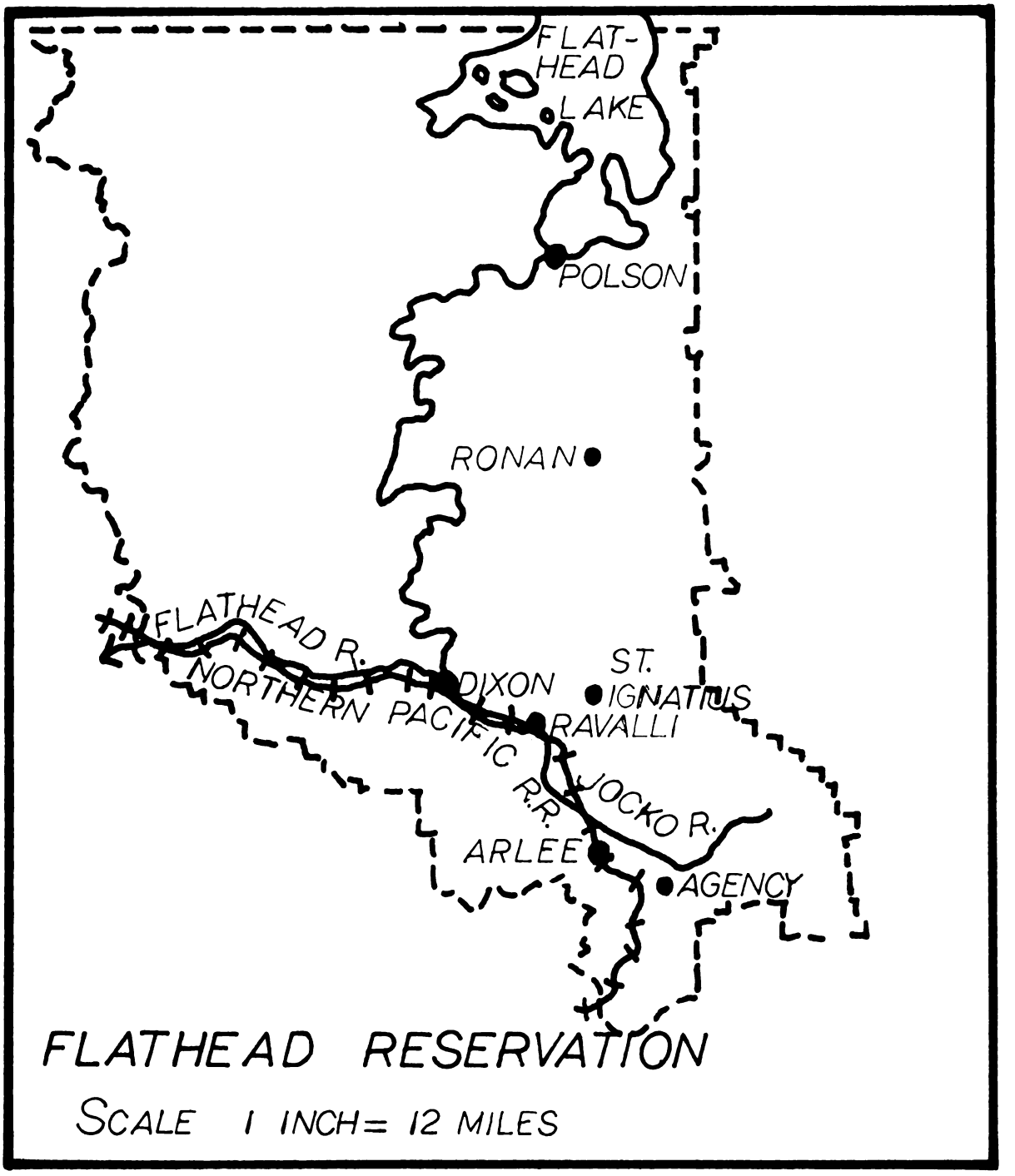
[50]"Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, pt. 5," H.R. Ex. Doc. No. 1, 42nd Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. 3, p. 1099, Serial 1505; and "Statement of Indian Tribes with whom Treaties have been Negotiated," Document No. 109, Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1856, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior (1857), p. 816. (In the future the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs will be referred to as Annual Report).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Some of the salient features of the treaty are worth noting here. In addition to extinguishing Indian land title and establishing the Flathead Reservation (often referred to as the Jocko Reservation, after the principal river in the area), the treaty made allowances for possible future road and railroad routes through the reservation. Money was to be spent to build and maintain a reservation agency and farm and to build houses and break ground for the Indians. Within one year following ratification an agricultural and industrial school and various craftsmen's shops (blacksmith, carpenter, tin and gun smiths, and others) were to be built, as were saw and flour mills. Personnel necessary for these various services were to be hired. A hospital, complete with medicines, furniture, and a physician, was to be constructed and maintained. Each of three tribes' head chiefs would be paid a salary of five hundred dollars a year for twenty years following ratification. In addition, each chief was to have a special, furnished house and ten fenced and plowed acres of land. Further, Article Six of the treaty provided for an allotment of reservation land to the Flathead Reservation inhabitants at the discretion of the President of the United States.[51]

The monetary provisions of the treaty require special mention. The sum of $485,500 mentioned above does not represent the twenty-year cash settlement with the Indians, but

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[51]Kappler, Treaties, pp. 722-725.

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rather the total money spent to establish and maintain the reservation and pay the Indians. According to article four, the tribes were to receive a total of one hundred and twenty thousand dollars, to be spent at the direction of the President for the removal, "breaking up and fencing farms, building houses for them, and for such other objects as he may deem necessary." In other words, the money was to be used specifically for the benefit of the Indians. Thirty-six thousand dollars was to be expended during the first year, six thousand dollars each year for the next four years, five thousand dollars each year for the next five years, four thousand dollars each year for the five years, and for the last five years of the treaty's twenty year life three thousand dollars each year. Further, the designated head-chief of each tribe was to receive five hundred dollars per year for twenty years. The three chiefs' payments, as well as the expenditures for employees, agency buildings and equipment, and other designated agency services, were to be made by the United States government and were not to be deducted from the annuities to be paid to the three tribes. Moreover, said the article, the cost of transporting goods for the annuity payments should not be charged against the annuities monies.

After concluding the treaty negotiations with the Flatheads, Governor Stevens left for Fort Benton, where he treated with the assembled tribes from the montane-plains area, as he had so often promised to do. The result of this final treaty effort was the 17 October 1855 treaty, signed by the members

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of the Blackfeet, Flathead, and Nez Perce nations, proclaiming that "Peace, friendship, and amity shall hereafter exist between the United States and the aforesaid nations and tribes of Indians, parties to this treaty, and the same shall be perpetual."[52] Those Indians of the Flathead Nation whose marks appear on the paper include Big Canoe, Alexander, Michelle, and Victor. Under the terms of this great peace treaty, each tribe was guaranteed territorial integrity and neutral as well as some individual hunting grounds on the plains. With this treaty, at least part of the governor's promise to the Flatheads was kept.

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[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 736-740.

CHAPTER IV

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STEVENS TREATY

There are two important considerations in a study of the years immediately following the signing of the Stevens Treaty of 1855 (often called the Hell Gate Treaty after the council site). One is the continuing condition of the Bitter Root Flatheads and their interaction with increasing numbers of white settlers; the other is the treaty--the need to know whether the government met its obligations, whether the Indians were willing to carry out their part of the bargain, and what the Indian and white attitudes toward the treaty were. This chapter will be concerned with the second consideration; the first will be dealt with in Chapter Five.

It is clear that the potential for misunderstanding, and the Indian ill will and a decreasing lack of respect for the terms of the document were built into the treaty. For one thing, the Indians were never completely convinced that a reservation was the most desirable thing, and the Flatheads might well have been expected to balk at an order to move out of the Bitter Root Valley if such a decision was reached following a survey of both areas. For another thing, the terms of the treaty were never completely explained by

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Stevens at the Hell Gate Council. Never a word was spoken during the meetings about Article Six, for example. According to this article, reservation land could be allotted and assigned to individual Indians or families as delineated in Article Six of the "treaty with the Omahas, so far as the same may be applicable."[1] (This treaty was made 16 March 1854 and ratified 17 April 1854. Its Article Six gives the details of allotment: the reservation land will be surveyed and allotted to families or individuals, and those who refuse the patents for their lots will lose all titles and rights to lands. The reservation land remaining after allotment will be sold to the public, the benefits going to the tribe.)[2] In short, at any time most of the 1,400,000 acres of the Flathead Reservation could be lost, the matter being beyond the control of the tribesmen. This allotment was actually accomplished early in the twentieth century, but the Indians must have been surprised, to say the least, when they first learned shortly after the passage of the Dawes Severalty Act in 1887 that the reservation was not theirs forever. The limits of the reservation were never clearly delineated in the council, either, and the description of the perimeter, though easily followed, was probably only a generalization in the minds of the Indians. Because of this, frequent

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[1]Charles Joseph Kappler, Indian Treaties, 1778-1883 (N.Y.: Interland Publishing Co., 1972), p. 724.

[2]Ibid., p. 612.

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squabbles over grazing rights and the exact location of the boundary dot the history of the reservation. Article Three, which made provision for rights-of-way through the reservation, may have been understood to some degree, but the effects of railroad building in the 1880's were unforeseen by the Flatheads in the 1850's.

Article Twelve of the Hell Gate treaty spelled out an area of more immediate trouble: "This treaty shall be obligatory upon the contracting parties as soon as the same shall be ratified by the President and Senate of the United States." The treaty was ratified 8 March 1859, nearly four years after it was signed and promises were made! Money for implementation of the treaty was provided in 1860. The general concern this delay caused is noted first in 1856, when Isaac Stevens wrote to the commissioner of Indian Affairs asserting that all treaties should be ratified at once, that the Indians were beginning to look forward "anxiously to the return of their 'paper' and were beginning to lose all confidence in the government and the Agents from the delay which has occurred in the confirmation of the Treaties. . . ."[3] His concern was not for the Flatheads alone--most of his treaties were not ratified until 1859.

J. W. Nesmith, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon and Washington Territories in 1857, echoed Stevens'

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[3]Isaac Ingalls Stevens to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 30 December 1856, Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, M-234, Roll 907.

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concern, saying that the treaty of Hell Gate should be ratified, if only because the area was a good route from the states into the Northwest and peaceful relations with the Indians should be insured. But Nesmith was thinking of the Indians also. He said that the Flatheads had observed the 1855 peace treaty with the Blackfeet very faithfully and deserved some credit for this, as in fact they deserved credit for their historic friendship toward the whites. For the record Nesmith said:

> I am of the opinion that, with the confirmation of the treaty and the presence of a reliable agent, those Indians can be easily managed. The experiment, fairly tried, of teaching them the usages of civilized life, and with the necessary safeguards thrown around them against the mischievous influences always attending the advance of our settlements into an Indian country, when measures have not been taken to separate the two races, I think will result in their permanent benefit.[4]

Nesmith's hopes were the hopes of most Americans, that the Indians, if given a chance, could learn to farm, read, and act like whites. The following year, in his annual report, Nesmith complained again about the failure to confirm treaties which would protect whites and Indians from each other, and about the dribbling amount of government goods and

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[4]James W. Nesmith, Document No. 134, "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1857," Sen. Ex. Doc. 11, 35th Cong., 1st Sess., serial 919. (In the future the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs will be referred to as "Annual Report." When the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior publication of the report is cited, it will be referred to as Annual Report.)

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money, matters which had driven some tribes to the edge of war.[5] Commissioners James W. Denver and Charles E. Mix, his successor, shared these views.[6]

The first clear period of Flathead Reservation activity extended from the signing of the treaty in 1855 to the appointment of Flathead agent Charles Hutchins, who was transferred to the Flathead Agency from the Nez Perce Agency on 30 September 1862. During this period three agents tried to appease the Flatheads and explain non-ratification of the treaty and the resulting lack of money and progress. They tried to begin the semblance of an agency and made a pretense, at least, of serving both the Jocko Reservation and the Bitter Root Valley. Thomas Adams served as special agent from 1 January 1854 to 4 August 1854, when Richard H. Lansdale was appointed. John Owen succeeded Lansdale on 13 October 1856 and served first as a special agent from his base, Fort Owen, in the Bitter Root Valley; he was officially designated sub-agent in late 1858. Charles Hutchins replaced him the following year.

Little is known of Thomas Adams, and his influence on the Flatheads was minimal. He was present at the Hell Gate Treaty Council and was probably of more help to Stevens than to the Indians since he had been an assistant artist on

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[5]Nesmith, "Annual Report of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 1858," Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 1, 35th Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. 1, pp. 567-570, Serial 974.

[6]Annual Report, 1858, pp. 353-369.

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Stevens' expedition in 1853 and was no doubt familiar with Indian matters. He remained in the valley for ten years after leaving the agency.[7]

Richard Lansdale was the first agent to make an impact on the Flathead nation, and he seems to have been one of the most capable agents the Flatheads ever had. He was assigned to Governor Stevens' office in October 1854 and remained attached to it until January 1855. During that time he was temporarily connected with James Doty, Secretary of the Washington Territory treaty commission, and in this capacity he participated in treaty making with the Walla Wallas and most of the other territorial tribes, including the Flatheads. He finished his treaty experiences with the Fort Benton Blackfoot treaty council and afterward was assigned to the Bitter Root Valley on 7 September 1855 to examine the two reservation sites.[8] The fact that he did not do much (if anything) in the Bitter Root Valley prior to the Hell Gate treaty and yet was called the Flathead agent in 1854 is explained by the nomenclature of the territorial Indian districts. The Eastern District of Washington Territory was called the

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[7]Albert J. Partoll, "The Flathead Indian Treaty Council," Pacific Northwest Quarterly 29 (July 1938), p. 286n.

[8]Richard Lansdale, "Annual Report," 18 October 1855, from Council ground on the Missouri River at the mouth of the Judith, accompanying Stevens to Commissioner, a report, 5 May 1856, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907 (In the future this will be referred to as Letters Received, Washington Superintendency.); and Lansdale to Stevens, 18 October 1855, Records of the Washington Superintendency, (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

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Flathead Agency, and Lansdale operated within this large area as part of the treaty-making team.

Following Lansdale's survey of the Bitter Root Valley and the Flathead Reservation sites (a matter discussed later in this chapter) he received instructions from the governor in late 1855 to locate himself on the Flathead River Reservation and erect no more than three temporary log structures and a corral. One reason for the temporary nature of the base was that money for the operation was to come from the general and meagre operating budget for territorial supervision of the Indians. Stevens said that these dwellings and shops were to last only until the required mills, shops, hospital, school, and related houses were built, and they were not to cost more than one thousand dollars. Of the three temporary buildings, the agency headquarters and residence building was to be the final construction.

Agency activities were to be as limited as the building program. Lansdale was to engage in only the most necessary activities as Indian Agent. He was not to hire an agency farmer or commence farming or gardening without special authorization from the governor, who authorized him to pick up subsistence supplies but not farming implements from Forts Campbell and Benton. No permanent reservation trader was to be allowed to locate on the reservation, although licenses could be granted for reliable individuals on a regular basis. (Stevens specifically forbade the Hudson's Bay Company from trading with the Flatheads, but the reservation post of the

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company continued to operate until 1871.[9] Lansdale was to furnish a list of goods necessary to execute the recent treaty, and to draw up plans to locate all Flathead Nation tribes on the reservation. Each tribe was equally entitled to suitable locations.

One concern which Stevens conveyed to Lansdale was about competition from St. Ignatius Mission. He warned the agent to be on his "guard against any temporary arrangements under the auspices of the Mission St. Ignatius which will Embarras [sic] the Department in locating the several tribes hereafter."[10] Stevens was worried that the mission might sap the authority of the agency in this early period and that the Flatheads--who would not take readily to missionary control at this point--would be coerced to live close to the mission.

The decisiveness of Stevens' directions to Lansdale suggests that the governor expected his treaties to be ratified soon. The initial steps taken by Lansdale and the ensuing agents will be examined, even though the men were working on the reservation to which the Flatheads would not go for many years, because the failure of the government to carry out provisions of the Hell Gate treaty was partly responsible for the unwillingness of the Bitter Root Indians to make the move.

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[9]Partol, "Flathead," p. 314n.

[10]Stevens to Lansdale, letter of instruction from Hell Gate Ronde, Bitter Root Valley, 10 November 1885, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

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Stevens was always pleased with Lansdale's work. In an 1856 letter to the Commissioner, he said:

> The report of Agent Lansdale will show that he has entered upon his duties with the most commendable earnestness and activity and has already got an establishment on the Flathead River reservation which has made him comfortable for the winter and will enable him in carrying out the provisions of the Treaty, to have some little accomodations to commense /sic/ with.[11]

Later that year the governor wrote, "I can speak most emphatically of Dr. Lansdale, as a faithful and efficient agent."

Efficient as Lansdale may have been when he was on the reservation, however, the reservation was without an agent during the winter of 1856-1857 and the early spring of 1857. Although John Owen was appointed sub-agent in October 1856, he operated from the Bitter Root Valley, and Lansdale continued to be the agent of record for the Jocko. But Lansdale left the Jocko on a trip west prior to the snows of the winter, and in February 1857 Stevens wrote to Commissioner Manypenny that Lansdale was not yet on the reservation and could not return, even after the snow melted in the passes, unless he had a military escort. Meanwhile, according to Stevens, Lansdale was checking on various reports of Indian depredations in the territory, operating out of the governor's office during the quarter while the new special agent Owen discharged agency duties from Fort Owen. On 31 March 1857, probably writing from Fort Owen or the agency, Lansdale wrote to Stevens to say that Owen wanted to be relieved of his duties in order to visit St. Louis in the spring (probably

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[11]Stevens to Commissioner, 5 May 1856, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

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for trade purposes), and that Lansdale thought that Henry Miller, interpreter for the agency, could take charge--even though Miller did not know how to read or write.[12] Lansdale was formally transferred from the Flathead Agency to the Nez Perce Agency in June 1857; he was careful not to leave the former agency in debt, and he made the beginnings of a functional agency, but his effect upon the Indians was probably minimal.

As a resident of the Bitter Root Valley, John Owen was in the best position to help the Flathead tribe, and in a poor position to serve the Indians of the Jocko Reservation. It was because the Flatheads remained in the Bitter Root Valley for many years that he was variously a full agent, special agent, and sub-agent. Unfortunately his administration left much to be desired. He was at once sympathetic to and prejudiced against the Indians, as were many of his era. His journals contain many apologies to the Indians regarding government policy and its "abuses" of the first Americans, and he advanced such solid ideas as providing Indians with livestock, plows, and permanent improvements instead of annuity trade goods.[13] And yet he would occasionally expose his hidden feelings, often in times of frustration, saying once that "it is useless to speak of

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[12]Stevens to Commissioner, 13 February 1857 and April 1857, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907; and Lansdale to Stevens, 31 March 1857, Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

[13]Owen, Journals, Vol. I, p. 12.

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the Merits of these Indians." His alarmist statements about fears of a Flathead uprising will be introduced later.

Lansdale promised Owen that he would be relieved of his responsibilities in the spring of 1857,[14] but Owen was not relieved, nor did he resign, until 1862; and in the meantime he managed to upset things at the Flathead Agency, as those associated with him readily testified. He was often delinquent in submitting reports to his superintendent, and many of them were probably never turned in. The superintendent's reports, and hence the commissioner's annual reports, often noted that little could be said about the Flathead Agency because nothing had been submitted.

Money problems plagued Owen, and his official finances were very muddled. He spent money on the wrong things; he spent too much on trips out of the area, probably in part for personal gain; and he failed to keep full records. As a result, when he sent one of his men to Fort Benton with a pack train to pick up annuity goods for the Flathead Nation, the army refused to release the goods. In September 1860 he protested to Edward R. Geary, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Washington and Oregon Territories, in a letter marked "private," saying: "I have some pride in trying to do in this far distant district all I can for the Means at my disposal [.] I would like to have one more honest talk

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[14]Lansdale to Owen, 18 October 1856, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

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with you about affairs generally." He admitted to Geary that he was in "a peck of trouble and annoyed beyond measure" at the delay of the annuity goods and charged that the colonel there had taken "a very arbitrary stand."[15]

Typical of Owen's problems was the confusion about the purchase of cattle. From Portland, which he was visiting on a buying trip, Owen wrote to Bion F. Kendall, the second Superintendent of Washington Territory and the virtual successor to Edward Geary (William Miller, the first Superintendent of Washington Territory, held office for five months, and no letters from him appear in the records), explaining that Geary had assured him that the purchase of cattle for the agency would be a wise one because the price of cattle was down. Hence, said Owen, he bought cattle on credit, not having agency funds for the transaction at the time. Three hundred head, at thirty-five dollars per head ($10,500), were delivered to the Jocko Reservation. Owen had not secured Kendall's permission for the purchase, however, and when the money was not forthcoming, Owen wondered why and suggested that it, and other funds designated for the Flathead Agency, should be turned over to him in cash while he was in Portland.[16]

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[15]Owen to Edward R. Geary, 6 September 1860, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

[16]Owen to Bion F. Kendall, 3 October 1861, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

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Beleaguered and interested in his own business, Owen resigned his Indian position 17 July 1862. After installing Hutchins as agent at the Jocko headquarters, he said that he felt quite relieved that he was rid of many problems.[17]

Owen's problems, however, were not over. When Kendall wrote to the commissioner on 2 January 1862, he said that although unable to visit the Flathead agency upon assuming his duties, because impending snows threatened, "I am informed by witnesses whom I can hardly discredit, that the transactions of Mr. Owen have been openly and notoriously corrupt, but as I have no evidence in such shape as will substantiate the charge, I will delay making any definite report on the matter until spring. . . ." He added that "nothing but absolute necessity induced me to let him remain during the winter."[18] Kendall may not have been a reliable source of information about Owen, He admitted not having actual proof of his charges, and his superintendency was short. He took office in July 1861 and left in March 1862, replaced by Calvin H. Hale.

More to the point, agent Charles Hutchins reached the Flathead agency and found it in deplorable condition. He reported that

> Maj. Owen arrived here about three weeks ago, but is now absent to Fort Benton and not expected back till the 5th of November. He came to the Agency on his return from Portland, discharged all hands, sacked the Agency of

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[17]Owen, Journal, p. 259.

[18]Kendall to Commissioner, 2 January 1862, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

> every head of stock of all kinds, & most of the grain, sold & gave away the nails, lumber, agricultural implements, household utensils, & in short scraped the public property to the bed rock of that which was most indispensible in this afar country.[19]

Hutchins called Owen's actions "rascalities" and said that "I never heard a man so utterly and universally cryed down in the neighborhood of his own home as is Owen."[20] Such acts may have been committed. He was a man much saddled by debts contracted for the agency's sake (probably on his own signature at times), a man who never had enough money to run the agency properly and who did not really want the agency position but took it in the face of pressing superintendency needs.

Hutchins again described agency conditions in his general report in December, 1862. There were, he said, a few tools at the agency, but no annuity goods left to distribute for the winter (blankets often made up a large portion of these goods). There were a few medical supplies, some carpenter tools in poor condition (partly because they had been purchased second-hand), no livestock, some wagons (but none complete), one-hundred bushels of wheat and two months' supply of vegetables, a partial and useless set of gunsmithing tools, and a partial set of blacksmithing tools. Owen had discharged the employees so abruptly, said Hutchins, that the agency farmer could not even harrow a field of wheat that

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[19]Charles Hutchins to Hale, 25 October 1862, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

[20]*Ibid*.

had been plowed and sown. Most of the crops had been issued to employees in lieu of wages. Thus no seed wheat was left for the spring of 1863.[21]

Hutchins supplied details about the extent of Owen's "sacking" of the agency. Prior to Owen's return from the West there were fifty-eight head of livestock, which Owen disbursed "down to the last hoof" along with the crops in lieu of wages. A fine team of six mules with the agency brand was given to the Bitter Root Indians, said Hutchins, who added that he had passed this very team in the Bitter Root Valley, in the hands of Indians. Harnesses and wagons were sold by Owen to Quincy A. Brooks, formerly Owen's accountant at Fort Owen who was now living in Walla Walla, although the man had never been employed at the agency. All of the farm implements were sent to Fort Owen, leaving the agency without tools for planting. Even seventeen rifles were disposed of. "I believe," Hutchins said, "that it will be apparant to you, that it was my predecessor /¯'_7 s aim to Embarras /¯sic_7 his successor to the utmost, and by stripping this agency of its material to stultify his action for a year to come." Hutchins asked Owen why he did these things, and Owen said that when he came, there was nothing, and that Hutchins might as well obtain things as he had![22]

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[21]Hutchins to Hale, 2 December 1862, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 908.

[22]Ibid.

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Whether Hutchins' accounts are wholly accurate will never be known. Information about his administration, personality, and integrity is too slight to be conclusive, and a formal investigation of his charges was never forthcoming. It may be that by exaggerating Owen's failings, Hutchins hoped to insure himself against future blame. But he was an agent in good standing when he was transferred to the Flathead Agency, and his record recommended him for the new position. He had little to gain immediately by making unsound charges; indeed, they were so detailed and so soon forthcoming that they appear to be a reaction to the actual situation. There is no history of a previous Owen-Hutchins rift that might have precipitated a personal clash.

Even Owen's explanation suggests that Hutchins was right. Owen replied indirectly through Brooks, who said in a letter to Superintendent Hale that Owen did in fact turn over a few mules. These mules did not go to Indians, however, but to Brooks, since the mules were actually Owen's own property and came from Fort Owen in the Bitter Root Valley. (The existence of the agency brand was not explained.) According to Brooks, Owen did pay his agency employees from produce raised on the Jocko Reservation, since Owen had promised to do so if he was unable to pay them in cash. This agrees with a statement by Owen in an earlier letter to the superintendent. Brooks could not address himself to all of Hutchins' charges and said that whatever the case, Owen was responsible to his bond, which all agents had to post, and

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that he should be held to "a strict and rigid accountability for the same."[23] Meanwhile, Brooks continued, the government should not withhold payments from others, since this was a matter between Owen and the government. It was too easy a matter to make charges against public officials, he said, adding that

> from the tone of your /Hale's/ letter I gather that you have come to the conclusion that the Major has been guilty of a want of integrity. Whatever faults he may have, and he is not free from them, I think you will find that dishonesty is not among the number.[24]

Owen did enjoy a good reputation among the Indians and the citizens of the Bitter Root Valley, and since no other charges were ever leveled at him, one must ask why Owen would prejudice the government against himself when he claimed that the government owed him so much money. Hutchins had commented that Owen would probably account for all his transactions, although they may have been without authorization. Hutchins also said that Owen believed that he had free reign to dispose of all public property in his charge, placing the accruing funds to the credit of the government. For example, said Hutchins, should unsuitable annuity goods arrive from the East (and this happened constantly), Owen thought that he could sell them and use the money for the agency.[25] This was

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[23]Quincy A. Brooks to Hale, 30 January 1863, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid.

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a sensible policy when applied judiciously, and no doubt the chronic non-arrival of funds--an established fact by 1862--further justified these actions in Owen's mind.

Owen was at least guilty of indiscretions which hampered the conduct of agency affairs by Hutchins. The overlapping of Owen's personal and agency business, the depletion of agency supplies at a time when resupply of a new agency was especially difficult and critical, and the ensuing bad credit rating of the agency made Hutchins' task a hard one. Superintendent Hale, basing his actions on Hutchins' long report, recommended that until Owen's financial statements came in, none of the agency liabilities incurred by Owen be honored; this further crippled the agency and helped place Hutchins in a desperate position for the impending spring planting.

The good faith of the federal government in these first years depended upon two things: a survey of the two potential reservation areas (the Bitter Root Valley and the Flathead Lake area), and the execution of treaty provisions providing service to the Indians. Unfortunately, neither matter was handled well in these first post-treaty years.

Isaac Stevens moved rapidly and firmly to establish the location of the reservation, but in doing so he was guilty of a breach of faith and the letter of the Hell Gate treaty. He instructed Lansdale to examine both areas and report to him their possibilities as a permanent home for the Bitter Root Flatheads. The treaty provided that the President would establish a separate reservation in the

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Bitter Root Valley for the Flatheads if a survey showed that that area was a better place for them. In his letter to Lansdale, Stevens assumed, however, that all of the Indians would live in one place; he pointed out to Lansdale that in formulating his report he should consider that majority of the Indians to be placed on a reservation preferred the Flathead River tract.[26] Whether Stevens forgot the provision in the treaty, or--more likely--intentionally circumvented it, is not certain, but he had negotiated the treaty and probably remembered very well what had been decided.

Lansdale reported first on the Bitter Root area, from the Lo Lo fork to a point fifty miles upstream on the Bitter Root River, and from the crest of the Bitter Root Mountains on the west to sources of streams feeding into the Bitter Root River from the east. Since the larger portion of the area was fir and pine-covered mountains, he examined only the open lands in the lower parts of the valley. What he noted has been considered briefly in Chapter One. There was little good, arable land, but sufficient water and grazing land and plenty of timber. The east side of the valley, the reader will recall, was not well-watered, and the whole area

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[26]Lansdale to Stevens, 2 October 1855, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22; and Lansdale, report of his examination of both proposed reservation areas, attached to his "Annual Report" to Stevens, 1 October 1855, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

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of good open grazing land, wet and dry, was about three hundred square miles in extent.[27]

Lansdale next turned his attention to the upper region, the reservation area of the Hell Gate treaty. Here he said that there was an area of prairie valley along the Jocko River called the Jocko Ronde. About ten miles long from south to north, and three miles wide, it

> affords the best kind of pasturage in the valley and upon the encircling hills, has twenty square miles of arable land of pretty good quality, and thirty square miles of grazing lands, the greatest abundance of water power in the Jocko and Course d'femme waters, and abundant timber on the streams and hills. This ronde has the reputation of being the warmest valley in all the higher ranges of the Rocky Mountains, and is a good locality for agency buildings being desirable for pasturage, tillage, and beauty of landscape.[28]

The area is striking even today; the Flathead Reservation area is bounded by impressive, snow-capped peaks on the east and west and is much broader than the Bitter Root Valley; the scenery is breathtaking. Lansdale continued, saying that the country between the Ronde and the Flathead Valley proper was grass covered and hilly, good for pasturage and about ten square miles in size. Although Lansdale did not personally inspect the Flathead River Valley itself, he conducted a "survey from prominent points," probably the elevation which overlooks the valley and the head of Flathead Lake, and said that it appeared to be "fine for pasturage,

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[27]Lansdale to Stevens, 2 October 1855, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

[28]*Ibid*.

being covered by a luxuriant growth of rich nutritious grasses."[29] His observation, even from a distance, was fairly accurate.

To Lansdale the choice was clear. The Flathead Lake area was a better home for the Flatheads than the Bitter Root Valley. He told Governor Stevens this in a letter of 2 October, and thus within two months of the Hell Gate Treaty council the matter appeared to have been settled. According to the agent,

> I would declare it as my conviction that the northern district is preferable not only as being their choice /the choice of the majority of Indians/, but for the purposes of a permanent home for all of them--as to beauty of landscape, extent and richness of pasture lands, extent and fertility of tillable lands, timber and water power, roots and fruits suitable and desirable for their use, fish and game, and as producing every element that enters into my unbiassed /sic/ consideration of the whole question.[30]

Lansdale also pointed out that the Bitter Root Valley had but one small trading post (Owen's), one small field, a tiny garden, and the abandoned St. Mary's Mission. In the northern area, he said, the mission had shops, dwellings, large fields, and a working mill. Father Adrian Hoeken of the mission observed in April of 1857 that the mission was already doing some of the things promised in the Stevens treaty. Indians were being taught to farm; seeds, fields, and farming tools were provided free, a smith worked with the Indians as did all men at the mission, and even medicine was free--this,

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

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without funds from the government.[31] Despite obvious prejudices on the part of Lansdale (if nothing else, he was working for the governor, who favored the northern location), his selection of the northern site was sound. It was larger, it was indeed favored by the majority of Indians, there was a thriving mission there, and the land was bountiful--as whites were to discover later. Further, in the 1850's the Flathead Lake area was out of the way, off the general travel routes, and hence "available."

Governor Stevens conveyed Lansdale's view to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in a letter dated 5 May 1856, saying that the agent had made the examination of the tracts

> and unequivocally reported in favor of the Tract in the Flathead River as best adapted to the Flathead Tribe. I will recommend that the reservation in the Flathead River /Valley/ be adopted by the Department as the reservation of all the Tribes parties to the Treaty in the Bitter Root Valley. . . . This will be in strict conformity with the guarantees of the Treaty. The report of Dr. Lansdale is so full and convincing, that further observations from me are unnecessary.[32]

This letter did get to Washington, D. C., but what happened to the message after that is unclear. There is no record of anyone, including Stevens, Lansdale, and Owen, specifically telling the Flatheads about an order to remove from the Bitter Root Valley. They learned of the government's intention, however, since from this point on until the 1890's there were almost unceasing efforts to persuade them to move.

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[31]Hiram Chittenden and Alfred Talbot Richardson, Life, Letters, and Travels of Father de Smet (4 vols; N.Y.: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), Vol. IV. pp. 1245-1246.

[32]Stevens to Commissioner, 5 May 1856, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

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The execution of other treaty provisions was not carried out with as much dispatch as the location of the reservation site, partly because of the potential collusion between the St. Ignatius Mission personnel and the pro-Catholic Indians. Alexander, Head-chief of the Upper Pend d'Oreilles and known personally to Lansdale as "a man of grasping and overbearing disposition," was, the agent declared, likely to use

> every exertion to secure unusual and improper concession to the injury of the Flatheads and I fear that. . . the missionary fathers will use an active influence in his behalf, as it is also to be feared they will in regard to all their especial retainers. This influence must be discontinued and any interference in your own functions, will, I doubt not, be promptly and effectively met.[33]

Prompt fulfillment of the treaty was also hampered by problems encountered in erecting buildings, and by winter. On 1 December Lansdale complained to Stevens that

> neither men in sufficient force, nor tools, nor materials, nor teams, could be procured to erect the kind of buildings indicated in your instructions; the lateness and coldness of the season allowed no delay. . . .[34]

Accordingly, Lansdale and his men built structures of green, unhewn cottonwood logs; these buildings did not even comply with the initial instructions from Stevens. The work on the huts was completed by 8 December, and other activities halted for the rest of the month as temperatures hovered between

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[33]Stevens to Lansdale, letter of instruction, 10 November 1855, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

[34]Lansdale to Stevens, 1 December 1855, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

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twelve and twenty degrees below zero. The buildings were actually "tolerably comfortable," and all employees but one were in good health and subsisted on daily rations of forty ounces of beef, a short twelve ounces of flour, three ounces of coffee, and four ounces of sugar. Indian relations, Lansdale noted, were "pretty much the same," many Indians being on their annual buffalo hunt.[35] January operations were as limited as the December ones, for the same reasons. Lansdale planned to begin construction of four better houses to replace the temporary huts when weather permitted.[36]

Indicative of the problems involved in starting an agency and of the generally slow start not only in the winter of 1855-1856, but in the ensuing year, is the report made by John Owen when he began operations there following Lansdale's residence. He found the agency in "Miserable condition," merely several thatched cabins. He had to fix one up for the miller and his wife to use during the coming winter. He said that he might have to move the agency, lock, stock, and barrel, to his own fort, as the men would dwell in "no such hole any longer." Further, said Owen, the agency was without provisions, the public funds were exhausted, and a year's pay was due some of the hands. Owen hoped that "our very

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[35]Lansdale to Stevens, report of December operations, 1 January 1856, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

[36]Ibid., report of January operations, 1 February 1856.

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liberal Gov't will make a better display in these parts in the midst of her red children before long."[37]

Even in 1860 the agency was hardly on a stable footing, and Owen complained that the flour mill was still incomplete, pending the delivery of burrs.[38] In the year preceding September 1860 Owen managed to erect a storehouse, a dwelling for farmers and assistants, and a blacksmith shop, one millwright shop, and a dwelling for the millwright and his party.[39] In other words, some of Lansdale's very temporary shelters were in use until 1860, five years after the signing of the treaty. The agency was scarcely attractive to its employees, and it hardly served to entice the Flatheads from the Bitter Root Valley. Superintendent Geary, aware of white pressures in the Bitter Root Valley and of the desirability of Flathead removal, thought it wise not to press the issue of removal in 1860.[40]

The primary reason for the halting start of the Flathead agency was a shortage of funds. Prior to the ratification of the treaty, money for operations on the Jocko came

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Owen to Kendall, "Annual Report for 1860," 12 September 1861, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Geary, "Annual Report of the Superintendency of Indian Affairs for Washington and Oregon Territories," 1 July 1860, Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 1, 36th Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. 1, Serial No. 1078.

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from general appropriations to the Washington Superintendency and not from any direct appropriations. Stevens experienced embarrassing money problems even before the Flathead Treaty was negotiated. He wrote to the commissioner in May, 1855 saying that he was placed in an awkward position by making commitments based on money requested but not received. He said he hoped that money was simply being withheld for fulfillment of proposed treaty obligations, and he added that he was well on the way to extinguishing many acres of Indian land titles in Washington Territory and would need all the money he could get. In fact, he said, he could not imagine not receiving what he requested![41]

In the face of critical shortages which left Stevens' agent, sub-agent, and interpreter staff thirteen men short of the needed twenty-three, the superintendent had to report to the commissioner that $100,300 was necessary to begin the Flathead Agency in accordance with the treaty.[42] This figure was based in part on treaty sums for payment of annuities, head-chiefs, and employees, and in part on a report by Lansdale of physical plant and supply requirements. Lansdale's needs included one hundred working oxen; one hundred milk cows; bulls; one thousand fruit trees; one hundred sheep; plows, yokes, chains, axes, twenty wagons, and blankets and material for clothing. Additionally, Lansdale listed costs

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[41]Stevens to Commissioner, 1 May 1855, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

[42]Stevens to Commissioner, 5 May 1856, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

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for the erection of various buildings and tools for the workmen housed therein (blacksmith, tinsmith, gunsmith, and so on). The total first-year costs were estimated at $75,300, an estimate that was supported in twenty-four legal-sized pages which comprised his list![43] Lansdale later sent an estimate of further costs to Stevens. These included $36,000 for removal (although he said three-quarters of this could be spent to break and fence land after removal, since the Indians were highly mobile and could move at almost no cost). The remaining $9,000 allotted for removal could be used to build houses for the Indians, although he suggested that none of this be spent until the Indians were far enough advanced to feel the need of permanent houses and to keep them in repair.[44] This report elaborated on the dimensions of some buildings and added $10,000 for the construction of a saw and a flour mill and water wheel. The proposed school would be two stories high (one floor for boys, one for girls), and sixteen feet by thirty feet--adequate for about one hundred students in crowded conditions. The hospital would be fifteen feet by twenty feet, again two stories high, hardly adequate for the anticipated number of Indians expected on the reservation. The total "additional" cost for the hospital, school, mechanic shops and tools, the wagon maker's and

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[43]Lansdale, report of requirements for implementing treaty, accompanying his "Annual Report," 3 October 1855, attached to Stevens, "Annual Report of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Washington Territory," Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

[44]*Ibid*.

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carpenter's shop, and dwellings for employees and for the agent's house would be $13,600, according to Lansdale.

The $100,300 mentioned by Stevens in May 1856 was a conservative estimate at best, and even before that date, Lansdale was warning Stevens that the initial funds allotted by the treaty for buildings would not be enough--even though the buildings were of a temporary nature.[45] In fact, Lansdale said he was unable to pay the expenditures of the last quarter for want of coin.

The money problems were not soon to go away. In June 1856 Lansdale wrote to Stevens that he needed funds badly, that the government was not coming through with the necessary cash, and that government warrants several months old could not be changed into coin to pay wages. Lansdale blamed severed communications with western Washington Territory for some of his problems and said that he would have to go to Salt Lake City to convert his warrants. Later, in April 1857, Lansdale wrote that

> the Flathead Tribes as you are aware, have not had the benefit of any part of the first appropriation for restoring and maintaining peace; and, as touching the policy of maintaining peace; and, as touching the policy of maintaining their friendshipe, /sic/ so constant in the midst of the disaffection of other tribes, I would respectfully refer you to my many reports. . . .[46]

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[45]Lansdale to Stevens, report of January operations, 1 February 1856, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

[46]Lansdale to Stevens, 2 April 1857, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

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Lansdale was referring to the fact that the Flatheads had not received any money for several quarters of the 1856-1857 fiscal year, and that they had not seen any of the money from the first general appropriation for Indians in Washington Territory.

Bion F. Kendall, Superintendent of Washington Territory from July 1861 to March 1862, faced the same problems that bothered Stevens. He wrote to the commissioner that liabilities for his superintendency had been incurred by Stevens far beyond appropriations, not only for "Incidental Expenses," but for "removal" and for "pay of treaty employees" as well. At the same time, Kendall suggested that the finances of the Flathead Agency had been mismanaged, largely because of Owen's lack of efficiency.[47]

For his part, Owen--whatever his efficiency (or honesty)--was put-upon to keep things running without enough money. He made a trip to Portland, Oregon, in the summer of 1862 to obtain funds to settle the debts of his agency in the Bitter Root Valley and on the Jocko. He said he was compelled to "contract a considerable amount of liabilities in order to carry on the current business of my agency."[48] He added that he had received no salary for the fourteen months prior

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[47]Kendall to Commissioner, 30 December 1861, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

[48]Owen to Hale, from Portland, Oregon, 1 August 1862, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

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to his letter, and no travel funds for expenses incurred in 1861 or during his 1862 trip to Portland. Costs were paid from his own pocket. Worse yet, he had been embarrassed because he had made himself personally liable for many of the debts he had contracted as an agent. In fact, he said, in order to get men to work for him at planting and harvesting time, he had to pledge to give them crops to the degree that they were not paid. It would be folly, he said, to have Hutchins come to the agency unless funds were available.[49] Owen's complaints reflect the seriousness of the money problem, although in fairness it should be said that the delay in paying him was compounded by his ill-kept books. Hale wrote that he could not say when he would be authorized to pay Owen, but even if he were, he could not do so until he received the returns which had not been made or had been sent to the wrong office. The superintendent's reply was to a general complaint by a Portland attorney acting for a minister who held a voucher from Owen which the government would not pay. The lawyer questioned the frequent changes in Indian agents, the wisdom of taking Hutchin's word for Owen's affairs and the condition of the agency, and placing an Illinois man (probably Hutchins) in charge of the Flatheads: "why was some man from some distant part of the

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[49] Ibid., 29 August 1862.

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world selected for his place? What does Mr. So & So from Illinois know about the Flat Head Indians?"[50]

In 1862 the requests for money were still coming in, this time from Quincy A. Brooks, Owen's accountant. In October he wrote, "Have you any funds applicable to the payment of any portion of these liabilities?" In January, 1863, he wrote again, saying that he had still not heard about the liabilities. "If you cannot pay these accounts," he said, "please return the papers to me as the parties do not wish me to part with them without receiving their pay. Have you any funds applicable to the payments of these accounts, and, if so, are they in paper currency or in coins?"[51]

Shortage of coin was a constant problem on the frontier and not unique to the Flathead agents. But the chronic shortage of money and the corresponding poor credit rating of the agency among employees and merchants of the Missoula area were not merely frontier problems, but also results of poor administration and a lack of communication in the several links between the agent and Washington, D. C. Basically, however, the fault lay with a niggardly and indifferent Congress. Until the late 1870's the agency was continually short of funds. Employees, agents, and especially Indians were not paid; thus a pattern was continued that began prior

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[50]E. Hamilton to Commissioner, from Portland, Oregon, 12 August 1863, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 908.

[51]Brooks to Hale, 31 October 1862 and 22 January 1863, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

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to the ratification of the treaty of Hell Gate. The result was increasing difficulty in dealing with the Flatheads, in demonstrating to them the good faith of the government, and in supplying the agency through local merchants.

Another difficulty, caused in part by money shortage and also by a genuine labor shortage, was the recruitment of employees. One object of Richard Lansdale's trip to Salt Lake City in 1856 was to employ two people for his agency, "as it is impossible to employ in this country." Others, he said, also complained about finding good help, especially at agency prices.[52] John Owen said virtually the same thing in a letter to Superintendent Geary.[53] Manpower was short, and inflexible treaty and superintendency prices and rates could not keep up with rapidly inflating wages and prices in Washington Territory. One means of keeping help was by promising part of the crops to laborers--something which Owen did openly. The enticement of free board and room, nominally prohibited by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was also common, the costs being taken from the "wages" of one or two persons on the books but not actually employed. These practices were a pragmatic matter, not an attempt to defraud, and the wheeling, dealing, and pleading of Lansdale, Owen, and others were for the most part necessary in a rude, undeveloped country.

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[52]Lansdale to Stevens, 30 June 1856, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

[53]Owen to Geary, from Portland, Oregon, 28 May 1860, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

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Supplying the agency posed another problem, and one might consider the hazards of an overland journey from the west. Hutchins recounted to Hale the contents of a letter from Owen regarding a return journey from Oregon. The trip, said Owen, was long, and uncomfortable. He could not hire transportation for goods obtained at Lewiston, so he bought a small pack train. On the first night out wolves stampeded the herd, and a two-day search was required to round up the animals and begin again, three mules and one horse short. When the train reached the Coeur d'Alene mission, Owen bought and borrowed more animals and then left for the Bitter Root Valley in a steady rain that did not stop. There was no food for the animals for seventy-seven miles, by Owen's reckoning, and they stampeded again, causing Owen to lose two more days, six mules, and three horses. The total distance traveled with the train was two hundred eighty-seven miles.[54]

Even this unpredictable transportation into and out of the Flathead area was halted during the winter months by snow in the mountain passes. Lansdale wrote that his letters of the winter were usually sent out on the first Hudson's Bay Company "express" from the Flathead post to Fort Colville on 1 February, and thence to Fort Vancouver in mid-February. Correspondence about solutions to supply and money problems might be prolonged for six months.

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[54]Hutchins to Hale, 25 October 1862, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

To further confound the agents' attempts to serve the Indians adequately, annuity goods arrived as sporadically as other material. Sometimes this was because of administrative conflicts and foul-ups. Once, when Owen sent a pack train of eight animals to Fort Benton to collect a shipment, the disbursing agent there refused to turn it over to anyone without direct orders from Superintendency Geary. Owen calculated that the ensuing delay, making necessary the keeping of the men and animals at the fort for a number of days, cost the government more than eight thousand dollars. At the same time the delay disappointed the Indians.[55]

In fact, the goods that arrived at the fort were only part of what had been ordered from the East, and not the most essential items. Much of what Owen finally brought back was useless to the Indians--a common complaint. Things had not improved in the ten years since Lieutenant Saxton, who journeyed east from Washington Territory to meet the traveling Governor Stevens, reported that he had difficulty buying Indian annuity goods or gifts in Washington Territory, except at exorbitant prices, and that he had to buy from the Hudson's Bay Company! (Stevens suggested that gifts should be purchased in New York and sent via clipper to San Francisco, to be picked up later.)[56]

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[55] Owen to Kendall, "Annual Report for 1860," 12 September 1861, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

[56] Stevens to Commissioner, from Fort Benton, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 907.

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Many of the problems of the new Flathead Agency were simply those of an over-extended new territory, and some were the result of bureaucratic bungling and a failure of officials to grasp fully the complexities and needs of the situation. What has been pointed out is not so much a matter of blame, as shortcomings of the system.

What is important about money, transportation, and communication problems, and about the disappointments of agents and Indians alike is the reaction of the Indians to these things. Their attitudes changed, and these changes occurred in two phases, the first one of gradual disillusionment.

Although the tribes were never particularly pleased about having signed the Stevens Treaty, they were not immediately critical of post-treaty developments. The Flatheads were even cooperative in the first years after 1855. Lansdale's Annual Report for 1857 suggests this; and he wrote to Governor Stevens that "the Flathead now appear favorable [sic] disposed to a removal to this reservation, should it be confirmed as such, and doubtless will readily remove unless overpersuaded by meddlesome white men." The treaty had been signed only a year before, and any delays or shortcomings on the part of the whites were not yet noticeable. Lansdale was usually accurate in his observations.

Delays soon began to irk the Indians. In 1857 Lansdale wrote that matters were taking on a new perspective; so much

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time had passed since 1855 that the Indians felt they should be consulted again before the ceded land was actually given up, or before the Flatheads were told to move north. "A tender regard for their feelings," said Lansdale, "would give them a small reservation in their own valley for a few years at least, besides their interest in the large reservation on the Flathead river."[57] In another report he noted that the Indians were very eager that the 1855 treaty be ratified, particularly since they had been called in treaty council at great inconvenience and promised much. Said Lansdale, mixing his own opinions with the views of the Flatheads:

> Since the Treaty was signed they see no proof of a desire on the part of the president to fulfill any part of his engagement. What must be [the] effect of such facts upon the ignorant and untutored, and consequently suspicious minds of the Indians? The Great Father is all powerful, there is no end to his silver and gold, he has all riches at his command, his white people are as numerous as the leaves on our trees:--so the Indian is taught to believe and so he does believe. What is the result? Perhaps the president does not intend to pay for our lands; the white people only wish time to come in, few at a time, till they gradually occupy and take all our lands; we shall be poor and without a country. No marvel that the poor Indian is suspicious and becomes disaffected. Already, they begin to object to so many whites settling in their rich grazing valleys. They also see that the great father sends large annual presents of goods to his Blackfeet children. . . . The Blackfeet are their old enemies, but we the Flatheads, gave them and the great father our hands at the Judith Council ground, we keep that paper in our hearts, but we get no presents.[58]

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[57]Lansdale, in his "Annual Report" to Nesmith, in "Annual Report," Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 11, 35th Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 2, p. 666, serial 919.

[58]Lansdale to Stevens, report, 31 March 1857, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

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In the same vein John Owen wrote that

> the Flathead Indians say that we are dogs. They say that two years ago they made a treaty with their great friend Gov. Stevens, and have never heard anything of it since. The Same year some moons later a treaty was made with the Blackfeet which was responded to immediately by their great Father in the shape of Blankets, --Guns, Grains, etc! Why should the Blackfeet stand so much better with the Great Father than we who have never shed the blood of a white man.[59]

The rapid response to the warring Blackfeet seemed to particularly rankle the Flatheads, and it was often referred to by them when they were complaining of the government's failure to live up to the Stevens Treaty.

The delay served only to harden the Flatheads' determination to remain in the Bitter Root Valley. Although Head-chief Victor claimed land near St. Ignatius Mission on the Flathead Reservation, he did not renounce his land in the Bitter Root Valley; this was true of many Flatheads. In 1857 Victor called John Owen down from the Flathead Agency to Fort Owen for a council, and Owen reported that

> . . .in my office at the Fort /_ ,_7 Victor told me that he was sorry for one thing that they had promised the Governor, which was to vacate the Bitter Root valley if it was though /_ t_7 best for them, and have the reservation elsewhere. They now say we have buried our farthers /_ sic_7 and children here which endears to us the soil.

Owen said that the Flatheads went as far as to warn some white men that if they fenced and farmed the land it would be for nought, because the Flatheads would reap the crops.[60] In

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[59]Owen to James Dotz, 25 April 1857, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

[60]Ibid.

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tones more ominous than the situation demanded, the agent added that it would have taken little to ignite hostility in the Indian camp during the past winter. Owen's report is important. It suggests that the Flatheads realized the implications of the Stevens Treaty and understood the conditions under which they would have to leave their valley. Later the Flatheads would claim that they did not understand the provisions of the document upon which they had placed their marks.

Meanwhile the establishment of a sub-agency in the Bitter Root Valley further cemented Flathead bonds to the area. Owen reported in February 1859 that the Indians were satisfied with this agency and that they had told him they would never consent to its removal from the Bitter Root Valley.[61] Their adamant stand was laced with fear, however, and they said as much when they met in council with Owen in April 1861, adding that they did not consider the valley lands disposed of by the 1855 treaty (a correct statement as far as it went) and would not move of their own will. Increasing white pressures in the valley undoubtedly intensified their worries.

The Flatheads were never openly hostile to the whites. Owen wrote to his superintendent in 1858, when other Indians were rising up: "God send that the present dissatisfaction

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[61]Owen to Nesmith, 2 February 1859, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

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may not reach the Flatheads."[62] A year later he reported to Superintendent Geary that although no stone had been left unturned by hostile Indians to prejudice the Flatheads against the whites, they remained friendly and peaceful. He added that one thousand dollars worth of presents, plus cattle, plows, wagons, and grain had undoubtedly helped them maintain this posture.[63]

Nonetheless, the position of the Indians had changed rapidly and markedly, from the suggestion that they did not really want to leave the Bitter Root Valley and the complaint that the government was being unjust, to the declaration that they would not consent to the termination of the sub-agency in the valley. Finally, in 1862, they fully reversed their original position. Agent Hutchins, writing to Superintendent Hale in December of 1862, reported that Victor visited him and made it quite clear that he believed Governor Stevens had not explained to them that they had sold their country, but rather that the Governor had promised them that they should always live in the valley. "It is very difficult to make the Indians understand a conditional agreement, and I can readily conceive, that by imperfect translation this impression of Gov. Stevens' words should obtain in their minds." Hale continued:

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[62]Owen to Nesmith, 16 July 1858, in Owen, Journal, Vol. II, p. 183.

[63]Owen to Geary, 31 May 1859, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

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> The Flatheads are warmly attached to that country, and declare they will never consent to leave it. If driven away from their homes, they say they will go to the Buffaloe [sic] Country, and cease trying to cultivate the grounds like the whites.[64]

Whether the Indians were actually convinced that this was the truth, that Stevens had promised them the Valley, or whether they were merely testing the whites, is uncertain, but their earlier councils and remarks suggest that the latter is true and that in view of the frequent governmental shortcomings regarding their treaty, they believed their new demands to be justified. For a time after the signing of the treaty, the Flatheads were resigned to moving if they were so directed; by 1857 they were protesting that they had been neglected and did not want to cooperate; and finally, by 1862, they were refusing to move. Now the government was faced with two problems: convincing the Indians of its integrity in the future, and convincing them that they should give up their homeland.

While the first phase of Flathead reaction to implementation of the treaty developed in seven years, the second phase was to last for much longer, its patterns solidifying between 1862 and 1870, when Victor died and was succeeded by his son, Charlot. A short discussion of this second phase will place it in proper perspective for ensuing chapters.

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[64]Hutchins to Hale, 2 December 1862, Records of the Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 908.

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One basic conflict from 1862 on was the clash between white settlers--actually encroachers on Indian land--and the Indians, whose position was increasingly threatened. James Harlan, Secretary of the Interior, wrote to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Denton Cooley in 1866 recommending the removal of the Indians from the Bitter Root Valley and payment for the improvements which they had made--a suggestion that had not been anticipated by the 1855 treaty.[65] The valley, he wrote, would soon be settled by whites; they were there, and there was no stopping them. He thought that additional legislation might be necessary to accomplish removal and payment. Details of how this was to be accomplished were evidently left to the Bureau.[66] White settlers apparently agreed with Harlan. Thirteen years after the signing of the treaty there had still been no survey, said the Bitter Root Valley whites in a petition to the Secretary of the Interior. They declared that the valley was

> the most fertile valley in Montana Territory and contains at least 360 square miles, in which settlements have been made by the whites who now number about 700 souls and have enclosed about 15000 acres of land.

They continued, listing their points: all Missoula County officers except the sheriff lived in the valley; there were two schools, with a total of fifty students; fifty ledges of gold and silver veins had been discovered (none ever produced enough to create a boom); a town (present day Stevensville)

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[65]James Harlan to Commissioner, 14 May 1866, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[66]*Ibid*.

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with twenty houses had been founded adjacent to Fort Owen; and there were but twenty Flatheads who had settled down and were actually farming a few acres of cultivated land.[67] The petition was signed by one hundred sixty-three people. Not one word was included about the ill-tempered Indians, or about an Indian threat; the whites simply wanted land devoid of Indians!

For their part, the Indians continued to insist that they had never given up their right to the valley. When Owen talked with Victor in the summer of 1868 the chief reiterated his position, contending that the 1855 Stevens Treaty set aside the valley for the Indians, that the whites had settled in defiance of the treaty.[68] It is possible that Victor did not know of the survey of the two areas and the recommendation by Stevens that the Flatheads be moved north. Indeed, following that report, the survey was never mentioned again by the whites, agents or settlers, and if it was once public knowledge, the whites--who had much to gain by recalling the fact--lost sight of it. Still, the treaty itself did not leave room for Victor's position.

Victor's remarks were made in the context of an August 1868 conference at Fort Owen, probably with John Owen and other Bureau officials. There, Ambrose, a headman, said that

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[67]Citizens of Bitter Root Valley, petition, to Secretary of the Interior, 7 May 1868, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[68]Owen, Journal, Vol. II, p. 121.

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the government had never complied with the provisions of the treaty (a true statement), that rumors of a railroad running through the Flathead Reservation inclined the Indians to stay away from the area, and that the Flatheads would be pleased to have all of the reservation Indians move down to the Bitter Root Valley! Ambrose also suggested that the annuity goods to which they were entitled were not being received in their full amount. Adolph, another headman, continued the list of complaints: there was no hospital on the reservation, and no smith; the agency was too far removed for good service; whites were illegally in the valley, often threatening to shoot the Indians. Adolph asked for farming implements ("The Great Father wants us to make farms. He ought to send us tools.") and said that he wanted to see the President, to insure that he heard what the agents were hearing. "Our hands are not stained with white blood. We never killed but one white man and he was a thief and a murderer. We had to kill him or get killed ourselves," Adolph concluded, generally showing a naive but accurate insight into the workings of the White Man's system.[69]

Things had come to an impasse. The Flatheads would no longer deal with the agents; they wanted to talk with the President about their situation. The idea was not new in 1868. John Owen, so much a part of the Flathead picture in

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[69]Minutes of remarks of Indians at a conference at Fort Owen, August, 1868. Out of place in Montana Historical Society files; no further information available.

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these early years, tried to intercede on their behalf in 1859, writing that they would not go to the capitol on a "begging mission" and would leave if asked, but that they would feel much better about things if they could talk with the President.[70] In 1867 Agent Wells revived the idea of the chiefs going to Washington, D.C. and caught Governor Green Clay Smith of Montana Territory off guard. Smith wrote to the Commissioner about the matter, saying that he could not recommend the trip until the matter had been investigated by a special Indian agent. Perhaps Wells favored such a trip for his charges because he was not in good favor with them, having been accused by the Rocky Mountain Gazette of desiring a survey of the Bitter Root Valley. (Wells disclaimed such a stand, telling the Bureau that he remained non-committal.)[71] Wells was not well-liked, and he was controversial, and the Tri-Weekly Post pointedly commented on his mishandling of the Flatheads and his own employees, saying that he did not understand the Indians and had too little tact to control affairs. According to the Post the Flatheads were very unhappy about the Stevens Treaty situation.[72]

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[70]Owen to Nesmith, 7 May 1859, Records of the Washington Superintendency (Letters from Employees Assigned to the Eastern District), M-5, Roll 22.

[71]Green Clay Smith to Commissioner, 31 August 1867, and John W. Wells to Commissioner, 27 June 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[72]Helena (Montana) Tri-Weekly Post, 2 July 1867, found in Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

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Wells was not alone in his view that a visit to Washington by the Flatheads was desirable. His immediate successor, M. M. McCauley, who assumed his position in July, 1868, wrote to James M. Cavanaugh, Montana Territory's delegate to Congress, in December of that year:

> It has become an absolute necessity to remove the Flatheads from the Bitter Root Valley to this Reservation--but no Agent or Commissioner can do /it/--except by Force as they cannot rely on their promises or representations--and nothing save a personal talk with the Great Father (whom they say speaks with a Single Tongue) can remove them peacably /sic/.[73]

McCauley added that "a splendid Tract" would "be opened to white settlement and very materially advance the Interests of" the section if removal could be accomplished.

The strong wording of McCauley's letter, written early in December, was partly the result of his having received no reply to a similar request made three months earlier.[74] The early December letter had to be followed by another on 14 December, in which he said that a Flathead visit to the capitol was necessary because the chiefs no longer believed anything that an agent told them, and because they needed "impressing." In fact, said McCauley, the trip was especially necessary in light of potential Indian-white trouble in the Bitter Root Valley--the Indians refused to go on their annual

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[73]M. M. McCauley to James M. Cavanaugh, 14 December 1868, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489.

[74]McCauley to Commissioner, 1 September 1868, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

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winter buffalo hunt, preferring instead to go to Washington, D. C.[75]

The Flatheads were not to make a trip to the capitol for a number of years; the government decided instead to treat with them once more on their home grounds. Major W. J. Cullen, appointed a special commissioner for Montana Indians for one year beginning in April 1868, was instructed to negotiate with Victor for the removal of the Flatheads from the Bitter Root Valley; he was authorized to make a treaty to this effect.

Cullen visited the Jocko and Bitter Root Valley areas in August 1868, and his report is noteworthy for its thoroughness and its impartiality.[76] In fact, it is one of the few impartial reports to be found on the Flathead agency. Cullen visited the agency first with James Tufts, acting governor and ex officio superintendent; the special commissioner's observations about the agency will be reserved for another chapter.

Cullen's observations about the Bitter Root Valley situation, however, should be mentioned. His first comment was that the tribe of five hundred fifty, though in destitute circumstances, was "remarkably peaceable and well disposed." After a feast, a council was held and the Flatheads, he said,

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[75]McCauley to Cavanaugh, 14 December 1868, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[76]W. J. Cullen, report, H. R. Ex. Doc. No. 1, 40th Cong., 3rd Sess., Vol. 2, pp. 676 to 682, Serial 1366.

> complained, and we thought with good cause, that the provisions of the treaty made with them . . . had not been faithfully observed on the part of the United States; that they had received annuities but five years since the treaty, and then, they believed, in deficient quantities; that there had been no hospital or school-house built for them, as provided for in the treaty; that the mills in the Jocko valley were inaccessible to them; that no houses had been built for their chiefs, land broken, &c. They also seemed very desirous of having a part of their annuities in farm implements, as they have scarcely anything to cultivate their farms with. One old man, showing his hands, said: "Look at these; they are my tools; I scratch the ground with my nails." Upon inquiry, we learned that the old man had planted a considerable crop this year, literally scratching it in with his nails.[77]

Cullen considered the question of removal, declaring that the Bitter Root Valley "has a very fertile soil, a mild and genial climate, is well watered and timbered, and is one of the best, if not the very best agricultural districts in Montana." This view does not agree with that expressed in Lansdale's report some years earlier. The settlers were very eager that the Indians be removed, he said, while the Flatheads were equally interested in remaining. Cullen did report that the Flatheads went halfway with the treaty in that they asked to have a survey made. But after the survey they would like to have a reservation established above the Loo-lo Fork! Cullen added that the Flatheads wished to go to Washington, D. C. to talk about these matters.

The special commissioner suggested two possible solutions. First, the provisions of the Stevens treaty could be faithfully carried out. Then, he said, he had little doubt that

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[77] Ibid.

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the Indians could be induced to move to the Jocko. Additionally, however, it would be necessary to pay them for improvements made in the Bitter Root Valley. They had about fifty farms and produced better and cleaner wheat than that of the whites in the area. Second, "if deemed most expedient, a suitable reservation for the accommodation of the three tribes might be made in the Bitter Root Valley, as desired by the Flatheads." Cullen thus did not suggest that an exclusively Flathead reservation be established in the valley, but rather that all three tribes be kept together wherever they might be. He clearly did not favor this last proposal, since it would necessitate the removal of a large number of white settlers and place the Indians on a main route of travel where they were "liable to be outraged at all times by evil-disposed persons."[78]

Cullen urged that whatever plan was adopted, it should be put into effect soon in order to avoid "serious trouble" caused by the "encroachments of the white settlers" upon the Indians. He also recommended that the expenditure of money appropriated under the Stevens treaty be checked closely. Thus any fraud could be detected and the good faith of the Indians more quickly restored. "In all my experience with Indians I have never seen a nation whom I thought more deserving in every respect than the Flatheads, and I may add that I have never seen a tribe whom I thought had more just

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[78]*Ibid.*, p. 680.

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grounds of complaint," he said in conclusion.[79]

Little ever came of Cullen's efforts. No new treaty was signed, no payments for improvements were arranged, and no marked reservation improvements were made.

The gloom of doubt remained with the Bitter Root Valley inhabitants, red and white, for two more years of Victor's rule as Head-chief. Additional efforts on the part of the Flathead reservation personnel may have been made; if so, they were feeble and went unrecorded. The Bureau of Indian Affairs made no further offers to the Flatheads.

Then, while on the summer hunt in 1870, Victor, who had been ill for a long time, died. His son, Charlot, succeeded him. Now the government had to deal with a chief once-removed from the negotiations of 1855; if there had been any hope of reconciling the Flatheads to the Stevens Treaty arrangements, they died with Victor. Charlot always insisted that he understood the Hellgate Treaty to have given the Flatheads the entire Bitter Root Valley as a reservation. Further, he said that he understood this arrangement was subject to change only by another treaty.[80] In the future the case for Flathead removal would have to become very strong indeed to persuade the new chief to leave. The following chapter considers the ground swell of white settlement and the growing pressure for Flathead removal.

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[79] Ibid., p. 681.

[80] James M. Hamilton, From Wilderness to Statehood: A History of Montana, 1805-1900 (Portland, Oregon: Binsfords and Mort, 1857), p. 201; and Peter Ronan to Commissioner, 20 August 1878, Annual Report, 1880, pp. 111-112n.

CHAPTER V

THE BITTER ROOT VALLEY AND THE QUESTION OF REMOVAL

Between the signing of the Stevens Treaty in 1855 and a strong effort to remove the Flatheads from the Bitter Root Valley in 1872, major and sometimes dramatic changes in the valley's Indian-white balance occurred. Whites began to flood into the valley, settling illegally, placing new pressures on the Flatheads, and expressing in pleas and petitions their tentative position and their anxiety over possible Flathead reprisals. For their part, the Indians became equally concerned about their own position. Their land was being taken, some of their number were being debauched by whites, and obtaining food was becoming ever more a problem. Indian attitudes changed and became increasingly intransigent in the face of white settlement.

The problems of these years might have been foreseen inasmuch as they had clear roots in preceding years. The Jesuits were the first whites to settle in the valley, but their small numbers posed no threat to the Indians. White and half-breed squatters, however, came soon afterward. The desire of Charles Larpenteur to move to St. Mary's with

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his family has been noted. He had seen the area and liked it very much, and de Smet had spoken highly of it to him. Larpenteur hoped to make the move early in the spring of 1847 by traveling down the Missouri toward the states and joining Mormons moving westward. Missing this chance, he hired on with a trading company which sent him to Flathead Country.[1]

Larpenteur's aspirations were sound. Governor Stevens of Washington Territory (of which western Montana was a part until 1863), writing in 1853 to Commissioner of Indian Affairs George Manypenny, said that

> the mission /aries/ . . . have expressed themselves highly delighted, not only with the country, but with the climate, the country is indeed beautiful; and the land fertile. My men were so struck with its beauty and fertility, that many preferred to remain here at less pay than to go on to the Pasific /sic/ there was no difficulty, in obtaining any number of men, to remain & accompany Lieut. Mullan, to whom as you have already been advised, important duties in the Indian department, have been assigned.[2]

Stevens was speaking of the men who accompanied him west on a surveying expedition. He also said that considerable progress had been made in settlement by half-breeds and others--probably retired Hudson's Bay Company personnel.[3]

Initial white settlement was influenced not only by the attractiveness of the area, but also by the attitude of

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[1]Charles Larpenteur, Forty Years a Fur Trader on the Upper Missouri, ed. Elliott Coues (2 vols.; Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, Inc., 1958--a reprint of the original 1898 edition), Vol. II, pp. 245-246.

[2]Isaac Ingalls Stevens to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 29 December 1853, Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, M-234, Roll 907 (1958).

[3]Ibid.

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Head-chief Victor of the Flatheads. Stevens described him thus: "He appears to be simple-minded, but rather wanting in energy, which might, however, be developed in an emergency."[4] Calling Victor "simple-minded" was meant as a compliment, not as criticism, although whether because Indians were less troublesome when simple-minded, or whether Victor was pure and simple in spirit is not known! Actually, Victor did not want to assume the position of head-chief, which was forced upon him by an election upon the death of Head-chief Loyola in the fall of 1855. According to Father Adrian Hoeken, a Jesuit missionary in the Flathead area for many years, Loyola had failed to designate a successor, and Victor's election was unanimous. "Victor alone seemed sad," said Hoeken. "He dreaded the responsibility of the chieftainship, and thought he should be unable to maintain the good effected in the tribe by the excellent chief Loyola." Victor did have leadership qualities, however, and Hoeken called him "a brave hunter, whom you as yet must remember as a man remarkable for the generosity of his disposition."[5]

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[4]Stevens, "Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, 1853-1855," H. R. Executive Document 56, 36th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1860), p. 128, Serial 505.

[5]Hiram Chittenden and Alfred Talbot Richardson, Life, Letters, and Travels of Father de Smet (4 vols.; N.Y.: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969--a reprint of the original 1904 edition), Vol. IV, pp. 1230-1231.

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This generosity eventually worked to the disadvantage of the Bitter Root Flatheads, but it was nonetheless admirable and, at times, touching. For example, when Victor was told that the Pope was sometimes threatened by war, he said,

> Should our Great Father, the Great chief of the Black-robes, be in danger,--you speak on paper (or write); send him a message in our name, and invite him to our mountains. We will raise his lodge in our midst; we will hunt for him and keep his lodge provided, and will guard him against the approach of his enemies.[6]

It was this chief who extended an open invitation to white settlers in the hope that they would assist in the defense against frequent attacks upon his tribesmen by the Blackfeet and Snakes.[7]

One of the first settlers to accept Victor's invitation was John Owen, an energetic, bald-headed man born in Pennsylvania in 1818. He appeared in the Northwest in 1849 and established himself as a trader in 1850 when he leased the mission in the Bitter Root Valley. He was an outstanding figure in the 1850's and 1860's; during the period from 1851 to 1864 he made thirty-four journeys into the Northwest and covered about twenty-three thousand miles. He was appointed Special Agent to the Flatheads in 1856 and acted thus for six years (reluctantly at times), gradually accepting

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[6] Ibid., p. 1340.

[7] U.S., Congress, Senate, Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, on Bill to Remove Flatheads and others, Senate Reports, 42nd Congress, 2nd Sess., Vol. I, Document 197, Serial 1483.

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responsibility for the Upper Pend d'Oreilles, the Mountain Snakes, and the Bannocks as well.[8]

The coming of Owen to the valley was an event of great importance. Charles Frush, who traveled through the Bitter Root Valley and other northwestern areas in 1858 and kept a journal of his trip, wrote in 1896 that he could still remember the adobe walls and buildings of Owen's solid fort.[9] A reconstructed stone building, as well as the foundation outlines of other buildings and the foundation of the fort's walls and stone blockhouse remain today, in the front yard of a modern ranch. Although the fort was constructed for protection--at least insofar as its design was concerned--it was never more than a home and trading post for Owen and his associates. In addition to supplying the Indians and whites in the area with trade goods, it became the center of a thriving community, Stevensville, which was founded in 1864. In 1870, a year of unusually large wheat yields, the mill at the fort was running day and night to meet the

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[8]John Owen, The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen, Pioneer of the Northwest, 1850-1871, ed. Seymour Dunbar and Paul C. Phillips (2 vols.; Helena: Montana Historical Society, 1927), Vol. I, p. 1; Application for Admission of Owen to Territorial Asylum for Insane, by Dr. J. G. Glick, 21 April 1874, "Letters Relating to John Owen" (Helena: Montana Historical Library, manuscript case); and Charles W. Frush, A Trip From the Dalles of the Columbia, Oregon, to Fort Owen, Bitter Root Valley, Montana, in the Spring of 1858, in Collections (Helena: Montana Historical Society, 1896), Vol. II, p. 341 (photostat).

[9]Frush, A Trip, p. 342.

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demand.[10] Whether the mill ground much Indian wheat is not recorded, although it probably did not.

As an Indian agent, Owen showed the mild schizoid traits of a man caught between the desire to improve the white settlement and his instructions to aid the Indian population. On the one hand, the whites in the valley desired to nominate him as a delegate from Missoula County to represent them at the Washington Territorial Convention, and he was easily alarmed by rumors of Indian uprisings, despite the unfailing respect of the Flatheads for white life. On the other hand, Owen repeatedly pointed out to the Bureau of Indian Affairs the racial abuse to which the Flatheads were subjected.[11] So important a figure did he become that the Flatheads refused to include him in their protests against illegal white settlement, and he was generally considered the friend of both Indian and white.

By the 1870's John Owen's mental health began to fail. He had frequent drinking bouts, and his final journal entries (from 1868 to 1871) reflect increasingly his troubles and disappointments; they become reminiscent and fragmentary. He was admitted to the Territorial Asylum for the Insane in Missoula in 1874, three years after his 640 acres of Bitter Root Valley land were sold at a sheriff's sale in accordance with an order from the territorial district court. His last

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[10]Missoula Pioneer, 13 October 1870, p. 3c.

[11]Owen, Journal, I, p. 12.

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years were spent in the East with his family. His end, however, was no measure of his contributions to the valley in which he worked.

The presence of a white settler and a trading post in the valley lent encouragement to would-be settlers, and Victor must have soon regretted his generous invitation. Upon returning from Oregon and Washington territories in 1859, Owen noted that the Flatheads were becoming increasingly alarmed on two counts. For one thing, other Indians, enemies of the whites, were becoming hostile to them. Over one thousand horses owned by the Indians and whites had been run off by Bannocks, said Owen; previously the only trouble had come from the Blackfeet. Furthermore, incursions of whites into the valley were increasing. Roads were being cut into the area. What Owen called "daily" promises by the agents to halt these trends caused a good deal of talk but were unfulfilled.[12] Two months later, in October 1859, Owen visited with Lieutenant Mullan and lamented that "things are not as quiet as I would wish in this particular district." He wrote thus in his journal:

> White Settlers are coming in & others are daily Expected. Many of the Men at this time engaged with Lieutenant Mullan expressed to me their intention of settling in this valley. The Indians have serious objections. They have themselves large bands of cattle and horses & hay /.7 There is not more pasturage than they would like to have for themselves.[13]

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[12]Owen to Edward R. Geary, 10 August 1859, Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, M-5, Roll 22.

[13]*Ibid.*, 10 October 1859.

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According to Owen, the Flatheads were even more unsettled by the possibility of more whites being drawn by the construction of the military road from Fort Walla Walla to Fort Benton, and he expressed his feelings about developments:

> . . . there is no Excuse for a dilitory & negligent Congress which controls all. There is but little Satisfaction in being an Agent under the Circumstances. And I would candidly believe that it is nothing but my long residance [sic] & straight forward course I have invariably adopted with these Indians that renders my being among them of any use whatever.[14]

Owen attributed white movement into the valley to the misconception that the entire area was thrown open to settlement under the 1855 treaty. He noted also that the Indians construed the Eleventh Article of the treaty as preventing all whites except those in the Indian service from settling in the Bitter Root Valley south of Missoula. It is interesting that Owen was observing the first great influx of settlers, and that his complaint was on behalf of the Indians, even though he stood to gain more from the presence of whites.

What Owen feared began to come true in the 1860's, for on 14 December 1860 the legislature of Washington Territory created Missoula County, including all of present Montana west of the continental divide. Missoula and Spokane Counties were united into one judicial district, and in July 1861 an election was held in Missoula County, with polls located at Fort Owen, Hell Gate, and the Jocko Agency to the north. Seventy-four votes were cast, and a full slate of county officers was elected (though only the commissioners, an auditor,

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[14] *Ibid.*, 10 August 1859.

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and a justice of the peace qualified). The first organization of area whites had occurred, and activity on the part of settlers increased. From this point on the records show increasing evidence of elections and town activities. Organization posed the first real threat to Flathead supremacy, since the means of addressing effective complaints and petitions to higher bodies now existed. When Gold Creek was added as a polling place in July 1862, the threat became stronger.

There was no stopping the settlers. The Mullan Road was completed in 1863, and miners flocked to canyons, creeks, and washes throughout the territory. John Owen noted that, unfortunately for the Indians, those seeking the treasure of the earth would pass through his area and that "in fact this Valley although in Violation of the treaty will Soon be Settled up. The Indians are already alarmed about it."[15] By 1863 Hell Gate (present-day Missoula) was well established. A year later Stevensville was founded near Fort Owen; and the fort, previously in slight decline, flourished. In 1865 a ferry was established on the Hell Gate River.[16] Superintendent of Indian Affairs Calvin H. Hale of Washington Territory reported in 1863 that it was now too late to stop the trend or even to drive settlers out of the valley. (This happened,

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[15]Owen, Journal, I, p. 266, II, pp. 261-262.

[16]Merrill G. Burlingame and K. Ross Toole, A History of Montana (3 vols., N.Y.: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1957), Vol. I, p. 229.

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he said, because of the government's failure to comply with its own engagements when it was in a position to do so.) He saw as the only solution the improvement of the Jocko Reservation which, he hoped, would become more attractive to the Flatheads.[17] The mining frontier, which by 1862 had reached Gold and Grasshopper Creeks, and Alder Gulch (present Virginia City) by 1863, not only attracted the mining population, but led to an increase in the number of farmers. Owen spoke more and more of the citizens of the valley as if finally there were enough to constitute a sizeable population. Returning after fifteen months in the East he observed that "many New Settlers have come in during My absence. . . ."[18] Newspapers trumpeted the news too. The Helena Weekly Herald published an account of a forty-wagon immigration into the area, while its predecessor, the Helena Herald, said in April of the same year, that "to the farmers of Bitter Root and Hell Gate--whose numbers are considerable and constantly increasing--it [settlement in the area] opens a nearer and more extended and lucrative market."[19] Clearly, the prospects of booming commerce and agriculture overrode a concern for the legality of settlement or the fate of the local Indians.

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[17]"Report of the Superintendent of Washington Territory, 1863," H.R. Executive Document 1, 38th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 3, p. 556, Serial 1182.

[18]Owen, Journal, p. 317.

[19]Owen, Journal, "Historical Introduction;" Helena Weekly Herald, 26 September 1867; Helena Herald, 4 April 1867, pp. 13-14.

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Since whites in the valley knew that their position was legally untenable, they needed to make their case look as good as possible, even better than reality allowed. It was with hope that they petitioned the Secretary of the Interior on 7 March 1868 to have the valley surveyed and the Flatheads removed. Thirteen years after the signing of the treaty, the Bitter Root Valley was, they said, "the most fertile valley in Montana Territory and contains at least three hundred sixty square miles,in which settlement have been made by the whites who now number about 700 souls and have enclosed about fifteen thousand acres of land."[20] The 163 whites who signed the petition pointed out that the valley furnished all Missoula County officers except the sheriff, that there were two schools with a total of fifty students, that about fifty ledges of gold and silver bearing veins had been discovered, that there were twenty houses in Stevensville, and that only twenty Flatheads actually farmed in the valley, working about ten acres apiece. (These Indians, the petition declared, were welcome to remain.)[21] The citizens drafting the petition were not particularly careful about the accuracy of their head-count. In a second petition, probably drawn up in March, 1869, the citizens reiterated their case, claiming only four hundred fifty whites in the

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[20]Citizens of Bitter Root Valley to Secretary of the Interior, petition, 7 March 1868, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488 (1959)--hereafter this will be referred to as Letters Received, Montana Superintendency.

[21]*Ibid*.

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valley and saying that they had made improvements on the land "in good faith" and that it would be cheaper to remove the Indians than the whites. They added, without much accuracy, that there were only three hundred fifty Indians in the valley; it could be that many were then away on their annual hunt.[22]

Other information also reflects the growth of white settlement and suggests how confused the situation became. The 1868 petition claims that fifteen thousand acres of Bitter Root land were used by seven hundred people. The minutes of a meeting of Stevensville and Bitter Root Valley citizens, along with an incomplete local census of 1869, were sent to congressional delegate James M. Cavanaugh, with instructions to forward them to the President; other copies were sent to the Helena and Deer Lodge newspapers. These minutes record that over thirty thousand bushels of wheat were threshed by machine in 1868 and that much more was threshed by hand. They also mention two grist mills and one saw mill (and another of each under construction), two stores, a hotel, the usual complement of saloons, and the necessary smith shops.[23] The most accurate population figures, however, are those of the 1870 federal decennial census of Missoula County.

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[22]Citizens of Bitter Root Valley, petition, no date, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[23]Citizens of Stevensville and Bitter Root Valley, Minutes of Meeting at Stevensville 4 September 1869, enclosed with James Cavanaugh to President Grant, 28 October 1869, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489.

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The tally shows 2,554 whites, 299 of whom lived in the Bitter Root Valley along with fifteen Indians. (A federal census did not count Indians living tribally or on reservations.)[24] Superintendent Jasper A. Viall claimed in his annual report for 1871 that over one thousand whites lived on "well-improved farms" in the valley, while only three good Indian farms existed.[25] Viall's report was the source of the Commissioner's figures in his 1872 report on a bill to remove the Flatheads; Viall, however, had his troubles as an administrator and was probably not fully apprised of the situation. The superintendent's figure was also used by John Blaine, Surveyor-General of Montana Territory, when he wrote to the Commissioner of the General Land Office, Willis Drummond, and by Governor Benjamin F. Potts, who also claimed in 1871 that the valley was served by five schools, two flour mills (the third, "under construction" in 1869, had not been finished), St. Mary's Church, five saw mills, and twenty-five miles of irrigating ditches.[26] Whatever the actual facts, whites were there

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[24]The census shows that forty-one of the total of 314 people were foreign, and that there were no Chinese. Forty-seven of the 314 were residents of Stevensville; U.S., Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census of the United States: 1870. Population, I, 196; and James M. Hamilton, From Wilderness to Statehood; A History of Montana, 1805-1900 (Portland, Oregon: Binsfords and Mort, 1957), p. 353.

[25]James A. Viall, "Annual Report of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Montana Territory, 1871," H.R. Executive Document 1, part 5, 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, Vol. 3, part 1, p. 829, Serial 1505.

[26]Benjamin F. Potts to Commissioner, 8 September 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491 (1959).

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in force, and inflated estimates made a consideration of white removal even more unlikely.

The Bitter Root Valley's lure was land. In an article entitled "The Present and Future of Missoula County," the Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer said that in 1868 the number of acres cultivated in the county was 25,553, with a valuation of at least two hundred thousand dollars. Yields of wheat, rye, barley, and oats, from what was reportedly some of the richest soil on the continent, was a remarkable fifty bushels per acre; potatoes yielded five hundred bushels to the acre. To be sure, the average reported weekly yield of gold and silver from the Cedar Creek mines--about two thousand ounces by very liberal accounts of which one should be wary--encouraged its share of immigration. But it was the land and the mild climate that promised the most.[27] One should remember what Agent Hutchins wrote to his superintendent in 1862:

> The Bitter Root Valley affords the finest agricultural spots in this Section of the Territory. Although closely compressed between two ranges of mountains rising abruptly from the plain, and much of its surface being gravelly, it will afford farming claims to at least a thousand farmers, and its grazing lands are unsurpassed.[28]

Reports of the land's bounty abound. Owen says it was reported to him in December of 1867 that a threshing machine crew had processed over twenty thousand bushels of wheat in the valley (about four hundred acres' production). The

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[27]Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer, 15 September 1870, p. 2 and 26 January 1871, p. 3.

[28]Charles Hutchins to Calvin Hale, 2 December 1862, Letters Received, Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 908.

Missoula paper noted that wheat was still averaging fifty bushels per acre, barley yielding eighty, and corn thirty-five.[29] U. S. Marshal W. F. Wheeler saw fields of wheat averaging forty bushels per acre; and at the Territorial Fair in Helena in 1872 the prize-winning acre of wheat yielded a phenomenal 102 bushels; for oats the highest yield was 101 bushels.[30] Another estimate placed Bitter Root Valley yields at a more modest but respectable thirty-five bushels of wheat per acre.[31]

At first many regarded the initial boom of white settlement as temporary, a phenomenon of the mining frontier. The gold and silver, however, played out, but the farmers stayed. The magnitude of land holdings and improvements, and the proximity of farms to centers of trade caused a rise in the value of land and produce until settlement was irreversible. Agent McCormick remarked that because of white settlement "the entire valley presents a spectacle of thrift and agricultural prosperity. . . ."[32]

Different requirements of the land and different attitudes precluded cohabitation of the valley by the two races,

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[29]Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer, 26 January 1871, p. 3.

[30]Hamilton, From Wilderness, p. 355.

[31]W. E. Bass to Potts, 26 November 1872, in James A. Garfield Papers (Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.). (Microfilm)

[32]Agent M. M. McCauley, "Annual Report, 1868," H.R. Executive Document 1, 40th Congress, 3rd Session, Vol. 2, pp. 673-674, Serial 1366.

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and rumblings were soon heard from the white quarter about the dangers of living so close to dissatisfied, savage Indians. In 1868 Agent McCormick said that

> already a feeling of insecurity prevails to some extent among the whites of the Bitter Root Valley, while the Flathead Indians watch with sullen interest the progress and encroachments of the whites upon their ancient domain, restricting and circumscribing the range of their cattle and horses and dissipating by their close contact the sports and amusements of their savage natures.[33]

What Agent McCormick worried about was a brooding Indian discontent which was no doubt exaggerated in the minds of whites until small incidents were enlarged into full-blown alarms. Many white protests focus on the possibility of violence between Flatheads and whites. Despite the Indians' continuing respect for white men, the settlers were genuinely worried, if only because of the general climate of Indian affairs in the United States.

Indian trouble elsewhere in the Northwest fueled white imaginations over the course of fifteen years. John Owen, usually friendly toward the Flatheads, said as early as 1856 that most of the Indian trouble in Montana country was caused by the Nez Perce; he hoped that the disaffection would never reach the Flatheads, "but they are nothing more than Indians" and might turn against the whites.[34] An undated petition of settlers from Missoula County voiced more immediate concern. All 129 signers felt that the Flatheads were in alliance with

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[33]Ibid.

[34]Owen to Stevens, 2 August 1856, Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, M-5, Roll 22.

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other Indians (probably the Nez Perce), and that settlers were in imminent danger of attack. They requested "one or two Companies of U. S. Cavalry." Thirty other settlers who signed a virtually identical petition, also undated, felt the same way.[35] They never specifically stated what the circumstances of their danger were, and the envisioned--even hoped for--threat never materialized. The whites never had a chance to feed two companies of troops.

"Alarms" continued; rumors had a way of cropping up to keep attention focused on valley problems. In the fall of 1867 Montana's Surveyor-General wrote that "There has as yet been no hostilities between the whites and Indians, except last Fall, when there were a few persons killed."[36] This incident was not reported in the area papers, and details are not to be found in petitions or other letters from the Bitter Root Valley. The Flatheads, however, still claimed not to have shed the blood of any white man. In the same year, Owen reported rumors of Flatheads meeting at Lo Lo Fork to consider ordering the whites out of the valley. Although the near-panic of the whites was real enough, Owen dismissed the rumor as the work of overly-alarmed settlers. He found no source for the scare and testified to the Indians' good nature by saying that "it is all 'Bosh' No doubt." He did

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[35]Petition of Settlers, Missoula County, no date, James A. Garfield Papers.

[36]Solomon Meredith to Commissioner, General Land Office, 9 May 1868, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

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admit, however, that the Indians were angered by the lynching of one of their young men suspected of horse stealing by a party of whites. Agent Wells wrote to Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles E. Meir in December 1867 that he just received a letter from a friend in Hell Gate that contained a petition signed by ten or twelve citizens from Missoula who were led by a Captain Higgins. They said,

> This country is in immediate danger of an Indian Raid, on the part of the Flathead, Pend d'Oreilles etc. that the Indians had burnt the country for nearly 200 miles--burnt up Hay Stacks--had openly threatened to kill all the whites; and that it was dangerous to travel in this country, unless in large parties, and well armed etc; and asking the Governor for 200 stand of arms and ammunition for protection.[37]

The governor was concerned enough to order an issue of 100 stands of arms and appropriate munitions, but Wells said that this action was unnecessarily inflammatory, as were the people. He left Washington at once to return to his agency.[38] Even Owen was not completely above succumbing to the prevailing mood. According to a Mary Winslett of Stevensville, he once represented to the territorial governor that Stevensville was in imminent danger of attack from a "very hostile tribe of indians resident here." Winslett added that he was hopeful of selling his fort to the federal government for use as a military post.[39] The citizens took themselves

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[37]John W. Wells to Commissioner, 23 December 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Mary E. Winslett, Stevensville, to Florence Fertime, Helena, 6 February 1922, Montana Historical Library.

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seriously. A petition of 8 August 1872, the result of a meeting of Bitter Root citizens on that date, stated that they were forming home-guards and organizing committees to petition that troops be assigned to the valley and that arms be issued to the citizens (who were undoubtedly armed already.)[40]

If ever the valley situation was near the point of ignition, it was between 1868 and 1872, and the whites cannot be wholly blamed for their concern. The Flatheads were caught in an awkward position quite apart from their loss of land. They were placed between traditional but temporarily pacified enemies: the Blackfeet on the east, and their friends and relatives, the Nez Perce, who were fighting the whites on the west. The Nez Perce regularly traveled through Flathead country and never missed a chance to put pressure on the Flatheads to join them; depredations by Nez Perce were often mistaken for illegal Flathead actions. White alarms about the Flatheads, however, were without corroborating support; and not one of the threats ever materialized. Virtually every white worry about attacks and Indian ultimatums was vague.

A theme which runs through many white protests, petitions, and letters of the 1860's and early 1870's is the request for a military outpost in the Bitter Root Valley. In 1865 Charles Hutchins said that Indians who roamed the

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[40]Citizens of Bitter Root Valley, Petition, 8 August 1872, James A. Garfield Papers.

areas surrounding the reservation area (this also applies to white land in the Bitter Root Valley) caused frequent incidents between the two races and that, inasmuch as the court system was inadequate, two companies of dragoons or other mounted troops should be posted "on or near" the reservation.[41] Three years later Agent McCormick suggested in his annual report that the citizens of the Hell Gate valley and the surrounding areas were entitled to military protection against marauding Indians.[42] The following year Major General Alfred Sully, Superintendent of Indian Affairs from 1869 to 1870, requested a military post among the Bitter Root Indians. Although the post was ostensibly to help control Idaho Indians (especially the Nez Perce), the settlers of the valley were undoubtedly pleased at the prospects of troops whatever their purpose. The Board of Indian Commissioners reported in 1872, prior to James A. Garfield's trip to Montana, that the requests for troops were for mouths to feed, not for protection. This explains why Owen thought some whites might have been antagonizing the Indians, and it also explains why some whites may have wanted to keep the Indians in the valley a little longer (although there is no evidence of overt sentiments to this end).[43] Generally the appeal was for safety, so that "the indiscriminate slaughter of men and

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[41]Hutchins to Sidney Edgerton, 27 January 1865, Montana Historical Library.

[42]Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1868, H.R. Executive Document 1, 40th Congress, 3rd Session, Vol. 2, Serial 1366.

[43]Board of Indian Commissioners, Fourth Annual Report, 1872, James A. Garfield Papers.

women and children may be prevented by the presence of a strong military force." Shortly after the presidential order for Flathead removal on 14 November 1871, The Pioneer said that "It will require a strong military force to execute this order successfully, and with safety to the whites in the valley."[44] The paper continued: "That the execution of this order, will be resisted by them, to the bitter end, no one at all familiar with the feelings that pervades the whole tribe, will doubt for a moment."[45]

One solution to the Bitter Root problem was removal of the whites, but only once was this considered; they would lose heavily, and white authorities would probably not have been able to enforce an order to this effect. Charles Hutchins, the Flathead agent from 1862 to 1865, proposed first that the Indians be moved out of the valley, inasmuch as the whites continued to come in with the belief that Indian title to the land would soon be extinguished, and inasmuch as it was probably too late to establish a permanent Flathead home there. Something--probably his official responsibility to the Indians--made Hutchins change his mind, however, and nine months later he requested Marshal George W. Pinney to remove the whites who were illegally intruding on Flathead land. A "large number" of whites had settled, built homes, opened farms, and traded in violation of the treaty and of the Indian trade and Intercourse Act of 1834,

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[44] The Missoula Pioneer, 6 January 1872, p. 2.

[45] Ibid., 9 December 1871, p. 2.

he said, causing "great complaint" by the Flatheads.[46] This seems to be the only official white request on record for the removal of whites rather than Flatheads. It was lost on Pinney, who wrote to Commissioner Cooley for instructions, protesting that some people "have made very valuable improvements upon lands lying above this Lou Lou fork."[47]

If the whites were full of misgivings about their situation, what of the Flatheads? Their number, stable at about five hundred during the 1860's[48] despite a few reports to the contrary,[49] was matched by white settlers in 1870; and if the valley was shared equally among all of its residents, there would be too little room as long as the Indians maintained their nomadic ways and found food by hunting and gathering. The Flatheads were still nomadic to a degree, even though some of their number expressed an interest in farming as early as 1862 when Charles Hutchins noted that

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[46]Hutchins to George W. Pinney, 30 October 1865, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488 (1959).

[47]Pinney to Commissioner, 8 March 1868, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488 (1959).

[48]Owen, Journal, I, p. 234; Blaine to Commissioner, General Land Office, 24 October 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491; and Charles B. Jones to Commissioner, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 23 January 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491.

[49]Hutchins to Hale, 2 December 1862, Letters Received, Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 908; Potts to Commissioner, 8 September 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491. Hutchins, new at his job, estimated the number at sixty lodges, or 350 Flatheads, while Potts said there were only 150 Flatheads, including forty adult males.

not only were the Indians "a peaceable, tractable and intelligent band," but that "they have considerable inclination for agriculture, and last summer produced over 2,000 bu. of wheat." He said that their farms looked good and were often enclosed with rail fences, and that they were very eager to receive farming implements and livestock for hauling plows and wagons.[50] In ten years production rose by five hundred bushels, and the Indians were cultivating about four hundred and fifty acres which yielded four thousand bushels of oats, one hundred bushels of corn, one thousand bushels of potatoes, and undoubtedly many bushels of wheat (although figures were not entered in the report). The problem, however, went beyond tilled acreage. Just as the whites grazed herds of cattle and horses, the Indians also relied upon the pasturage to feed their twelve hundred horses and eight hundred head of cattle.[51]

Faced with a threat to their valley livelihood, the Indians must have been pleased with the 4 August 1867 report of Agent Wells[52] which said that there was considerable interracial ill will which had been caused partly by alleged

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[50]Hutchins to Hale, 2 December 1862, Letters Received, Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 908; and Minutes of Remarks of Chiefs at a Conference at Fort Owen, August 1868, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489 (out of place in files--no further information about Conference).

[51]Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs 1872, H.R. Executive Document 1, part 5, 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, Vol. 3, part 1, p. 792, Serial 1505.

[52]Wells to Commissioner, 4 August 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

slaughter of white cattle by the Indians. But more to the point, Wells said that "the truth Sir, is, the Flatheads are intimidated. They are frightened, and I believe rather than risk an angry collision with the white settlers around them, they would be induced to do almost anything." He added that in the meantime "the spirit of dissatisfaction is fostered by interested parties"--for example, a Missoula judge who frequently decided cases in favor of the whites. Wells called it "partial justice." He pointed out with candor rare for a Montana Territory white that, if the truth were told, the whites were actually trying to stir up trouble in the hope of getting the valley officially opened to settlement sooner. He added that there was less actual trouble in the valley than the newspapers suggested.

The following year several Indians registered their protests at a conference at Fort Owen.[53] Ambrose and Adolph, headmen of the Flathead tribe, complained that the treaty provisions were never met. Annuity goods were insufficient; farming tools never came, despite the government's express desire to turn the Indian hand to farming; there were no agency facilities of any kind in the Bitter Root Valley; and the proposed construction of a road on the Jocko Reservation made them think that there would be no room there for the Flatheads if they decided to remove. The Indians

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[53]Minutes of Remarks of Chiefs at a Conference at Fort Owen, August 1868, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489 (out of place in files--no further information about Conference).

were especially incensed because they maintained that "our hands are not stained with white blood. We never killed but one white man and he was a thief and a murderer. We had to kill him or get killed ourselves."

Even as the whites increased their pressure on the government to remove the bothersome Indians, the Flatheads were feeling the effects of white settlement in their fields. It has already been suggested that the sheer number of settlers caused a significant loss of Flathead land, thereby forcing the Indians to graze their animals on poorer and smaller pastures. The Flatheads were also suffering physical discomfort and hardship in some cases, although it is difficult to determine accurately the degree of their deprivation. White writings on the matter are often tainted by ulterior motives.

It was usually true after 1860 that the Flatheads seldom had enough to eat and probably never had an abundant year. John Owen greeted "half-famished" Flatheads on their April 1862 return to their valley after nine months of hunting, and he reported that they had lost much livestock and had little meat to show for their pains.[54] So hard put were they to meet their own food needs that later in the year Owen sent a few Indians to the Jocko Reservation to get some cattle that he had ordered turned over to them to replace their winter losses.[55] The loss of stock on the extended

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[54]Owen, Journal, I, p. 253.

[55]Ibid., p. 255.

hunt was a new phenomenon, probably the result of longer hunting forays in the newer, more peaceable times when fear of the Blackfeet did not hurry the Indians back to the protection of the mountains. The winter may have been a hard one, too. The lack of good supplies of dried buffalo meat was the result of the rapid dwindling of the great herds, a matter to be considered later.

In 1863 the Flatheads' condition declined further. Chief Victor told John Owen that his tribesmen were still on the hunt, forced to extend their search for food because of their unsuccessful venture and their starving condition. Victor added that in addition to the scarcity of game, there was sickness and theft of horses by the Blackfeet.[56]

The situation had hardly improved in 1865. The hunt lasted ten months, about twice as long as hunts once did, but the Flatheads again returned with little meat and with ponies which had been ridden too hard. Increasing white settlement and decreasing buffalo presaged the end of the old ways. Charles Hutchins said that the Flathead tribe still relied on the buffalo hunt, carried out deep within Blackfeet and Crow country, for their livelihood, and that the hunts were marked by some killing of Indians and much horse stealing.[57]

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[56]*Ibid*., p. 274.

[57]Hutchins, "Annual Report, 1865," H.R. Executive Document 1, 39th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 5, Serial 1248.

References to the Flatheads' poor condition continued. In 1868 Special Agent Cullen mentioned their "destitute circumstances," which usually meant lack of food.[58] That same year Agent McCormick wrote in his annual report that the Flatheads could not join the fall hunt because of "extreme poverty in horses and means of travelling." Further, they were without the necessary clothing for the winter's rigors. They would have to be content with rations of beef and flour and a few bundles of clothes or blankets.[59] Agent Ford said that unless the 1870 fall hunt was better than the last, aid would once again be necessary for the Flatheads. Dr. J. P. Tiernam, physician to the Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles, and Kootenais, spent ten days at St. Mary's Mission and reported a great amount of sickness. The Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer, which carried the story, also mentioned that two and one-half tons of flour were distributed to the Flatheads by Agent Ford while the doctor was at the mission.[60] The necessity of feeding the Flatheads grew out of their inability to raise enough food to feed themselves. They were claiming no fixed plots of land; and the whites, in the wrong legally, were not leaving enough open land to supply the Indians' needs.

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[58]Agent Cullen, Report, H.R. Executive Document 1, 40th Congress, 3rd Session, Vol. 2, pp. 376-681, Serial 1366.

[59]McCauley, "Annual Report, 1868," H.R. Executive Document 1, 40th Congress, 3rd Session, Vol. 2, p. 670.

[60]Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer, 5 January 1871, p. 3.

The inability of the Indians to supply themselves was only part of the story. Chief Ambrose charged in 1862 that whites at Hell Gate complained about having serious trouble with drunken Indians, while continuing to sell them whiskey. The same kind of complaint is also found in a letter from the Flatheads to President Grant. The older Indians watched helplessly as the young men were sometimes daily coaxed into drunkenness and the women were debauched.[61] For the most part, however, the Indians suffered in silence. Two few sources mention a problem that was pervasive among the Flatheads by 1865 or 1870.

There were a few reports which did not support the generally accurate and pessimistic accounts of Flathead poverty. For example, some said that the Flatheads had many horses, tents, and guns. This was true, although the condition of the horses was not good; and the firearms were the tools of hunts which yielded less as the years advanced. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs noted in 1866 that the Flatheads' total wealth was about $60,000, mostly in land. Farming operations, said the commissioner, seemed productive. The Flatheads cultivated about two hundred and forty acres and raised about five thousand bushels of wheat and six thousand bushels of potatoes in 1865. Agent Jones said that, compared to the Kootenais, the Flatheads were not

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[61]Owen, Journal, I, p. 257 and II, p. 263; and Flathead Nation to President Grant, 7 May 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491.

in particularly bad straits.[62] Finally, Commissioner Walker, in his letter of instruction to General Garfield in 1872 (a matter to be taken up later), said that they "are the wealthiest, most industrious and frugal of these confederated tribes."[63] It is here that the relativity of the matter enters. The Flatheads may indeed have been better off than the Kootenais, many of whom in any event did not live on the Jocko Reservation, but their condition was far below that of the whites. First-hand observations generally rely on the word "destitute" to describe them. Relativity touches another chord, too: the lot of the Flatheads would become much worse in the next twenty years.

White land-grabbing and the shrinking of the buffalo herd took their toll on the Indian standard of living, but when the loss might have been compensated for by increased agency efforts and more and better annuities to the Flatheads, the government failed to give heed. After John Owen, always a special agent or sub-agent, was replaced by Charles Hutchins in 1862, the Flatheads never had a government representative in the valley; attention swung to the reservation seventy or eighty miles to the north. This shift is

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[62]McCauley, "Annual Report, 1868," H.R. Executive Document 1, 40th Congress, 3rd Session, Vol. 2, p. 671, Serial 1366; Jones, "Annual Report, 1871," H.R. Executive Document 1, part 5, 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, Vol. 3 part 1, p. 841, Serial 1505.

[63]Commissioner, Letter of Information to James A. Garfield, 10 July 1872, James A. Garfield Papers.

apparent in the reports of government personnel. The listing of schools, population, wealth, and other statistics in the 1861 Annual Report of the Commissioner included no figures for the Flatheads, although the Pend d'Oreilles and the Kootenai were accounted for and credited with receiving $20,000 in annuities or other benefits.[64] In fact the commissioner, new at his job, grouped the Flatheads with the Snakes and Shoshones as "wealthy and powerful," a tribe that could "cause their hostility to be severely felt."[65] He said that the Flatheads complained that they had not received the attention of the government, and he suggested that a council be held "in which a more definite knowledge of their wishes and expectations could be arrived at. . . ."[66] The extensive 1862 reports on most tribes likewise omitted figures about the Flatheads. Since figures for the Annual Report came from the agent on the Jocko Reservation, the lack of concern for and attention given the Flatheads may be inferred from missing figures.[67] The chain of communications for the Commissioner's Annual Report commenced with the agent, who wrote to his superintendent, who in turn wrote to the commissioner. In 1862 Superintendent Calvin H. Hale reported

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[64] Annual Report, 1861, Senate Executive Document 1, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, Vol. 1, p. 830, Serial 1157.

[65] Ibid., p. 642.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Annual Report, 1862, H.R. Executive Document 1, part 2, 37th Congress, 3rd Session, Vol. 2, p. 504, Serial 1157.

on the reservation Indians, saying that they had the benefits of a good saw and grist mill (although the grist mill was without burrs), but that annuities for 1861 and 1862 were never received. He noted that the 1861 goods were burned in transport aboard the river steamer Chippewa; they were never replaced. Hale failed to refer specifically to the Flatheads.[68]

The years 1863 and 1864 were years in which little information about the Flatheads appeared in the official reports, but one does learn that despite the existence of the Jocko Agency, which was supposed to serve the Flatheads in the Bitter Root Valley, neglect of their needs continued to be the norm. In 1867 Agent Wells requested money to buy 1,500 bushels of wheat for them after grasshoppers had destroyed their crops; some of the wheat was to be saved for spring planting. Ultimately $4,000 worth of wheat--about thirteen hundred bushels at the going rate of three dollars per bushel--was distributed by Wells' successor, M. M. McCauley, mostly to the Kootenais and Pend d'Oreilles on the Jocko Reservation. About one-third of the wheat was given to the Flatheads about a year after Wells first asked permission to feed them, and this is the only substantial distribution of wheat on record for several years.[69]

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[68]Hale, "Annual Report of Flathead Nation, 1862," 19 October 1862, H.R. Executive Document 1, part 2, 37th Congress, 3rd Session, Vol. 2, Serial 1157.

[69]Wells to Commissioner, 27 June 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488; and McCauley, "Annual Report, 1868," H.R. Executive Document 1, 40th Congress, 3rd Session, Vol. 2, p. 669-670, Serial 1366.

Food was not the only issue. James Tufts, Acting Governor of the Territory, wrote after a personal visit to the area that the Bitter Root Indians had neither a school nor a hospital, nor most of the other benefits of the treaty, because they were kind, peaceful, and did not invite attention. In other words, they were easy to ignore.[70] Bvt. Major Alvin S. Galbreath, Flathead Agent from June 1869 to July 1870, suggested in his annual report for 1869 that the Flatheads needed an agent of their own in the Bitter Root Valley to give them proper attention.[71]

Such problems as the Indians faced were bound to be mirrored in changing Indian attitudes toward the whites and affect adversely inter-racial relationships. Father Joset Menetrey was one of the first to notice what whites were doing to the Indians. He came down to the valley from St. Ignatius Mission on the Jocko Reservation for twelve days in late July, 1857, and returned again to the valley for eight more days in August. He found that all earlier work of the Church had been undone. Chiefs Victor, Ambrose, Moses, and Adolph were still good men, he reported, but Victor said that most of the tribe was given over to "gambling & libertinism."[72] John Owen, whose continuous, on-the-spot observations

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[70]James Tufts to Commissioner, 27 September 1868, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[71]Alvin S. Galbreath, "Annual Report, 1869," H.R. Executive Document 1, part 4, 41st Congress, 3rd Session, Vol. 4, part 1, p. 657, Serial 1449.

[72]Gilbert J. Garraghan, The Jesuits of the United States (3 vols., N.Y.: America Press, 1938), Vol. II, p.

are invaluable, was bothered by the worsening situation when he wrote, in June, 1865, after the loss of four horses (probably stolen) that

> The Indians of the Flathead Nation once proverbial for their honesty are growing tricky & worthless. They require rigid & great punishment which will fall upon them Ere they least Expect it. The old Chiefs can do Nothing with them. The young Men are growing heedless & will Not listen to the Councils of their Sages.[73]

Victor complained bitterly to Owen that whites were selling his people whiskey, one cause of the changes about which Owen worried.[74] Horse stealing, for which the Indians were usually blamed whether guilty or not (and they often were), seemed to be one of the most frequent complaints of whites. Thefts increased dramatically prior to the annual hunts, as John Blaine and Agent Augustus Chapman noted. (Actually, Chapman's immediate comment concerned a white's retrieval of his horses, which had been stolen by the Indians.)[75]

The anger and frustration of the Indians was beginning to surface with increasing frequency. Victor was so disturbed by the state of affairs that he made a special trip to Owen's fort to complain to the trader that whites were selling brew to his people. In another instance, Chapman dismissed a white man's claim against Flatheads who were accused of harrassing him and smashing his whiskey kegs--

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[73]Owen, Journal, I, p. 333.

[74]Ibid., p. 221.

[75]Blaine to Commissioner, General Land Office, 24 October 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491; and Augustus H. Chapman to Commissioner, 31 August 1866, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

he had been selling them liquor. Agent Wells reported to Victor the beating of a white judge near the Lo Lo fork of the Bitter Root River by drunken Indians.[76] Although these incidents occurred over a period of several years, they are representative of developing behavior patterns which led Galbreath to say:

> Much trouble is caused by the Indians getting whiskey, many complaints were made by whites that the Indians were throwing down their fences and turning Indian stock into the fields. Indians claim stock in the possession of whites, and whites claim stock in possession of Indians.

Galbreath added that it was almost impossible to settle these claims.[77]

The federal government tried unsuccessfully to solve its problems by sending General Alfred Sully to the valley in 1869 to negotiate a treaty with the Flatheads. Evidently his instructions were not specific, because he arrived at a novel solution: the establishment of a Flathead reservation of three hundred square miles in the southernmost thirty miles of the Bitter Root Valley. According to Sully, the area contained seventy-five whites and over thirty farms, and since the settlers were law-abiding, he proposed that they continue working their farms. These people spoke well of the Indians, he said, and had no objections to remaining on the

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[76]Owen, Journal, I, p. 221; Chapman to Commissioner, 31 August 1866 and Wells to Victor, 29 August 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[77]Galbreath to Alfred Sully, copied in Sully to Commissioner, 18 May 1870, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 490.

proposed reservation. He seemed to be out of touch with reality, and whites were generally displeased. The Helena Daily Herald voiced sympathy with valley whites and denounced "those vagabond relics of the various Northwestern tribes of Montana known as the Flatheads. . . ."[78] According to the paper, over two hundred whites would be affected by the reservation. Bitter Root citizens protested the proposed treaty at a meeting and had the minutes published in the paper.[79]

Sully doubted that the proposed arrangements would work, and he tried to induce the Flatheads to leave the valley:

> I do not like the Treaty, the Whites and Indians living together on the reservation will be a constant source of difficulties, But it was the only treaty I could make and the best terms I could get. I offered these Indians every inducement to leave the Bitter Root valley and settle in the Flathead Lake valley--I even offered them more than I think the Government would have been willing to allow. . . .[80]

These inducements included some things that should have been done anyway, according to the Stevens treaty: a school and hospital would be built on the reservation and overseen by the St. Ignatius Mission (which would have the use of two sections of land in return). Additionally, he suggested that the government provide $10,000 each year for ten years

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[78]Helena Daily Herald, 27 October 1869, clipping included in Sully to Commissioner, 29 October 1869, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489.

[79]Ibid.

[80]Sully to Commissioner, Report on Negotiations, 29 October 1869, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489.

for the purchase of agricultural implements, seed, and stock for Flathead farmers. The Flatheads rejected the offer, despite Sully's conviction that the majority of Indians cared little where they lived.[81]

Whites hoped that the death of Victor in July 1870 at about eighty-five years of age would herald a new era of increased Indian "cooperation" and speedy removal. Charlot, Victor's son, assumed the head-chief role and met with Agent Jones in December 1870, accompanied by chiefs Arlee and Joseph. It immediately became evident then--if it was not so before--that if Indian attitudes had changed, they had but intensified. Jones tried to explain carefully what the Stevens Treaty actually said and to point out that the question of removal was not in Indian hands, but was a matter for presidential determination. Arlee replied for Charlot ("Charlos the principal chief having no powers of oratory") and said they would not leave. He pointed out that Charlot had been selected by heredity and election, "but as he was weak and sickly, they had agreed among themselves on some young braves, ten in number, who acting as police would aid Charlos in keeping order and making their people behave."[82] This, however, was as far as the Indians would go.

The matter of removal was not as simple as it seemed to the whites. The reader will recall that Article Eleven

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[81] Ibid.

[82] Charles S. Jones to Commissioner, 8 December 1870, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 490.

FIGURE A

Chief Charlot, 1903 (Photograph courtesy of the Montana Historical Society)

of the Stevens Treaty made provisions for a presidential survey of the two potential reservation areas. He will also recall the comprehensive survey made by Dr. Lansdale at the request of Isaac Stevens in 1856, and that Stevens promised to forward to the commissioner the report that favored the Jocko area. Unfortunately the report either never reached Washington officials, or it was never acted upon. No presidential order had been made and hence no one in the valley--Indian or white--ever presumed that a survey had been accomplished. All petitions and letters from whites and Indians alike suggest that they were ignorant of any early official suggestion of a move to the north. The Flatheads wrote to the president in 1871 that they begged leave

> respectfully to represent to you the importance and necessity of some final and definite action in regard to our future continuance and residence in the Bitter Root Valley.
>
> Notwithstanding these solemn guarantees, no survey of the valley has yet been made, although eleven years have elapsed. . . and still worse and what we most complain of is that almost our entire valley is occupied and overrun by white settlers, who impose on us in many ways, subjecting us to annoyance, inconvenience and injustice which seems to call aloud for redress at your hands, and to you, therefore, we respectfully appeal.[83]

(This letter was probably penned by an educated white, possibly an agent or interpreter.) In 1883 Senator George Vest, Democratic chairman of a subcommittee of the "Special Committee of the United States Senate, Appointed to Visit the Indian Tribes in northern Montana," visited the Flatheads in

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[83]Flathead Nation to President Grant, 7 May 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491.

company with Major Martin Maginnis, territorial representative, and Schuylar Crosby, Governor. His committee reported that up to 1872 no survey had been made, just "as the Indians claim; nor were any schoolmasters, blacksmiths, carpenters, or farmers sent to the tribe, as provided for in the treaty."[84]

Jones tried to overcome Indian resistance, even though he had no real grounds for coercion or even strong argument. At one point he suggested that the Indians become de facto citizens of the valley under the pre-emption and homestead laws. "This," he said, "produced a very favorable impression. . . ."[85] The Indians soon changed their minds, however, and he realized, as Owen had, that they would not leave easily if at all. He said, "I do not think (and my means of information are superior to those of many) that the Chiefs and Headmen of the Flathead Tribe will ever willingly consent in advance to leave the Bitter Root Valley."[86] If removal was to be accomplished, he said, it should be done gradually and peacefully rather than immediately and by sheer force.

The agent continued to urge removal and to investigate its ramifications, treading between a hard-line policy and

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[84]Senate Reports, Document 283, "Report of the Subcommittee of the Special Committee, Appointed to Visit Indian Tribes in Northern Montana," 48th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 2, p. XVI, Serial 2174.

[85]Jones to Commissioner, 8 December 1870, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 490.

[86]*Ibid*.

one sympathetic to the Indians. For example, he protested to the Missoula Pioneer that they had published an article about the proposed removal of the Flatheads without consulting him first. Even if he entertained the views credited to him in the article, he said, it would be unwise to proclaim them publicly.[87] But at the same time he estimated that if removal could be effected at all, it would be at a cost of not less than $40,000 (including houses, moving expenses, and payment for Bitter Root land improvements). Moreover, wrote Jones to the Commissioner in a statement contradictory of his assertion that voluntary removal was not possible, if anyone could persuade the Indians to leave, he uniquely, was able since the Indians trusted him and had "confidence" in and "affection" for him.[88]

He had planted the seeds of removal in Indian minds as early as December 1870, and the following month Anleck and Nine Pipes, as well as Arlee, came to him at the Agency from their home sixty miles away. They detailed the harassments of the Bitter Root Indians by whites and asked Jones' advice. The agent said that the problem was difficult to solve "because of the temperament of our people, and the nature of our laws, which rather encouraged than prevented the settlement and cultivation of public lands everywhere, except on

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[87] Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer, 8 December 1870, p. 13.

[88] Jones to Commissioner, 23 January 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491.

the regular Reservations. . . ."[89] He recommended removal for three reasons: it would eliminate white contact with the Indians (protection on the reservation was guaranteed forever); the Indians would receive full value for improved as well as unimproved land in the valley; and they would have a free choice of locations and good land on the Jocko Reservation. According to Jones, Chief Arlee thought his advice wise and asked for permission to go to Washington, D. C. to see the President. There was but one thing lacking in this exchange of ideas: Head-chief Charlot did not take part.

Whites pressed increasingly for Indian removal. Requests that the Flatheads vacate the Bitter Root Valley were part of virtually every white petition. And almost every reference to the matter dealt with the desirability of sending the Indians to the Jocko. James Harlan, Secretary of the Interior, wrote to Commissioner Denton Cooley that since whites would soon completely fill the valley, and since there was no stopping them, removal should be soon effected, by additional legislation if necessary.[90] This was in 1866. A year later agent John Wells of the Jocko Reservation (who served from 1866 to 1868) reported a conversation with the Flatheads. Wells spoke of the necessity of opening the valley to settlement, and also presented a list of damages

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[89] Ibid.

[90] Secretary of the Interior to Commissioner, 14 May 1866, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

claimed by white citizens for cattle killed by the Flatheads.[91] John Owen wrote to Wells that it was absolutely necessary that the valley be opened to settlement, saying that "the Flatheads will never leave of their own volation [sic] for the Jocko. Their case is truly a hard one." To reinforce his point, Owen reported in March 1868 that the citizens of the valley had held a meeting in Stevensville on 8 March and had drawn up a petition to the Secretary of the Interior to have the valley opened. Owen had signed it.[92]

Toward the end of the 1860's legislative interest in the subject increased. The legislative assembly of Montana Territory passed a memorial in February 1869 for the removal of the Flatheads from the valley. In the memorial the delegates said that the two races could not live on "amicable terms," and that "several hundred" whites might be forced into conflict with the Indians.[93] Taking a political position, the Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer two years later complained that James Cavanaugh, the territorial delegate to Congress, was achieving too little (if anything) by way of the necessary survey by the President, and removal.

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[91]Wells to Commissioner, 14 June 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[92]Owen, Journal, 8 March 1868, II, p. 96.

[93]Legislative Assembly of Montana Territory, Memorial for the Removal of the Flatheads, 4 February 1869, H.R. Misc. Document 41, 40th Congress, 3rd Session, Vol. I, Serial 1366.

Cavanaugh's actions were termed "the latest absurdity," and the paper favored Edwin W. Toole, the incumbent's opponent.[94] Perhaps more important, in October 1871 Jasper Viall wrote directly to Acting Commissioner H. R. Blum, saying that "I cannot too earnestly press this matter of the consideration of the Department."[95] He was convinced that serious trouble would result if removal was not effected at once. For example, he said, echoing Wells, that any stock missed by whites was presumed to have been stolen by Flatheads. Viall reiterated his earlier but doubtful point that only three good Indian farms existed in the valley, and he suggested that severalty would amply reward these Indians for their work. He attempted to make the settlers' case strong by adding that all whites in the valley prior to Victor's death were there with his consent and that, in fact, the old chief often showed them the best land. More than that, said the superintendent, the Indians understood very well the meaning of the Eleventh Article of the Stevens treaty.[96] About the same time, John Blaine wrote again to Willis Drummond, at the urging of the Bitter Root settlers, asserting that something must be done soon to remove the Flatheads.[97]

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[94]Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer, 25 May 1871, p. 2.

[95]Jasper A. Viall to Commissioner, 16 October 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491.

[96]Ibid.

[97]Blaine to Commissioner, General Land Office,24 October 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491.

The old argument that the Indians were not making proper use of their land and thus did not deserve it was advanced again. The surveyor-general of the Territory, Solomon Meredith, wrote in 1867 that the whites had taken advantage of the distance of the agency from the Bitter Root Valley and had "made a large and thriving settlement in the Bitter Root Valley" and surrounding areas. He grumbled that the Indians were failures at farming, despite missionary efforts [which had long since ceased], and thus there was ample arable land on the Flathead Reservation for the little farming they did. Anyway, said Meredith, the discovery of gold, silver, and nickel in the Bitter Root area would bring a hoard of miners down upon the hapless Indians. "This nominal reservation [the Bitter Root Valley]," he wrote, "can certainly be of no advantage to the Indian while it may contain untold wealth for the whites and has every prospect of great richness."[98]

The Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer picked up the same theme in 1870 and stated that opening the valley would "throw open for pre-emption a rich agricultural section, and be a great boon conferred to those looking for a pleasant and permanent home in Montana." After all, said the paper, the valley was "one of the pleasant spots of the Territory;" not only was it fertile, but the climate was "very salubrious."

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[98]Meredith to W. J. Cullen, 23 December 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

An old Hudson's Bay Company trader employed by the Flathead Agency swore that "Men don't die here; they only blow away." "When the Indians are removed from this portion of the Territory," said the Pioneer, "it will be amongst the best farming sections in the mountains." How the newspaper expected the Indians to prefer the Jocko area while it was praising the Bitter Root Valley is a mystery.[99]

William Clagett added his voice to the others and proved to be very influential. A lawyer and a Republican, he was elected territorial delegate to Congress on 7 August 1871. Three months later, on 9 November, he wrote from Washington, D. C. to the Commissioner asking that the President order a survey and find in favor of removal.[100]

Clagett's letter may have been the one that prompted Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs Clum to write to the Secretary of the Interior two days later, on 11 November.[101] Clum's letter summed up the Bitter Root situation and appears to have been the immediate cause of the presidential order of 14 November 1871. After citing the articles of the treaty that pertained to removal, he pointed out that Superintendent Viall had advocated removal and feared serious trouble between the Indians and the settlers if it were not accomplished.

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[99]Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer, 24 November 1870, p. 3.

[100]William Clagett to Commissioner, 9 November 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491.

[101]Commissioner to Secretary of the Interior, 11 November 1871, National Archives, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Report Book 21, 7 September 1871 - 21 June 1872, pp. 72-73.

Viall estimated that removal would cost no more than five thousand dollars. Clum then listed those who concurred with Viall: Clagett; the surveyor-general of the territory; Agent Charles Jones; and Viall's predecessor, General Alfred Sully.

The treaty demanded more of the government than consensus, however: it required a survey of the Bitter Root Valley. Nobody recalled the Richard Lansdale survey, but Clum pointed out that another survey had just taken place. Governor Benjamin Potts, whose statement was transmitted to Clum by Clagett, said that he had visited the valley with Clagett and Viall and that they had examined "the right and propriety of the removal of the Flatheads." Clum concluded that their report was sufficient, and he recommended that the President order the removal of the Flatheads.

Finally President Grant succumbed to the squatters' influence and on 14 November 1871 issued an executive order of removal. Declaring the Bitter Root Valley to have been "surveyed and examined" in accordance with the treaty of 16 July 1855, he said he did not find the Bitter Root Valley better suited to the Flatheads' needs and therefore ordered them to remove to the Flathead reservation. The order of removal also allowed any Indians then residing in the valley who wished to become citizens to live on land that they occupied, providing that it did not exceed in quantity that which was allowed under the homestead and pre-emption laws (320 acres), and providing that they became citizens (i.e.

give up tribal relations) and notified the Superintendent of Indian Affairs of Montana Territory of their intent prior to 1 January 1873.[102]

On 6 December the Secretary of the Interior wrote to Felix R. Brunot, Chairman of the Board of Indian Commissioners, saying that he believed the reasons for the issuance of the executive order were satisfactory, but that he would delay execution of the order until the Board acted on it, if Brunot desired. Evidently there was no delay.[103]

The matter of removal in accordance with this order will be considered later. It seems clear that conditions were intolerable in the valley for both Indians and whites, and that Indians were, quite literally, losing ground at an alarming rate while white men continued to feel insecure about their legal position in the valley. It also seems clear that the Flatheads were in destitute circumstances--which could, however, become appreciably worse. The question in November 1871 was whether the reservation was indeed better for the Flatheads. The ensuing chapter will examine reservation life from its inception to 1871 in an effort to ascertain whether the case for removal was sound or merely pragmatic. Half of the question has been answered: the Indians should not have remained in the valley. It remains to be seen whether reservation life would be much better.

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[102]Executive Order of 14 November 1871, in James A. Garfield Papers.

[103]Secretary of the Interior to Felix R. Brunot, 6 December 1871, National Archives, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Misc. Vol. 10, 1870-1872, p. 346.

CHAPTER VI

THE FLATHEAD RESERVATION, 1862 TO 1872

The previous chapter considers the growing pressure on the Bitter Root Flatheads to remove to the Jocko Reservation, and it mentions the frequent comments about making the reservation attractive enough to encourage Flathead removal. To understand why the Flatheads refused to move north prior to 1872, at which time James Garfield persuaded part of the tribe to go, it is necessary to examine the condition of the reservation and its lack of progress from 1862 to 1872. This period, which encompasses the residency of the first permanent agent and all other agents up to the Garfield Agreement, is critical to an understanding of increased Flathead recalcitrance.

The Flatheads were particularly displeased about the prospects of living on the reservation, and with just reason. Within the span of ten years seven agents served the Indians there, three for only one year and one for but three months. The supervision of the agents changed from Washington Territory to Idaho Territory to Montana Territory between 1862 and 1864. Through all of these changes the Flathead Agency was in constant turmoil and confusion. The agency was always

in arrears to agents, employees, and Indians; annuity goods were months or sometimes even years late, if they ever arrived; charges and countercharges of fraud--some of them accurate--kept clerks busy recording denials. The physical plant (house, barns, and mills) was in a state of acute disrepair much of the time; and tools, farming equipment, and livestock were often nonexistent, as were crops and seed grains. Employees were often difficult to hire, partly because they knew they would be underpaid and perhaps even unpaid some of the time. There was at the agency, in other words, a general preoccupation with simply getting along that precluded much concern for the Indians. The Flatheads were being pushed to remove to a reservation that was frequently incapable of functioning.

One of the best agents of this decade was Charles Hutchins, who served from September 1862, when he was transferred from the Nez Perce Agency, to September 1865. For an annual salary of $1500, the government hired a professional who was above reproach, provided prompt and thorough reports, was particularly concerned with money and agency buildings, and showed some concern for the Indians. Unfortunately, Hutchins was not much of a farmer, and his appraisal of agency conditions was always overzealous (as his successor promptly pointed out). And in the 1860's even a good agent was unable to accomplish much in Montana because of the host of problems that he faced.

When he arrived, Hutchins discovered to his dismay that the agency was severely crippled by a dearth of equipment and supplies. He complained that John Owen had sacked the agency, directed all work to cease, and discharged all of the employees so abruptly that the farmer could not even harrow a field of wheat. Owen had issued the harvest to the employees for their pay, said Hutchins, since the agency was short of cash; and thus seed wheat for the spring of 1863 was disposed of. Only a ton of sheaved oats, damaged by rain, was turned over to the new agent, who also said that Owen had dispersed fifty-eight head of stock, including mules, "down to the last hoof," and had taken the farm implements to Fort Owen. This was particularly crippling, since Hutchins was utterly unable to secure such items as plows without ordering them from the East. No annuity goods were available to him for winter distribution, and only a few medical supplies, some carpenter tools in poor condition, and some incomplete wagons and partial sets of gunsmith and blacksmith tools were left. Charles Hutchins was faced with the difficult task of completely restocking the agency.[1]

When the new agent surveyed the agency grounds, he learned that the agency, which was located about a mile from the Jocko River on a feeder stream, was in a poor location for farming. "Very little fertile land is found in this

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[1]Charles Hutchins to Calvin Hale, 2 December 1862, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 908--hereafter this will be referred to as Letters Received, Washington Superintendency.

valley," he said. "Occasionally small patches are met with that could be cultivated. . . but I doubt not, that at least two hundred Indian families could produce their subsistance [sic] here."[2] He was trying to make the best of an unpromising situation; in fact, two hundred Indian families would be hard put to raise crops sufficient to feed themselves.

The buildings were primitive and did not live up to the treaty agreement; most of them were constructed under Lansdale's supervision and were meant to be temporary shelters. A hewn log house, fourteen by sixteen feet square and one story high, served as the agent's office and residence. A double house of round logs, each room fourteen by sixteen feet square, was used for the kitchen and employees' living quarters. There was a floorless log storehouse and "one rickety tumble down log shed, in which the purpose of blacksmithing has been served." There was a saw mill and an adjacent cabin for the miller. The agency did boast a good barn, twenty by forty feet square, and, two miles away on the Jocko, a "very excellent" circular saw mill which had a capacity of four hundred feet of lumber per hour. Unfortunately, Hutchins found it difficult to locate a man skilled enough to run it. He discovered that there was no flour mill, nor any evidence that the machinery for one had been ordered. The power for the saw mill--and a future grist

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[2] *Ibid.*

mill--came from a good dam on the Jocko River, and he guessed that the dam's cost "enormously exceeded the amount provided for the erection of both a saw and flour mill."[3]

The agency wants were supplied by an agency farm and a small trading post. The farm consisted of about one hundred and fifty acres, well fenced. About half of this land was broken, but it was "very poor, being a thin gravelly soil over basaltic boulders." Hutchins thought that it could be readily irrigated if necessary, and he estimated that it would yield ten to fifteen bushels of wheat per acre without extra water--a fairly small amount by western Montana standards. A Hudson's Bay Company post enjoyed a steady exchange of furs with the Indians and a good business from whites off as well as on the reservation. Hutchins said Owen had permitted the company to remain on the reservation because goods were scarce in the territory. Hutchins was not sure what should be done about the British company and asked special instructions, inasmuch as the factor, a man named McLaren, acting on instruction, declared that he would continue the post "till he was put off by force."[4]

St. Ignatius Mission, sixteen miles away, added to Hutchins' initial problems by refusing to honor its contract to run an Indian school. Fortunately the priests changed their minds, and the problem was short-lived.[5]

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Hale, "Report," H.R. Executive Document 1, 38th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 3, pp. 555-556, Serial 1182.

Hutchins' reports were not self-serving fabrications or exaggerations that would provide excuses for possible shortcomings on his own part. His superintendent, Calvin Hale of Washington Territory, agreed that the reservation was almost destitute, in part because Owen had not actually lived there. The dwellings were indeed uncomfortable, he said; and worse still, the Indians were dissatisfied and complained of the government's bad faith in not supplying them with annuities or fulfilling other treaty obligations. Hale also agreed with Hutchins that the agency should be moved away from the Jocko, "owing to its unfitness."[6]

During the territorial period, staffing an agency frequently was a problem that taxed an agent's ingenuity. The supply of workers was low, their tenure was at the mercy of their whims and the latest news of gold or silver strikes, and Indian Service pay was usually lower than that offered by local entrepreneurs. By December 1862 Hutchins claimed the services of a doctor, teachers, two farmers, a wagon and plow maker, and a carpenter--hardly the full complement, which also included a gunsmith and tinsmith, as well as a miller for each type of mill. Actually, the agency may not have had the services of all whom Hutchins claimed, since it was standard practice among Indian agents to estimate funds, or issue vouchers, for more employees than actually existed. The unclaimed salaries were then used to pay the subsistence of those really working on the reservation. Hutchins argued

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[6]*Ibid*.

in a letter to his superintendent that given the remoteness from supplies and the low base pay, subsistence (beyond allowed salaries) was necessary.[7] Hale had a different solution: the government could sell provisions to the employees. Hutchins said that such a system would work if living quarters were sufficient, but present employees' quarters were minimal, and there was not even a set of scales available in the area to weigh goods.[8] Two years later, in 1864, Hutchins proposed that agency employees' salaries be increased thirty-three per cent to combat inflation, but this was never done.[9] In fact, the Bureau of Indian Affairs scarcely paid Hutchins any heed at all; he complained in January 1865 that he had not received any communication from the Bureau since 26 May 1864.[10]

The problem of finding employees continued well past Hutchins' first two years, and in 1865 he calculated that a salary of $1200 plus subsistence--which Owen had offered some employees--was now worth only $822.22 2/9 at inflated

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[7]Hutchins to Hale, "Estimate of Funds for 1863-1864 Fiscal Year," 2 December 1862, Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 908.

[8]*Ibid*.

[9]Hutchins to Commissioner, 13 October 1864, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488--hereafter this will be referred to as Letters Received, Montana Superintendency.

[10]*Ibid*., 27 January 1865.

rates. Moreover, Hutchins was not supposed to offer subsistence pay, which amounted to about twenty-three dollars per month. He complained that his wagon and plow maker, the blacksmith, and the carpenter could be counted on to work for only one to two weeks before leaving!

One of the overriding problems of Hutchins' administration was the overseeing of mill operations, and he was particularly eager to install a flour mill. He proposed that the agency spend $987.50 of the allotted $1,000 to buy a Todd's Patent Flouring Mill. In October 1865, nearly two years after the first request was made, Hutchins notified the Commissioner that the mill was completed and functioning at a capacity of ten bushels per hour. Until this time, the nearest mill was located at the St. Ignatius mission, sixteen miles away.[11]

The flour mill was powered by the saw mill water wheel, and Hutchins found it a continuous chore to keep the mills running. He placed several orders for shafts, bearings, and gears. Unfortunately, his initial appraisal of the saw mill was not accurate. It was expected to cut three thousand feet of lumber in a ten-hour day with four men, but he was unable

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[11]Hale to Commissioner, 6 January 1863, Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 908; Hutchins to Commissioner, 23 March 1864, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Idaho Superintendency, M-234, Roll 337--hereafter this will be referred to as Letters Received, Idaho Superintendency; Hutchins to Commissioner, 30 June 1865, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488; Hutchins to Commissioner, 3 October 1865, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

to process more than two hundred feet of coarse lumber in ten hours with two men. He estimated that a good day's work for one man might be six hundred feet if the mill worked well. In over a year the mill had cut but seventy five thousand feet of lumber, most of which was used to construct agency buildings.

Hutchins wanted to move the saw mill closer to the center of Indian residence, at the same time converting it to the more efficient and easily operated sash type. The chief obstacle to this proposal, which was never carried out, was the cost. A new dam would cost seventy-five thousand dollars, according to Hutchins' best estimate, and a new mill house would probably cost about eight thousand dollars. Hutchins mistakenly thought that the existing mill dam was strong enough to warrant keeping it.[12]

Even when the saw mill was operating, Hutchins had trouble finding someone to run it. He was once forced to engage a private individual to saw two hundred thousand feet of lumber, half of which the sawyer would keep for himself as pay; free use of the saw mill was part of the deal which was functional but short-lived. Later in 1865 Hutchins thought he had made arrangements with S. D. McAnally to work as a sawyer, but the man "was seized with the mining mania that is at present so much exercising the citizens of this territory, and has thrown up the contract and left the

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[12]Hutchins to Sidney Edgerton, 31 August 1865, Montana Historical Library Collections, Helena, Montana.

premises."[13] When Hutchins anticipated the completion of a grist mill, he tried to hire a miller and was for some time unable to find anyone willing to take the job, even at $1,000 a year.[14]

Despite the difficult times in which Hutchins worked, he received remarkably little criticism. That which was leveled at him is relatively insignificant, particularly when compared to criticism of his successors. The Montana Post stated in August of 1864 that "Matters at the Agency are in a most beautiful state of confusion," and that ". . . the buildings are fast going to destruction; that the principal crop will be almost entirely lost for want of proper attention; and the Indians are very much dissatisfied."[15] Inasmuch as many routines--especially financial ones--were not yet established, confusion did exist. The buildings which were originally built as temporary winter shelters by Lansdale were indeed fast going to destruction. It is impossible to determine whether the paper was correct about the loss of the crop, and it is fair to say that the Indians were usually dissatisfied during most administrations of the agency, in some cases not so much because of an agent's shortcomings as because of their generally unsatisfactory kind of life.

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[13]Hutchins to Commissioner, 26 May 1865, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[14]Hutchins to Edgerton, 24 August 1865, Montana Historical Library Collections, Helena, Montana.

[15]Montana Post, 10 August 1864, clipping enclosed in John W. Wells to Commissioner, 31 August 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

A potentially more important charge was also made against the agent. During his return from Washington, D. C. in early 1864, Hutchins purchased goods for the agency in New York City pursuant to his visit with the Commissioner. Later that year Commissioner Dole wrote to Hutchins, accusing him of "extraordinary proceedings" in exceeding his authority in purchasing more goods than listed on his requisition form and covered by appropriations. He was, in fact, accused of violating the law. Hutchins replied that he was not in violation of any law and that this suggestion was probably "a bit of clerical enthusiasm" which had excited the Commissioner's attention. The tone of Hutchins' letter was very indignant, and it appears that it should have been. He was never found guilty of any indiscretion or illegal act, and the matter does not appear to have been pursued further.[16]

Augustus H. Chapman, who followed Hutchins, registered a complaint that seems designed as much to place Chapman in a good light as it does to place Hutchins in a bad one. Chapman said that "it is a burning shame" that his predecessor left no seed for spring planting of the garden, because even though grasshoppers had destroyed much of the Indian crop, it scarcely affected the agency crop. All except thirteen and one-half bushels of wheat had been ground into flour, and most of the oats had been fed to Hutchins' private stock,

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[16]Hutchins to Commissioner, 18 November 1864, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

while the government cattle was left to forage, said Chapman. Furthermore, the work oxen were low of flesh after prolonged overwork and poor feeding.[17] It is difficult to assess the degree of truth in these comments, particularly since Hutchins never included many remarks about the crops and stock in his reports. The truth of the matter was probably much as stated, but unfortunately for agents and Indians alike, crop and stock problems were the norm and not the exception.

Shortage of money, the usual bane of agents, was beyond their control, and was probably the root of some of the problems to which Chapman alluded. During the early period of Flathead Agency development there was confusion regarding payment of bills, the proper use of vouchers, and the availability of cash. Agents came and went rapidly after Hutchins; the area was first in Washington Territory, then in Idaho Territory and finally in Montana Territory, and mail routes and superintendents changed when the agency was transferred from one territory to another. Transportation of mail and supplies was difficult, and even if items reached the reservation as ordered, the seller and the freight company were often unable to collect money from the agency for long periods. It is not surprising that some of the problems attributed to Hutchins' administration did exist in fact.

Examples of financial problems abound and were often similar to the one about which Hutchins complained in October,

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[17]Augustus H. Chapman to Commissioner, 20 April 1866, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

1865. He wrote to the Commissioner that he had not received any funds for the first and second quarters of the fiscal year, and he urged that they be sent at once to his agency. He noted that the last time money was sent, it was in the form of a draft on the Washington Territorial Depository in Oregon City, a long journey away. He suggested that the draft be on a bank in Montana Territory, and that no New York bank be used--he feared that the checkbook would be thrown away by the mail contractors to save weight. Rumor had it that they delivered only letters, he said. He was genuinely worried that he would be unable to retain employees for the spring planting if funds did not arrive soon.

Hutchins was also afraid that the Indians would become unhappier if money did not become available soon, for they already had reason to complain. Although the agency was solvent in other respects, by the spring of 1865 the government owed the chiefs of the three tribes several thousand dollars, for they had not been paid their five hundred dollars per year since the spring of 1862.[18] Moreover, there was no agency school on the reservation, nor was there a hospital as the treaty required.[19]

Annuity goods were usually in short supply too, compounding the problem for the agent. It was virtually a certainty in the 1860's that they would not arrive on time.

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[18]Hutchins to Commissioner, 7 March 1864, Letters Received, Idaho Superintendency, M-234, Roll 337.

[19]Hutchins to Commissioner, 3 October 1865, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

For example, the 1864 annuity goods that were shipped in the spring did not arrive until 28 October 1864, having come from St. Louis to Fort Benton via steamer, and thence to the Flathead Agency by wagon at ten cents per pound, paid in gold upon arrival.[20] The expense of shipping goods from St. Louis to Missoula was about seventy-five per cent of the invoice cost. In 1865 the annuity goods seemed to please the Indians, according to Hutchins. They especially liked the agricultural implements, and Hutchins predicted a better farming year for them in 1865. Strangely, in view of this fact, his request for 1866 annuity goods included only three breaking plows, the usual agency supplies such as powder and shot, caps, coffee and sugar, and 300 three-point blankets for the Indians. Hutchins could expect some grumbling when these goods were distributed.[21]

There is some question whether the Flathead Agency complied with the treaty with respect to a doctor during Hutchins' tenure. There was no hospital, and although an 1865 report of the condition of the Bitter Root Flatheads was filed by Dr. Charles Shaft, and a four-page list of medical supplies and a three-quarter page list of medical

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[20]Hutchins to Commissioner, 2 September 1864, 18 November 1864, 14 October 1864, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488; and Hutchins to Commissioner, 1 March 1864, Letters Received, Idaho Superintendency, M-234, Roll 337.

[21]Hutchins to Commissioner, 3 October 1865, and "Requisition for Annuities, Material, and Supplies," included with Hutchins to Commissioner, 14 October 1864, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

texts were requested by Hutchins, there is no other mention of a doctor in any available records. The doctor's report was of little consequence. Apart from urging that a hospital be built, largely to prevent sick Indians from being taken on fishing expeditions or on buffalo hunts, Shaft said that he noticed the usual cases of colds, measles, inflamation of the lungs, sore eyes, and so on. He remarked that the birth rate was five per month, while the death rate averaged one and one half per month--a ratio which must not have been fixed, since the Indian population never showed much increase.[22]

In summation, it can be said that Hutchins, administering the agency at a critical and difficult time, did a fairly good job of maintaining some equilibrium. He sensed the key problems and made solid suggestions. He urged prompt payment of the government's obligations and the fulfillment of its treaty requirements. If his chief interest seemed to be money and the agency's physical plant, it is because his problems were acute. He cannot be blamed for any lack of progress, however slim it may have been.

In September 1865 Hutchins was replaced by Augustus H. Chapman, who faced the task of supervising and supplying about twelve hundred Indians, of whom 273 were Kootenais, 751 were

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[22]Hutchins to Edgerton, 30 June 1865, Montana Historical Library Collections; Charles Shaft to Hutchins and Hutchins to Commissioner, 3 October 1865, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

Pend d'Oreilles, and 259 were Flatheads. The reservation Indians still hunted, but more sporadically now than before, and they farmed about two thousand acres and thus placed increased demands on the agency. The Flatheads and many of the Kootenais, however, did not live on the reservation, and most agents, including Chapman, provided these people with minimal service.

Chapman was not particularly pleased with the situation in which he found himself, and during his turbulent nineteen months at the agency he made a point of registering his complaints. His list was long: there was little seed grain left; the saw mill was too small and nearly worn out; the mill dam, which Hutchins thought more than adequate, had washed out, and there was not enough money to fix it; head-chiefs' salaries were overdue for a year as of 20 April 1866 (an unexplained understatement, as the reader will see below); the mails were agonizingly slow, partly because for some inexplicable reason they were sent through Idaho, thus extending the delivery route by more than seven hundred miles. Although Chapman blamed Hutchins for some of the problems--the lack of grain, and the condition of the mill and dam, for example--the latter was not wholly responsible for the condition of the agency when he left, if only because of the problems that he also had faced. Furthermore, complained the new agent, Governor Sidney Edgerton knew little about Indian matters and told Chapman not to bother him with mail, but to send it directly to the Indian Department. Edgerton

was, concluded Chapman, "severely afflicted with quartz on the Braine. And when a public officer gets into quartz speculations he is sure to neglect his official duties."[23]

Chapman faced a multitude of problems. For example, he wanted to establish an industrial school and farm, as the treaty required, and he noted that although Hutchins had the chance, appropriations for the school for 1864 and 1865 had not been expended. Chapman hoped to use this money for the necessary buildings, but his efforts came to naught. His surgeon quit, just as the tribe was returning from its annual hunt with sick and wounded. The agent managed to replace him with "a Wild Devil half Mexican & half Blackfoot Indian," who did not last the year. The next physician, James Dunlevy, did not stay long either. Perhaps they were discouraged because no medical supplies had been received by the agency for three years prior to November 1866.[24]

Indian dissatisfaction, mounting during Hutchins' administration, increased during Chapman's tenure and centered mainly on non-payment of the chiefs' salaries. Chapman made an honest if largely ineffective effort to resolve the problem. He wrote to the Commissioner that

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[23]Chapman to Commissioner, 6 March 1866 and 7 March 1866, Letters Received, Idaho Superintendency, M-234, Roll 337; and Chapman to Commissioner, 20 April 1866, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[24]Chapman to Commissioner, "Statements of Service Rendered, Fourth Quarter, 1866," 1 January 1867, and James Dunlevy to Chapman, 1 November 1866, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

> there is much dissatisfaction existing at present among the Head Chiefs of the Flathead, Kootenays, and Upper Pend O'Reilles in regard to the back salaries due them & the amount still due their tribes for beneficial purposes.
>
> There is certainly a large amount of back-pay due the Headchiefs & there certainly must be several thousande /sic/ dollars due the Flathead nation for beneficial purposes.[25]

He requested a complete report of the amounts appropriated by Congress for the chiefs and for beneficial purposes; and receiving no reply, he requisitioned nearly ten thousand dollars for Alexander, Head-chief of the Pend d'Oreilles, and his tribe. He enlisted the aid of Governor Green Smith (Edgerton's successor), who wrote that for eight years the Indians of the Flathead Nation had not received their salaries, farms, and houses and were becoming "very much dissatisfied." The agent especially urged payment of Eneas, who was "by far the best chief of the Confederate Flathead Nation." Younger and poorer than the other chiefs, Eneas was eager to have the government build him a good home, and Chapman promised him one. Chapman also registered Victor's complaint that no one but Chapman had ever paid him. The agent stated that he still held vouchers for $1,000 from Owen and Hutchins, signed by Victor, that they never turned in. According to Chapman, both agents admitted that they had never paid a cent to the head-chiefs of the Kootenais or the Pend d'Oreilles. The total owed to the chiefs as of

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[25]Chapman to Commissioner, 25 April 1866, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

18 October 1866, he said, was $3,375.00,[26] although one wonders whether even this figure was wholly accurate, given the confusion regarding accounts.

If Chapman was unable to effect the payment of the chiefs, he was just as frustrated in his attempts to relieve the sorry conditions of the reservation Indians, who were faced with increasingly difficult hunts and growing poverty at home. Chapman noted in the fall of 1866 that it was dangerous for the Indians to continue hunting in Blackfoot country, since the Blackfeet were better armed each year and within the last year had killed about fifty Flathead warriors.[27] (These slain warriors may have been Pend d' Oreilles or Kootenais, since Chapman did not always distinguish one tribe from another.) The alternative to hunting was farming, and Chapman pleaded with the Commissioner to help the Indians:

> . . .you can form no idea of the poverty of a large portion of two of these tribes, and of their utter inability to get a proper start in the world, that is in agricultural pursuits. Something will have to be done for them and that at once; their necessities are such that delay is death to them.[28]

Big Canoe, a Flathead or Pend d'Oreille chief, apparently agreed that agriculture was the only hope and, according to Chapman, said:

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[26]Chapman to Commissioner, 18 October 1866, Green Clay Smith to Commissioner, 13 November 1866, and Chapman to Commissioner, 20 April 1866, "Requisition for 3rd and 4th Quarters 1866," Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[27]Chapman to Commissioner, 28 October 1866, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[28]Ibid.

> We are now willing to work; get us seed, stock, harness, oxen, wagons, and farming and other tools, and see what we can do. --pay our head chiefs. . . make them their homes. . . start our agricultural and industrial school . . .give our youths opportunities to learn trades at your shops, have your men learn us how to build houses . . .pay us what is due us, regular, and then if we don't prosper we will not complain of any one.[29]

How much of what Big Canoe was reputed as saying actually came from Chapman is difficult to tell, but the points were valid.

All Chapman could claim to have done while at the agency was accomplished in 1866, and most of it involved the agency plant. In the spring he fenced about one hundred acres of agency land and broke about twenty-five acres, in addition to planting about thirty-five acres of small grains. Over the winter of 1865-1866 the agency sawed a considerable amount of lumber, some of which was used to complete a large barn which Owen had begun four years earlier. Irrigation ditches were dug, and their contribution to a good crop was anticipated. Those Indians who could procure seeds showed "considerable zeal" in planting small garden plots.[30]

Generally speaking, however, Chapman--like his predecessor--only held the line, improving a few things while letting other things decline. Like Hutchins, Chapman showed some concern for the Indians' plight but did little about it except notify the Bureau that the government was not living up to its agreement.

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Chapman to Commissioner, 1 March 1866, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

In the fall of 1866 Chapman's world began to crumble until he lost control of the agency, which remained virtually leaderless until April 1867. The troubles began when the financial picture became muddled. He had always had difficulty getting money from the government, as had the agents before him. For example, he wrote in April 1868 that the government still owed the agency for the first three quarters of 1865. Matters were compounded by the fact that Hutchins apparently took the agency records with him (or destroyed them) when he left,[31] but in October Chapman felt obliged to correct the government's statement of the balance due the Indians for beneficial purposes. The government claimed the amount was a little over eleven hundred dollars, while Chapman returned a statement showing the balance to be more than thirty thousand dollars.[32] He reached his conclusion in a logical way: he noted that the Indians were charged twice in a complicated cattle deal in which Owen had sold some cattle to pay transportation costs that were then deducted from Indian claims. Chapman said that the government did not credit the Indians for annuity goods and stock sold by Owen to pay transportation charges, and he claimed that Owen had issued Flathead annuity goods to the Bannocks and Snakes on the order of Superintendent Geary. Hutchins had been guilty of a similar abuse, having sold eight annuity plows at thirty dollars each. Chapman also believed that the Indians should

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[31] Ibid., 20 April 1866 and 28 October 1868.

[32] Ibid., 28 October 1866.

have been credited with the gold premium on all monies expended on them, since the disparity between the value of currency and gold was appreciable.[33]

Chapman was replaced during the winter of 1866-1867. His outspoken manner, which may have led to a personality clash with Montana Territory's Acting Governor Thomas Francis Meagher, and his generally ineffective administration of agency affairs were the chief causes for his replacement. John W. Wells was appointed as his successor on 9 November 1866, and Chapman evidently left the agency about a month later. Wells, however, did not actually arrive at the agency until April 1867, and Chapman returned to the agency early in that year to make up returns for the first quarter of 1867 and to help Wells get started.

After Chapman left the agency, accusations against him began to surface. Governor Meagher charged in a forthright way that Chapman appeared

> grossly and scandulously to have violated his faith with the Government, as well as with the Indians placed under his charge, and to have done so to such an excess as to reduce the affairs and interests of the Agency, to the most deplorable, discreditable and ruinous condition. . . .[34]

More specifically, Meagher believed that Chapman was guilty of selling government property and keeping the money. He instructed his private secretary, E. H. Barrett, to lock up

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Thomas Francis Meagher to Commissioner, 4 March 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

the Flathead Agency files and, if his investigation found Chapman guilty, to arrest him.[35] One can be fairly certain that Barrett would not be inclined to find matters otherwise.

The absence of more specific charges by Meagher suggests that there may have been a personality clash between the two men, and the Acting Governor's inflated rhetoric should put one on guard. Chapman said that he had had difficulty with Meagher, and that the governor's charges were part of a scheme to bring government troops, business, and money into the area; Chapman implied that Meagher would use Chapman's alleged misconduct as an excuse to claim unrest among the Indians. As evidence of his own integrity, Chapman pointed to his return to the agency to work on the finances and help Agent Wells. Chapman was particularly incensed that without legal authority to do so, Special Agent Barrett had locked up not only all agency records, but some of Chapman's personal property as well. He requested of the Commissioner copies of the agency records for his own defense.[36]

Whatever the relationship between Meagher and Chapman, Meagher was probably acting on the strength of specific accusations emanating from agency employees. Age Luning, the blacksmith, and James Dunlevy, the doctor, both accused Chapman of profiting from the sale and mishandling of annuity goods, agency equipment, and reservation raw materials such as lumber

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Chapman to Commissioners, 5 July 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

and grain. He was also accused of holding $2,000 of government money that he claimed was owed him for travel.[37]

Special Agent Barrett's investigation added specifics to the general list of offenses, including skimming about four thousand dollars in cash from money intended for the benefit of the Indians.[38] The result of his investigation was the arrest of Chapman on 14 April 1867, one day prior to Wells' arrival. Fortunately for the agent, the counsel whom Barrett employed to examine Chapman concluded that the Superintendent had no authority to arrest an agent and could only suspend him and await further instructions from the Commissioner. Chapman was thereupon released and never tried. Debate about his guilt or innocence followed in the newspapers, but the matter remained unresolved.[39]

The tangled finances further turned territorial suppliers against the agency. There was a marked decline in its credit and credibility and a new reluctance on the part of local businessmen to deal with the agency except on a cash basis. Men to whom the agency owed money under Chapman's administration were unable to collect from Wells, who referred them to Chapman. The newly retired agent was himself trying to collect

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[37]This name is hand written and is not perfectly clear; Age Luning to Meagher, 27 January 1867, and Dunlevy to Meagher, 4 February 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[38]E. H. Barrett to Meagher, "Papers in the Investigation of Flathead Agent Chapman, by Special Agent E. H. Barrett, Private Secretary of Governor (Acting) Meagher," 3 March 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[39]Montana Post, 11 May 1867, p. 5.

what he considered to be back pay and travel expenses from the government, and records show that these efforts continued until at least 1878.[40]

John W. Wells arrived at the agency on 15 April 1867 to confront the depleted condition of an agency, which seemed to confirm what others had said about Chapman. Most of the employees had been discharged; only a doctor and one farmer were still there. There was no coffee, tea, bacon, or lard, no seed grains or farming equipment. The process of buying stock and supplies began once again, and Wells busied himself making lists of needed items to be purchased, including cattle, hogs, horses, poultry, a thresher, reaper, combine, harnesses, and plows, as well as bedding and wagons. In May alone he requested ten thousand dollars worth of supplies, including a thousand dollars worth of provisions for the Indians.[41]

The new agent, who often told how hard he worked, was particularly concerned about money and sometimes requested large sums for major projects. He worried that the money appropriated for 1867 would not be sufficient to resupply the

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[40]Chapman to Commissioner, 5 July 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488; Chapman to Commissioner, 26 May 1872, and Ino A. Chapman to Commissioner, 19 February 1876, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 504; E. B. French to Commissioner, 9 March 1877, and E. B. French to C. C. Carpenter, 13 June 1877, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 506; and Augustus Chapman to Commissioner, 6 February 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 509.

[41]John W. Wells, copy brief of letters of Wells; received at Office of Indian Affairs in May 1867, and Wells to Commissioner, 15 April 1867, 7 May 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

agency and pay Chapman's employees as well as his own. (Chapman had used available money for himself and for payment of Hutchins' employees.) Wells noted that the high cost of labor complicated the problem, as did the rising cost of supplies and transportation and the inflation of greenbacks. He was also aware of the high cost of repairing the mill, which Indian children had broken by thrusting wood into a gear.[42]

Wells did what was nominally required of him. He planted a crop and in August of 1867 remarked that it should be a "splendid one," providing seed for the coming year. His September 1867 report bears this out, although he found it necessary to counter a statement to the contrary in the Missoula newspaper.[43] He also requested $10,000 for new saw and grist mills. The existing ones were too small and of poor design, he said, adding that he had been sending his wheat to St. Ignatius, sixteen miles away, and that the location of the mill dam on the Jocko was very poor--high water usually took it out. Unfortunately, Wells never had the chance to build new mills.

Wells' administration was not particularly significant, even though it was not tarnished by proven misdeeds. There were charges against him, however. Senator C. Cole from California wrote to the Secretary of the Interior in July 1867

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[42]Wells, "Report on Flathead Indian Agency from 15 April 1867 to 8 September 1867," 31 December 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[43]Wells to Commissioner, 14 August 1867 and 9 September 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

that he knew Wells to be unfit for his job:

> I desire to call your earnest attention to the fact that J. W. Wells, Esq. lately appointed Indian Agent for the Flat Head agency situation in this country is a man totally unfit for the position, that he is almost daily in a state of intoxication unfit for business [,] that most of the employees on the Reservations have and are leaving on account of his conduct [,] that the Indians do not respect him he has no control over them and the universal expression is that the sooner Wells is relieved the better it will be for all. Let us have some man who knows something about the Indian character other than what he has learned from books or reports, some one who will not keep intoxicated, will not carry liquor on the Reservation. . . .[44]

Wells responded that he would proceed to Washington, D. C. from Virginia City to see the Commissioner and rebut the charges and enclosed affidavits from employees to prove that he was not selling whiskey to the Indians and allowing his buildings to go to ruin and his crops to fail. Evidently Wells' response was not only to Cole's charges, but also to several articles of a similar nature in local papers.[45] No further word about Wells' misconduct has been discovered.

The reservation Indians were in pitiful condition, according to the only remarks about their condition that Wells made. He said that "some are in [a] heart rending state of destitution, and suffering." They were returning from the hunt in May of 1867 at the time of his remark and had lost many horses to the Blackfeet and to famine. Wells, feeling compelled to feed them, slaughtered a bull that he

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[44]C. Cole to Secretary of the Interior, an extract from this letter, 25 July 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[45]Wells to Commissioner, 10 September 1867, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

had purchased for stud purposes.[46] The Indians, the agent reported, were also victims of whiskey smuggling, which had reached alarming proportions; he had discovered a gang of Indians working with many unidentified whites. Wells said that apparently this arrangement had been going on for years; he seemed unable--perhaps unwilling--to stop it.[47]

Although Wells did little to relieve the Indians' condition, his general ineffectiveness was not wholly his fault. He tried to call to the attention of his superiors the problems of the Indians, and he prepared an important report, "Beneficial Fund of the Confederate Flathead Nation," which would have benefited the Indians considerably if acted upon by the government. It seems to be fairly accurate and complete and illustrates the degree to which the government had failed to meet its obligations. It was precisely this default, mirrored in the condition of the agency at any given time up to 1872, and the shortcomings of dishonest agents that helped discourage the Flatheads in the Bitter Root Valley from moving to the reservation.[48]

According to the report, of more than one hundred thousand dollars due the Indians for beneficial purposes since the treaty took effect, nearly thirty-one thousand dollars was still outstanding. More telling of administrative

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[46] Ibid., 7 March 1867.

[47] Ibid., 29 August 1867.

[48] "Beneficial Fund of the Confederate Flathead Nation," November 1866, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

practices was the method of arriving at the first figure. Wells calculated that sixty-nine thousand dollars had been appropriated. About thirteen thousand dollars more should have been refunded from the accounts of John Owen, Superintendent Wallace and another man, and credited to the Indians. About twenty-three thousand dollars had been misapplied and should have been refunded to the Indians; this figure included money for annuity goods and stock sold by Agent Owen to pay for transportation of annuity goods, annuity plows sold by Agent Hutchins by order of Superintendent Edgerton, and beneficial funds spent by Owen for purposes other than those for which they were intended. Nothing came of Wells' requests for more money; and when he left, the agency was better supplied, but otherwise little better off than he had found it.

Agent M. M. McCauley, Wells' official replacement, was supposed to assume his position in July 1868, but he did not begin until sometime in the fall. Instead, Special Agent Major A. J. McCormick replaced Wells in September 1867 and remained at the agency until August 1868, at which time he was relieved of his responsibility at his own request by Acting Governor James Tufts. Tufts was then inspecting the agency and found it nearly in ruins. "Except for the farm crops for the current year," he said, "every thing belonging to or connected with it, presented a most forlorn and thriftless appearance. The buildings at the Agency, are either unfinished or out of repair." He thought that the object of

the Government in establishing agencies seemed "to have been misunderstood or perverted in the management of the Flathead Agency." Instead of being a "house of the Indian," the agency was the home of the agent and his employees; it seemed "to present no attractions for the Indian as only a few idlers or beggars stay near or about."[49] Tufts also reported that there was an almost total absence of tools, and that the Indians were very unhappy not only with McCormick, but also with their annuity goods--in 1868 they received only fifteen bales of blankets, from which 113 pairs had been stolen.

Tufts instructed farmer Blake to assume charge of the agency until McCauley arrived. Blake enjoyed a high reputation among whites and was well liked by the Indians, and he earnestly followed Tufts' orders to save the crop and then repair the mill dam. Although he was more industrious than most of the agents, Blake was still trying in 1871 to collect extra pay due him.[50]

McCauley's effect upon the agency was minimal, partly because he served for so short a time--from the fall of 1868 to the end of July 1869. He sent at least eight letters to officials during his tenure, and from them one gets some impression of the condition of the Indians, something that seemed to concern McCauley more than it had concerned earlier agents. In December 1868 he offered this description to

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[49]L. L. Blake to Commissioner, no date but 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491.

[50]M. M. McCauley to James M. Cavanaugh, 14 December 1868, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489.

James M. Cavanaugh, the territorial representative:

> /The reservation Indians are/ a lot of Miserable Beings huddled together in Lodges Composed of a few poles thatched with Straw without covering of any kind save a few filthy rags in a climate where the Thermometer stands at Zero Sometimes below and seldom over 10 above during the long Winter Season. in addition Some are disabled some cripples and many entirely Blind, there are three Families 10 in all who are entirely Blind, there are many partially so--and I trust for the sake of our Common Humanity, that there are few who could witness this.[51]

Of the Kootenais specifically, McCauley observed that they were "destitute," having received no blankets for the winter. He took the liberty of distributing 100 pairs of double blankets prior to receiving permission to do so.[52]

Except for these observations, and a few others regarding crops, the peacefulness of the Indians, and the state of the Hudson's Bay Company post, McCauley provided little information.

Despite the ineffectiveness of the agency during McCauley's official term, and the lack of any real leader, a more accurate picture of the agency and Indian conditions can be obtained for this period than for any earlier period. Officials were aware of the general disintegration of agency affairs and appointed W. J. Cullen Special United States Indian Agent. On 30 April 1868 he was charged with the task of investigating the reservation, and he persuaded James Tufts to visit the Flathead Reservation with him. Tufts' report

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[51]McCauley to Commissioner, December 1868 (no day), Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[52]*Ibid.*, 1 September 1868.

has already been cited; Cullen also submitted a report. Both reports were thorough and reasonably objective.[53]

Arriving at the agency on 10 August, Cullen was immediately impressed by the surroundings. The spot, he said, was beautiful and attractive and the ground fertile. He found the agency "in very bad condition," however:

> The agency building, now occupied by the farmer, is a small frame house with only two rooms, inconvenient in every particular, and very much dilapidated. The mess-house, or boarding-house for the men, is an old log building, which was erected several years ago by Major Owen, and was never designed for anything more than a mere temporary concern. The roof of this building has fallen into such a state of decay as to afford but little shelter from either rain or snow. The barn if the venerable pile of logs which compose it may be so termed, is without roof, save a few boards very badly warped up by the sun, laid at irregular intervals. The blacksmith and carpenter shops are pretty good buildings, but the former is entirely without iron, and the latter without nails. These indispensible articles were very scarce, there not being a pound of either to be found at the agency. The grist and saw mills are good buildings, and in very fair condition of repair, but both are lying idle on account of the mill-dam having been swept away. The dam was carried away some time last summer, and has not since been rebuilt. The farm. . .contains something over 100 acres. They are growing this year wheat, oats, and barley, besides a variety of vegetables. Everything looks very well, but how they have managed to grow such fine crops, with the stock and the farm implements at their command, is something of a mystery. Upon taking a careful inventory of farm property we found it to consist of two yokes of work-oxen, two old worn-out horses worth about $10 each, two milch cows borrowed from the mission of St. Ignatius, 45 head of hogs and pigs, three old wagons torn apart, four old broken ploughs, together with a few antiquated hoes, picks, shovels, &c.[54]

Cullen added that the agency was very much in debt and that

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[53]W. J. Cullen, "Annual Report," H.R. Executive Document No. 1, 40th Congress, 3rd Session, Vol. 2, pp. 676-681, Serial 1366; and James Tufts to Commissioner, 27 September 1868, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 488.

[54]*Ibid*., p. 677.

the employees were complaining loudly about not being paid. He was unable to find sufficient records at the agency to determine the amount of money involved, but guessed that the total indebtedness was something over thirty thousand dollars, mostly in the form of vouchers issued by past agents. (About twenty-five thousand dollars of this amount had been incurred by Agent McCormick, who claimed that it cost him that much to keep up the agency).

The Special Agent noted that there had never been a school or hospital at the agency; the nearest doctor, though paid by the agency, was twenty-five miles away at Missoula Mills. On the other hand, he said, St. Ignatius Mission, situated in the St. Ignatius Valley and founded in 1844, was very successful and ran a fine church, school, mills, and shops that were dedicated to the service of the Indians. The Pend d'Oreilles lived near the mission and numbered about nine hundred, while the Kootenais living near the mission numbered about three hundred. Although some of the Indians were destitute, most were well enough off and many farmed. Cullen said that "it would be hard to speak in terms of too high praise of the efforts for the civilization and improvement of the Indians which have been made by the devoted men having this mission in charge."[55]

Cullen recommended a solution to the problem of the Bitter Root Flatheads that reflected directly on the agency;

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[55] Ibid., p. 679.

he said that if the Stevens treaty was faithfully carried out, and the improvements that should have been made were accomplished, the Flatheads might be willing to move north. The implication was that given the present circumstances at the reservation, the Flatheads would be better off not to leave the Bitter Root Valley. Cullen concluded,

> I would also recommend that the expenditures of money appropriated under the treaty here referred to be closely examined into, to the end that if any frauds have been committed the perpetrators of them may be brought to justice. The Flatheads have always conducted themselves with the utmost good faith towards us. In all my experience with the Indians I have never seen a nation whom I thought more deserving in every respect than the Flatheads, and I may add that I have never seen a tribe whom I thought had more just grounds for complaint.[56]

Governor Tufts confirmed what Cullen had said, adding that McCormick had used agency timber, oxen, carpenters, and tools to build a house for himself. Later O. H. Browning, Secretary of the Interior, wrote to Commissioner Taylor that these two reports showed "gross and flagrant abuses by Agent McCormick, in the administration of the affairs of his agency." Browning was particularly upset because McCormick issued too many vouchers, most of which had not been paid and which may or may not have been valid.[57]

McCormick denied the charges most emphatically. He submitted an affidavit of farmer Blake which said that McCormick had fed and clothed about one hundred and fifty Kootenais for

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[56] Ibid., p. 681.

[57] Secretary of the Interior to Commissioner, 7 January 1869, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489.

nine months in the fall and winter of 1867, that Blake himself had rebuilt the mill dam in the fall of 1868, and that in Blake's ten years at the agency no one had better cared for the Indians than had McCormick. In his own letter to the Commissioner, McCormick objected to Cullen's accusations, complaining that Cullen did not examine one witness under oath. McCormick claimed that all of the agency buildings except the barn were in a "most perfect state of repair" and that the farming implements and teams were in fine shape. McCormick did not deny that the agency owed its employees money, but he claimed that the responsibility for this was with the government, which had not appropriated enough.[58]

McCormick's rebuttal is not very convincing; there is no reason to doubt the observations of Tufts and Cullen. Blake's affidavit was really a relative statement, for in a letter to the Commissioner written prior to his affadavit he said that "to say that I found the Agency in a ruinous condition, everything in disorder and confusion, would be stating but little in comparison with the state of things that existed at the Agency when I took charge of it."[59] The confused wording obscures the meaning: what Blake meant was that he had improved the agency greatly since relieving McCormick in August 1868. He had, in fact, acted more decisively and

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[58]Blake, Affidavit, sworn to 5 March 1869, and Charles McCormick to Commissioner, 20 February 1869, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489.

[59]Blake to Commissioner, 6 January 1869, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489.

effectively during the short time he acted as agent than had several agents before him.

The administration of the agencies was turned over to the army for a short time, and Bvt. Major Alvin S. Galbreath was assigned to the Flathead Agency in June 1869, to serve until July 1870. He arrived about the end of July and had been on the reservation less than one month when the destruction of mills, barn, and stables by fire brought agency functions to a virtual standstill. Galbreath could not say whether the fire was the rekindling of a prairie fire that had occurred three days earlier, or whether it was set. He thought the latter more likely, however, particularly since the barn was not near the prairie fire. He did discount the rumor that dissatisfied Indians had set it, since they especially desired that the mills be rebuilt as soon as possible. The Major recommended that this be done as soon as the Flathead-Bitter Root Valley problem was solved. He wanted to insure that the rebuilding effort and the mill locations would satisfy the needs of the Flatheads.[60]

Major General Alfred Sully, Galbreath's superintendent, was very unhappy with what he observed on the Flathead Reservation. Despite the burning of the buildings, he said, "nothing but the worst sort of management can excuse the present state of affairs." The agency raised no crop in 1869

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[60]Alvin S. Galbreath to Alfred Sully, 26 August 1869, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489.

(that is, Galbreath found none planted when he took over in June), and the working stock turned over to Galbreath was worthless. The three wagons that had been around for several administrations were as worthless now as earlier, and a complete set of smith tools and medical supplies were required. Sully proposed spending money from the unused school fund to repair the mill and buy necessary tools.[61]

By the spring of 1870 a little progress had been made. Galbreath reported that the roster of employees included a physician, farmer, blacksmith, carpenter, gunsmith, tinsmith, miller, assistant farmer, assistant miller, wagon maker, and a teacher.[62] Estimates of the necessary seeds for spring planting and for smith and carpenter tools were submitted to Sully by Galbreath, but it is difficult to tell whether anything came of these efforts, partly because Galbreath seldom wrote, and his letters said little.

Like the agents before him, Galbreath was frustrated by a lack of funds. Sully lamented the small appropriations for his agencies. He wrote that "the appropriations for. . . /illegible/ is altogether too small, as the expense in this country are very heavy, much more than in any other section of our country. With the most rigid economy on my part, I

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[61]Sully to Commissioner, 11 October 1869, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489.

[62]Galbreath, "Report of Employees in the Service of the Flathead Indian Agency, M. T., for the Second Quarter Ending 30 June 1870," Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489.

see my contingent [sic] fund rapidly melting away."[63]

The agency was dealt continuing setbacks by the frequent turnover of agents, and the army's period of supervision was no exception. Lieutenant George E. Ford succeeded Galbreath in July 1870, only to be replaced by Charles S. Jones, a civilian, in September of the same year. Bureau of Indian Affairs files contain no letters from Ford; it can only be presumed that he appeared at the agency.

Agent Jones remained at the agency for just over two years, and despite serious conflicts with his superior during the latter part of his administration, he seems to have been one of the more capable agents. The logic of his arguments, the thoroughness of his research and letters, the style of his writing, and the quality of his spelling show him to have been an intelligent, thoughtful, and educated man. He served the Indians fairly well, though the general problems of the times plagued him, too. The records suggest, however, that he took at least one leave of absence to visit his family in the East, thus leaving the agency without direction for at least a month, and probably somewhat longer.[64]

Two months after assuming his position, Jones requested the permission of the Commissioner to move the Flathead Agency

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[63]Sully to Commissioner, 1 October 1869, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489.

[64]Jones to Commissioner, 26 February 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492; and Jones to Viall, 7 August 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491.

to the St. Ignatius area, citing a number of sensible reasons. The initial location of the agency, he said, had been thought of as temporary, and many before him had remarked on the unsuitability of the spot. Sully agreed that a relocation should occur and noted that the Flatheads might have moved to the reservation long since, through the influence of the Catholic Church, had the agency been relocated earlier. Jones pointed out other reasons for moving the agency: the Indians thought that it was intentionally located as far from Indian settlement as possible; it was on the main thoroughfare from Missoula to Walla Walla, and the constant traffic and demands to house people and horses were an imposition on agents; a railroad might be built in the future, too, further disrupting agency operations. He requested that in addition to the $11,800 appropriated for the reconstruction of the mills, $13,200 should be appropriated for the complete rebuilding of the agency in the St. Ignatius Valley.[65] The move was never made, despite his strong arguments, and Jones was forced to rebuild on the original site.

The new mill construction progressed rapidly. A portable grist and saw mill was ordered for a site not far from the original mill, and by November 1872 both parts of the mill were operating. E. S. Miller, a miller and Superintendent James A. Viall's inspector of the operation, wrote that the machinery was in "splendid running order, and was doing most

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[65]Jones to Commissioner, 9 November 1870 and 9 December 1870, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 490.

excellent work. I Pronounce the Sawmill an 'A No. 1 Mill'." The grist mill also received his approval.[66] The cost was more than ten thousand dollars, although only eight thousand dollars had been placed in Viall's hands for the construction.[67]

Jones requested money for a new barn and living quarters, citing as proof of need his list of employees expected to be on the payroll during the third quarter of 1871. (The list included the full complement allowed by treaty.)[68]

Jones' preoccupation with the agency plant detracted from the attention that he might have given the Indians, and his actions on their behalf were infrequent and for the most part related to their need for food, annuity goods, and farming supplies. The huge needs of the reservation Indians were perhaps better appreciated by Jones than by most of his predecessors. He noted that Ford's order for eight hundred annuity blankets for 1869 was woefully inadequate since there were seventeen hundred Indians to supply--at least eight hundred of them fourteen or older and requiring whole blankets, and the others requiring partial ones. He feared that distribution of an inadequate supply of annuity goods

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[66]E. S. Miller to Viall, 2 November 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 493.

[67]Viall to Commissioner, 20 May 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 493.

[68]Viall to Commissioner, 6 November 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491; Jones, "Estimate of Funds," 25 April 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 493; and Jones to Commissioner, 17 January 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491.

would only render the agency obnoxious to the Indians and tend to make it impotent in the future. In November 1872 he asked for 20,000 pounds of flour at $5.50 per hundred pounds to supply the Pend d'Oreilles and Kootenais, and he requested another 10,000 pounds for the Bitter Root Flatheads. One reason for this request was that he was having difficulty getting a threshing machine to the Jocko and anticipated losing the agency's crops, which would have been distributed to the Indians.[69] Another time Jones requested thirty-six two-horse plows for the Indians; Superintendent Viall attached a note of concurrence to this request and suggested that half of the plows should be given to the Pend d'Oreilles, one-third to the Flatheads, and one-sixth to the Kootenais, who lived off the reservation and hunted.[70]

When unhindered, Jones was one of the most active and satisfactory agents to serve the Indians, but his last year on the job was largely ineffective because of a feud with his superintendent, Viall. The overtones of the feud are largely personal; in fact, nobody was ever convicted of a crime, although Viall resigned in December 1872, and Jones was replaced in the fall of the same year.

The feud began in a small way. Jones complained to the Commissioner that he could not pay agency suppliers some

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[69]Jones to Viall, 15 November 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 493.

[70]Jones to Commissioner, 25 May 71, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491.

twelve hundred dollars, since he had no funds on hand. Viall had earlier agreed to pay only for those things used for the subsistence of the Indians, thus requiring Jones to pay the rest from the funds allotted for pay of agency employees.[71] That spring, Dr. J. T. Tierman, recommended by District Judge Hiram Knowles and Father Ravalli, and appointed to his position by Jones, was removed by Viall--according to Jones and Territorial Representative Cavanaugh, who said that "with the exception of two agents in Montana the appointments are a disgrace to the supposed Christian policy of the Administration." He criticized the influence of partisanship over that of fitness and ability.[72] Possibly the doctor's Catholicism offended Viall, who replaced him with a Methodist physician.[73]

Hostile feelings escalated, and over the course of several months Jones complained bitterly to the Commissioner that Viall had tampered with the employee roster on the reservation until those who remained gave their loyalty not to Jones, but to Viall. First, said Jones, the superintendent reduced the number of employees without asking Jones, thus hampering agency operations. Later in 1871 Viall began to hire new employees for Jones, placing them under the direction

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[71]Jones to Commissioner, 31 January 1871, and Viall to Jones, 13 January 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491.

[72]Cavanaugh to Commissioner, 7 April 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491.

[73]Jones to Commissioner, 17 May 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492.

of Horace Countryman, another agency employee. Eventually Jones lost control of affairs; Viall's hirelings used the public stables for "libedinous [sic] purposes," even lighting candles in the straw at night. The agent's only recourse was to order away from the area the Indian lodge furnishing "the female part of these night entertainments." This was ineffective; the contractor for whom the agency employees were working and who had been hired by Viall told the Indians to stay, and they did.

Other accusations were also leveled at Viall. According to Jones, the Superintendent's actions violated the Flathead Treaty by eliminating treaty positions at the agency, and they violated Bureau of Indian Affairs regulations prohibiting interference in agency operations. Viall had virtually suspended operations, said Jones, who added that Viall had also urged him to evade payment of merchants' vouchers. Finally, Viall was accused of using a large portion of the money designated for the Crow and Blackfoot agency for personal things and hiding this by sending his clerk, George Seaton, to the Blackfoot agency quarterly to juggle the books.[74] This and other unfavorable testimony caused William Clagett to investigate Viall, who resigned in December 1872.

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[74] *Ibid*.

Viall counterattacked by bringing dubious charges against Jones. William Norton, an agency employee, and William Lemen, a former employee filed affidavits against Jones. Although they made a number of charges, only one had any substance: Jones had listed two ficticious employees on the agency roster and had collected money for them. Although this was not in accordance with Bureau rules, it was a common method of obtaining extra operating funds.[75] The affidavits gave Viall an excuse to launch an investigation of Jones, however, and he concluded that the agent was guilty of fraud.

More serious was a major difference between Jones' version of agency accounts and the official version--about sixteen thousand dollars according to the Treasury Department, and much more than Jones would admit. A new investigation ensued, removed from the clutches of Viall. The United States Attorney General assigned Clagett to Jones' case as the government's Special Counsel, after Jones' removal. The ex-agent predictably accused Clagett of being as unfriendly toward him as Viall had been. Ultimately Jones' worries subsided; the case was continued from one judicial term to the next and ultimately dropped.[76]

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[75]William Norton, "Charges of William Norton Against C. S. Jones," 28 December 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492.

[76]Secretary of the Interior to Commissioner, 10 December 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492; C. F. Herring to Commissioner, 14 July 1873, Jones to Commissioner, 1 March 1873, E. B. French to Commissioner, 7 April 1873, and Attorney General to Secretary

The investigation of Jones, and the charges, defenses, and countercharges provide insight into the frequently questionable practices often used by agents and show that the administration of the Flathead Reservation was crippled by personal feuding and the sapping of energy that could have been used to further agency business. The chief hindrance to operations, however, was caused by the refusal of the government to honor vouchers and to provide funds, thus ruining the agency's credibility with local merchants and laborers. As late as May 1878 Jones was still trying to straighten out unpaid vouchers with the Treasury Department--a process which had continued intermittently ever since he issued them before 1872.[77]

From its inception to 1872, the Flathead Agency was debilitated by agents who were either incompetent, or in the service for personal gain, or faced with insurmountable

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of the Interior, 5 May 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 494; Attorney General to Commissioner, 27 February 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 498; Jones to Commissioner, 21 July 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 495; and Jones to Commissioner, 24 July 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 499.

[77]Vouchers issued by Jones for summer of 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 498; Jones to Commissioner, 11 July 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 495; Jones to Commissioner, 12 May 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 502; E. B. French to Commissioner, 31 May 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 501; J. D. Terrill to Jones, 9 December 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 503; and Jones to Commissioner, 21 May 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 510.

difficulties beyond their control. Sometimes all three things pertained. Agents who might otherwise have been effective were removed before they had a chance to succeed, or were involved in quarrels with superiors. All had too little money to operate a fully-staffed agency. The money provided was too little to permit the hiring of other than second-rate personnel, and occasionally there were periods in which some employees could not be hired at all or be kept more than a few weeks. Only two agents--Jones and Hutchins--were at the agency long enough to influence the course of the reservation in a positive way--and they were unable to take advantage of the opportunity.

The thrust of what has been written, including Cullen's damaging report, is that to some degree the agency existed for its own sake, merely serving itself. The frequent requests to move the agency northward to the center of Indian activity, the difficulty with which agency employees fed themselves and their stock from supplies grown at the agency, the distance of the Indians from the agency doctors--particularly the one located in Missoula--all attest to the ineffective administrations prior to 1872. Indeed, it is the thesis of this chapter that the agency was woefully and almost uniformly derelict in its duties. This is not to suggest, however, that such was the choice of agents. It has been pointed out that an agent was often hampered by matters beyond his control, and most agents made some attempt to fulfill their

duties. For example, eighteen miles (the distance from the agency to St. Ignatius and the center of Indian activities) was not a prohibitively great distance for a man with a buggy to travel, and most agents found their way northward and around the reservation frequently. Likewise, many Indians--presumably those most in need of agency help--found their way down to the agency for whatever services were offered. Annuity goods were distributed on a more or less regular basis, as were rations. And one can be fairly sure that although the agents were unable to alleviate the condition of the Indians, they were nonetheless generally aware of Indian problems.

In any event, the Indians on the reservation were often left either to shift for themselves or to rely on the efforts of the St. Ignatius Mission, giving the Flatheads little reason to leave the Bitter Root Valley. Virtually no Indian housing was constructed, particularly for the Flatheads who might move to the Jocko; almost no farming tools were distributed to the reservation Indians, and almost no livestock was provided for farming; often the agency was without saw and grist mills, and even more often it failed to provide seed grains to the Indians. The agency services promised in the 1855 treaty were sporadic at best. There was, generally, a modicum of concern for the Indians on the reservation by the agents. Their attention to Indian problems usually extended only to the issuing of annuity goods--usually blankets, and always too few--and some food during

starving times. Chiefs received no pay. In other words, the agency miserably failed to carry out the provisions of the treaty, and the Flatheads had every reason not to move north.

CHAPTER VII

THE GARFIELD AGREEMENT

Indian-white conflict over Bitter Root land rights and the pressure of whites on the federal government for Indian removal, matters considered in Chapter Five, reached a head in 1872 and finally prompted action from the President. Despite the illegal aspect of their settlement, the settlers had established a local government and petitioned the Secretary of the Interior and the President. Pressure was also applied by William H. Clagett, territorial delegate to Congress from 1871 to 1873, until efforts were rewarded. President Grant succumbed to the squatters' influence and on 14 November 1871 issued an executive order of removal. Declaring the Bitter Root Valley to have been "surveyed and examined" in accordance with the treaty of 16 July 1855, he said he did not find the valley better suited to the Flatheads' needs and therefore ordered them to remove to the Flathead Reservation. The order of removal allowed Indians wishing to take up land in the valley under the homestead and pre-emption acts to do so, providing they became citizens (i. e. gave up tribal relations) and notified the Superintendent of Indian Affairs of Montana

Territory of their intent prior to 1 January 1873.[1] On 29 May 1872 Congress appropriated $6,000 for the accomplishment of this removal.[2]

The executive order took the Flatheads by surprise, and they quickly announced that they would not move. This open flouting of the President's express order spurred the indignant settlers of the valley to further agitation: they met to form a home guard to forestall anticipated "Indian trouble" and to organize petitions to the federal and state authorities. The petitions carried the righteous statement that the squatters' life and property were in "imminent danger," and they requested that one or two companies of United States cavalry be stationed in or very near the valley. Nearly four hundred persons signed these petitions.[3]

The petitions, combined with Indian recalcitrance, had an effect, for on 5 June 1872 Congress passed an act of removal that placed the government's policy on a firmer footing.[4] The first section of the act made it the duty of the President to remove the Flatheads from the Bitter Root Valley as soon as practicable. The second section required the

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[1]Executive Order of 14 November 1871, in James A. Garfield Papers, Library of Congress (Microfilm).

[2]U. S., Statutes at Large, XVII, p. 188.

[3]Petitions of Settlers, in James A. Garfield Papers.

[4]U. S., Department of the Interior, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872, H.R. Executive Document 1, part 5, 42nd Congress, 3rd Session, Vol. 3, part 1, p. 473, Serial 1560. In the future annual report will be referred to as Annual Report, Commissioner, 18--.

surveyor-general of Montana Territory to have the valley surveyed as public land in order that it be opened to sale and settlement in legal subdivisions of 160 acres, at one dollar and a quarter per acre, payable by the buyer within twenty-one months of settlement. Fifty thousand dollars of the proceeds of the land sales was to be expended in $5,000 annual installments at the discretion of the President for the benefit of removed Indians. Section three provided that any Indian twenty-one years of age or older, or the head of a family might take up land under the pre-emption laws if he abandoned tribal relations before 1 August 1872. (The land so taken was to be inalienable.) The fourth section contained provisions enabling John Owen to keep his old, free title should the act interfere with it.

The act received the strong support of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the Secretary of the Interior, and Superintendent Jasper Viall, but the input of William Clagett was especially important. A draft of a bill introduced in Congress by Clagett early in 1872 was for the most part the substance of the final act.[5] It differed from the act in only a few respects: there was no provision for John Owen's property, but there was a section that reserved land for St. Mary's Mission; $10,000 was to be used to survey the valley in preparation for land sales; $5,000 was to be used for the

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[5]Helena Daily Herald, 26 January 1872, clipping.

accomplishment of removal; and the Indians were to receive as benefits the interest from land sale money which would be invested for them.

Faced with the certain reluctance of the Flatheads to obey the act, the Secretary of the Interior appointed James A. Garfield special commissioner to carry out its terms. The Secretary's instructions to Garfield left little leeway; although the general was free to negotiate the terms and benefits of removal and was instructed to cause as little dissatisfaction as possible, removal was to be accomplished.[6] A month after Garfield's appointment, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs informed him that although the Indians previously opposed removal, the growing number of settlers in the valley caused them to change their minds and view removal favorably.

Garfield left Ohio on 31 July and arrived at Fort Leavenworth to learn that Henry L. Dawes, appointed to accompany him west, was unable to go. Thus Major David G. Swaim, Judge Advocate of the Department of the Missouri, and an intimate friend of Garfield, was assigned to go in place of Dawes.[7] The two men left Leavenworth on 8 August and arrived in Montana four days later. Upon reaching Gaffney's

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[6]Secretary of the Interior to Garfield, instructions, 15 June 1872, in James A. Garfield Papers.

[7]Garfield to Commissioner, 14 September 1872, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492 (1959)--hereafter this will be referred to as Letters Received, Montana Superintendency.

Junction they were met by Governor Benjamin F. Potts, who accompanied them to Virginia City where he briefed them on Indian affairs of the area.

Potts was particularly concerned that Garfield receive a full briefing, because citizens in and near the Bitter Root Valley were highly exercised over the "Indian threat" which they claimed was so imminent. Garfield learned that since the order to remove, the Flatheads had become vociferous and almost unanimously opposed to removal. He also learned that about sixty lodges of Nez Perce and Spokane Indians, who annually moved through the valley en route to their hunting grounds on the Missouri River, had threatened to remain in the valley and aid the Flatheads in their resistance.[8]

To combat these threats, Garfield was told, citizens of Corvallis, Missoula, and Aetne had formed militia companies of about one hundred men at each place. They had requested arms and ammunition of Governor Potts, who ordered 300 muskets and 30,000 rounds of ammunition sent to Missoula. An editorial in a Virginia City newspaper indicated that white men were calling upon other settlers and the governor to drive the Flatheads and their supposed allies out of the valley. Tempers were short and hostility rapidly mounting.[9]

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[8]Ibid., 15 November 1872.

[9]Garfield to Secretary of the Interior, 7 September 1872, in James A. Garfield Papers; and Garfield to Commissioner, 15 November 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492.

Investigating further while in Virginia City, Garfield formed a more accurate picture of events. From conversations with various citizens of the capitol and Missoula, he ascertained that most of the whites' fears were real but groundless, and that in all probability the reports of a potential Flathead uprising had originated among settlers in the Bitter Root Valley who hoped to find in the requested military post a market for their produce. As he succinctly stated, "There was iminent danger of trouble in the Bitter Root Valley, from the conduct of mercenary whites, who want a military post."[10]

There was one sound request for troops that was exceptional in that it expressed sentiments diametrically opposed to those of the formal settlers' petitions. In 1868 Agent McCormick recommended a military post at Hell Gate, as it was on the Mullan Road mail route. In addition, said McCormick, citizens of the Bitter Root Valley demanded it "and are justly entitled to protection against marauding parties of Snake, Bannock, and Blackfeet Indians, and above all to aid the civil authorities in the enforcement of the laws regulating intercourse between whites and Indians. . . ."[11] This request, so different from other 1872 requests for military assistance, was for protection for the Flatheads,

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[10]Garfield to Secretary of the Interior, 7 September 1872, in James A. Garfield Papers.

[11]Annual Report, Commissioner, 1868, p. 674.

not from them; and it confirmed Garfield's impressions as well as suggested the evil influence of some whites upon the Indians.

In a meeting with the Nez Perce and Spokanes on 23 August, Garfield found no evidence of hostilities. He concluded that the hundred or so lodges of Indians were only passing through to their annual hunt. But their presence served well the purpose of those whites who sought to create the impression of Indian threats. Garfield's only fear was that these men would make his task of removal exceedingly difficult.[12]

The men whom Garfield called troublemakers included those who had been selling whiskey to the Flatheads for some time. This, he thought, had "much to do with the state of feeling among them." At the same meeting at which they requested arms, the general noted, the citizens also asked for deputy marshals to help enforce the laws against trafficking in liquor with the Indians. Other potential troublemakers included the missionaries at St. Mary's. It was rumored that they had urged the Indians to remain in the valley and stand on their right to do so.[13]

Garfield admitted that he had culled much of his information from rumors circulating through the capitol and that

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[12]James A. Garfield, The Diary of James A. Garfield, eds. Harry James Brown and Frederick D. Williams, 3 vols. (E. Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1967-69), 2:66-67, 74-84; and Annual Report, Commissioner, 1872, pp. 494-495.

[13]Garfield to Secretary of the Interior, 17 August 1872, Letters Received, M-234, Roll 492.

his opinion about the mercenary nature of white requests was based more on intuition than hard facts. But, he said, "it would be inconsistent with the whole history and character of the Flatheads if they should resort to violence in a case like this."[14]

Garfield and Governor Potts proceeded to the Bitter Root Valley, which they reached on 21 August in the company of Major Swaim, Superintendent Viall, and Clagett. Conversations with citizens in Missoula while en route to the valley convinced Garfield that his earlier perception of the situation was accurate: ". . . the chief anxiety of the settlers of the Valley was to secure the establishment of a Military Post, and that the market would thus be afforded for their home products, was really a matter of greater consideration, than protection against hostile Indians."[15]

On the morning of the twenty-first, Garfield and his companions met with Flathead Chiefs Charlot, Arlee, and Adolf, together with a number of tribal head-men, near Fort Owen. Viall had wired the Commissioner on 19 August that "there is some little feeling of hostility among the Flat Head Indians proper to moving from the Bitter Root Valley to the Jocko reservation."[16] After explaining to the Indians the nature of the 1855 treaty, the presidential order of

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[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid., 15 November 1872.

[16]Jasper A. Viall to Commissioner, telegram, 19 August 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 493.

removal, and the 5 June 1872 act, Garfield quickly learned that Viall was correct. The Indians said that they thought they had never given up the Bitter Root Valley, and they were opposed to leaving it:

> They insisted--and in this I believe they are partly borne out by the facts--that when the Treaty of 1855 was nearly completed, Victor, the Flathead Chief, refused to sign it, unless he and his people could be permitted to remain in the Bitter Root Valley.[17]

Garfield was aware of Article Eleven of the 1855 treaty when he made this statement. He meant that the facts were much as the Indians said--they too were aware of the article, which required that the President survey the two proposed reservation areas, but they knew that for seventeen years no survey had been made and no measures to address the matter had been taken. They considered the government's silence tacit approval of a Bitter Root reservation, and Garfield saw the justice of such a view.[18]

The Flatheads pointed out other reasons why they should be allowed to remain in their homeland. They had learned farming, and their improvements in the valley were appreciable. The other provisions of the treaty had not been carried out: no smiths, schools, carpenters, or farmers had been furnished. And they had been completely friendly toward the whites. As they spoke with Garfield they insisted

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[17]Garfield to Commissioner, 15 November 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492.

[18]*Ibid*.

that they had no hostile intentions and that they would continue their tradition of not shedding white blood. They also insisted, however, that they would not move to the Jocko Reservation.

Garfield faced a dilemma. He sympathized with the Flatheads, who had suffered because of the government's long delay. He knew that although some of the settlement in their valley had occurred because of Victor's invitations, settlement in the last few years increased without the consent of the tribe. In view of these things, and because of the government's belief that the Indians would remove without opposition (obviously not true), Garfield--according to his report--did not feel justified in insisting that the government would force the Indians out of their valley, any more than he felt able to say that force would not be used. He ended the conference by requesting an answer to the direct question of whether the Flatheads "had decided to disobey the order of the President, and the Act of Congress. . . ."[19]

The Flatheads' response to the question came the following morning, after consultation with the priest at St. Mary's. They assured Garfield that they bore him nothing but good will and indicated that they were ready to go to the reservation to examine possible sites, as he had proposed. They insisted, however, that this action should not be construed as a commitment to leave the Bitter Root; the

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[19] *Ibid.*

special commissioner reminded the Indians that when the 5 June act was made known to them, many of the tribe indicated that they would be willing to take up 160 acres of land. (Garfield admitted, though, that they did so in the hope of keeping the tribe together in the valley, and that many so signifying did not even come under the provisions of the law.)

The negotiators proceeded to the Jocko Reservation, where Arlee and Adolph spent two days picking out farm sites and the general area of resettlement. Charlot refused to participate in the selections.[20] The area that they chose was near the agency rather than near the rest of the reservation Indians around St. Ignatius Mission. Garfield also preferred this location and suggested that "it will help emancipate them from the undue influence of the Jesuits."[21] Father Lawrence Palladino, of the mission, took exception to the new site and wrote to Garfield that the place was a poor location for a reservation settlement. The farmland was deficient, "gravelous," and "altogether unfit for any agricultural purposes," he said, adding that the first comment he heard from the reservation Indians was, "The Great Chief has no heart for the Indians, since he intends to make them settle down on rocks." Moreover, said the priest, the projected Northern Pacific Railroad would sever the area more

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[20]Viall to Commissioner, 7 September 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 493.

[21]Garfield to Secretary of the Interior, 17 August 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492.

than other locations. The truth, however, was chiefly that the priest believed that the Flatheads would not be close enough to the mission; he suggested that if the Flatheads knew how far they would be from the mission, they would select a site much closer to it.[22] The Flatheads, however, were quite aware of the distances involved.

Garfield responded to Palladino, saying that although some land was poor, the land near the mill and along the Jocko was good or easily irrigated. The choice, he said, had been left to the Flatheads, who especially wanted to be near the mill. Garfield did consider the possibility of a railroad running through the reservation, but he did not think that it would pass through the area the Flatheads selected. He said that it was the government's obligation to protect the interests of the Indians even if tracks did go through the area. Last, said Garfield, the Flatheads would be best cared for separately from the other tribes; and in any event, the chiefs refused to settle in close proximity to the other Indians, even though the choice was clearly put to them.[23]

Following the selection of a site by Arlee and Adolph, the Indians met again with Garfield and raised further

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[22]L. B. Palladino to Garfield, 3 September 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492.

[23]Garfield to Palladino, 2 November 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492.

objections to removal. They said that if the tribe were to remain undivided and move to the reservation together, the $50,000 provided by the act of removal would be insufficient. The Flatheads were, said Garfield, afraid that they would lose their Bitter Root lands and would not receive compensation or equivalent land on the reservation, such was their distrust of the government. Garfield agreed to recommend that the amount provided for annuities should be increased. Charlot said little during the meetings, and Arlee proved to be the most articulate spokesman.[24]

It began to look as if Charlot could never be persuaded to move to the reservation. He refused the mild bribe of being made head-chief of the entire Salish Nation, and he spurned Garfield's generous offers of compensation: if the Indians removed they would receive sixty well-built houses (the chiefs' to be double the others in size), food for the first year following removal, agricultural implements and aid in farming, $50,000 to be paid in ten annual installments, and $5,000 to be spent as the chiefs designated. Charlot stood firm; it was apparent that the chiefs were divided. The second and third chiefs of the Flatheads, Arlee and Adolph respectively, finally decided to sign the agreement and receive their share of the benefits listed above, with

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[24]Garfield to Palladino, 2 November 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492; The Pioneer (Missoula), 24 August 1880, account of the "Garfield Council," found in James A. Garfield Papers.

the promise that the government would act immediately.[25]

Before leaving for home, Garfield wrote to Viall giving him special instructions; the letter was mailed from Washington, D. C., however, after the Commissioner approved it, and Garfield probably outlined his plans to Viall orally before he left Montana. According to the letter, he wanted the superintendent to proceed with the work stipulated in the agreement ". . .in the same manner as though Charlot the first Chief had signed the contract." "I do this," he wrote, "in the belief that when he sees the work going forward he will conclude to come here with the other Chiefs and thus keep the tribe unbroken."[26] Charlot did not sign the agreement, but this gesture seemed to be the only hope of re-establishing any good will and confidence between the Indians and the government. In this respect, it was good that Garfield so instructed Viall; yet it was also unfortunate, because it helped create the impression--particularly around the Bitter Root and Jocko areas--that all problems had been solved, that Charlot did sign, and that it was therefore he who was delinquent in not moving.

The problem was compounded by an unfortunate incident that permanently placed Charlot at sharp odds with the government and lead directly to his complete distrust of federal

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[25]Garfield to Commissioner, 15 November 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492; and "Report of the Conference," in James A. Garfield Papers.

[26]Garfield to Viall, 27 August 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492; and Annual Report, Commissioner, 1872, p. 500.

officials and to the final impoverishment of his followers. A manuscript copy of the Garfield agreement clearly shows that Charlot did not place his mark upon the document, and the original in the National Archives also shows this. However, when the agreement was printed in Washington, the X of Charlot mistakenly appeared with those of Arlee and Adolph, creating the impression that the problem was settled and the mission of Garfield was a total success. Years later, Agent Peter Ronan wrote that Charlot was deeply embittered by the addition of his signature on the treaty, as well as by "other misunderstandings with General Garfield" that were not specified by Ronan but which probably included Charlot's ideas regarding the size of houses, location of Indian farms, and so on.[27] The entrance of his mark upon the printed document may have been a printer's mistake or it may have been ordered by someone unknown, in the mistaken assumption that Charlot had signed. This question will probably remain unresolved, except that it is clear, despite Father Palladino's suggestion to the contrary, that Garfield did not forge Charlot's mark.[28] It was not until 1883 that the government admitted the error to Charlot.

The second and third chiefs persuaded Garfield, Viall, Clagett, Swaim, and Potts that Charlot would reverse his

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[27]Peter Ronan to George G. Vest, 25 March 1886, Letters Received by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group Number 75, U.S., National Archives and Records Service.

[28]L. B. Palladino, Indian and White in the Northwest (Lancaster, Pa.: Wickersham Publishing Company, 1922), pp. 87-88.

decision once the government's good faith was demonstrated, but this proved to be more difficult than the general anticipated. First, there was the matter of allotting land in the Bitter Root Valley. Prior to Garfield's mission, Superintendent Viall visited the Flatheads at St. Mary's on 26 June 1872 and notified them of the provisions of the 5 June act. He appointed J. W. Winslett, "an old resident of the said Valley, and a friend of these Indians," to determine the names of the Indians who were entitled by law to remain in the valley by taking up 160 acres of land. Winslett took the names of sixty-four people who claimed this right, although further examination revealed that twelve of them were not eligible. The initial list included the three principal chiefs, as well as five people who were not farmers but said they would not leave, and the names of eight women who claimed that they too were farming.[29]

About nine months after the Garfield agreement was made, Superintendent James Wright (successor to Viall) instructed Mr. W. Hall of Stevensville, the Missoula County Surveyor, to secure a list of all Flatheads entitled to remain in the valley under the law of 1872, to prepare a description of the land claimed by them, and to mark such places on plats. Wright directed Flathead Agent Daniel

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[29]James Wright to Commissioner, 11 March 1873 and 15 March 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

Shanahan, who replaced Charles Jones on 15 November 1872, to cooperate with Hall.[30]

Hall tackled his job with enthusiasm and early in 1874 reported his task finished.[31] He submitted an 1873 survey that listed fifty-four Flathead farms; and Flathead Agent Peter Whaley, who served from April 1874 to April 1875 as Shanahan's successor, certified that it was accurate. Evidently Hall envisioned the possibilities of more work--and more money; and later in 1874, after his first survey had been submitted, he made an additional one of sixty-six farms with the help of Eneas Francois, a Flathead. Francois told Whaley that Hall was surveying farms for all of the Flathead Indians. Of the additional sixty-six claims, forty-four were for women, and--according to Whaley--"Hall came near exhausting the tribe in order to find persons for whom to locate farms." Some of the women had husbands who had located their claims under Hall's first survey, and some had husbands who were filing for land as whites. Hall was paid $1,000 for his first survey, but he was unable to collect for the second.[32]

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[30]Wright to W. Hall, 2 June 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 500.

[31]Hall to Commissioner, no date but marked "received, 2 April 1874," Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 498.

[32]Peter Whaley to Commissioner, 5 December 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 500; Hall to Commissioner, 15 February 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 502; and Secretary of the Interior to Commissioner, 12 January 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492 (misfiled).

The work of the first survey was delayed by Agent Shanahan's uncooperative attitude. Shanahan was not available to furnish names of tribal members farming in the valley when Hall began his work. According to the agent, Wright's orders for Hall to proceed "tended more to retard than promote the settlement of this Flathead Question." Shanahan indicated that he would wait for specific instructions from the Commissioner before helping Hall, whom he charged with making indiscriminate surveys of the land. "Trouble is apprehended from his actions in connection therewith," he said. Shanahan suspected the integrity of Hall's work, and Superintendent Wright did not remain in his position long enough to see the surveyor's work through to the end. The agent finally approved Hall's work in a qualified way, saying that

> not having been furnished with a list of the Indians entitled to lands, nor a list of those for whom lands were surveyed, I am therefore only able to state that the lands for Arlee, the Head-Chief, and all the Indians who removed with him from the Bitter Root Valley to the Jocko Reservation, have been included. . . .

Shanahan was sure that the fifty-four ranches platted by Hall would be more than sufficient for the Indians yet remaining in the valley after Arlee and his followers moved to the reservation.[33]

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[33]Daniel Shanahan to Commissioner, 29 March 1874 and 26 May 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 500; Shanahan to Commissioner, 12 July 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 495; and Shanahan to Commissioner, 4 August 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

Meanwhile, with Hall's first survey available, Montana officials complied with an order from Washington to open the Bitter Root Valley lands for sale and homesteading. The long-range effect of this action will be discussed at length in an ensuing chapter, but it should be noted here briefly. Whites holding land would receive title to it, and settlers would flock to the rich valley seeking the best available land; the Flatheads who remained there would be forced to compete with growing numbers of whites, on white terms, while denied access to much of the valley. They would be quickly surrounded by white homesteads, and any freedom they possessed in the past would be increasingly restricted.

Under the terms of the 5 June act, the Indians could have obtained title to fifty-four inalienable tracts of 160 acres each. Since three of these interfered with John Owen's claim, the number had been reduced to fifty-one. But by now Charlot was so determined in his resistance that titles to all fifty-one patents were refused; the Indians chose to remain a tribe, but landless. It is true that some of the Flatheads did live on parts of the patent lands, but they almost never demanded their rights when whites encroached upon the soil. This resulted in continued encirclement of the natives, and some whites even fenced off forty or more acres of the patents.[34]

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[34]U. S., Congress, Senate, Report of General Henry B. Carrington, Special Disbursing Officer in the Field, Senate Document 221, 51st Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 12, pp. 10-12, Serial 2689.

On the reservation, efforts were being made to comply with the terms of Garfield's agreement as rapidly as possible, in order to speed the removal of Arlee, Adolph, and their followers. Agent Jones, the agent until 15 November 1872, was so much in conflict with Viall that he hindered the rapid construction of houses. Viall wrote to the Commissioner complaining that the agent was opposed to building houses for the Indians until they actually came to the reservation. According to the Superintendent, Jones was doing all he could "to prevent the enterprise from being carried out as agreed upon with the Flathead Chiefs." Viall thought that Jones would do all in his power to prevent Charlot from moving to the Jocko.[35] Jones' lack of cooperation was probably not as great as Viall suggested, but Charlot's reluctance may have been encouraged. Viall, however, did go over Jones' head and install new agency employees under the supervision of Horace Countryman to work on the new cabins for the Flatheads.

Viall's efforts were effective, if one accepts his word, for on 27 November 1872 he reported to the Commissioner that of the twenty houses promised, eleven were nearly completed, including three houses for the chiefs (it was hoped that Charlot would move). Viall also said that there was enough lumber sawed to complete the remainder.[36]

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[35]Viall to Garfield, 30 September 1872, in James A. Garfield Papers.

[36]Viall to Commissioner, 27 November 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 493.

Unfortunately, Viall's observations were inaccurate, possibly being based on faulty information sent to him while he was in Washington, D. C. His successor, Wright, reported in late March 1873 that two double houses (chiefs') and two single houses had been raised and nearly enclosed, and that framing for one or two more had been completed. Further, he said, six or seven locations for other houses had been chosen by Indians. Shanahan was "earnestly engaged" in the work, but spring planting took precedence for the time being. Wright estimated that ten more houses would be finished in a month. Arlee and Adolph, he said, were ready to move.[37]

Shanahan pushed work on the houses. They were small buildings, measuring twelve feet by sixteen feet, and although the specifications called for sawed lumber, log houses were built because the Indians preferred them and they were easier to build. Wright received a telegram from the Commissioner ordering him to effect removal without delay; he directed Shanahan to proceed forthwith. Shanahan was authorized to buy three more yoke of oxen and to hire an extra man for chimney work on the new cabins.[38] One carpenter and six laborers were engaged full-time on the houses, and the fact that the houses were contracted rather than built with extra hired help speeded the work. The total cost for each house

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[37]Wright to Commissioner, 28 March 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

[38]Commissioner to Wright, telegram, 9 April 1873, and Wright to Commissioner, 10 April 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

under the contract was sixty-one dollars, excluding the chimneys and government-furnished material.[39] Work stopped on the houses at the end of June; twenty had been built, and all were unoccupied pending removal in the fall of 1873.[40]

Compliance with the Garfield agreement also implied compliance with the 1855 Stevens Treaty, but the government had not lived up to the treaty. Wright wondered why planting was on such a small scale, why the smiths' shops, the miller's and the physician's houses were not completed. Garfield noted that for the large sums of money annually appropriated, there was "but little to show." He found only three-fourths of an acre planted to garden in 1872, one acre of potatoes, less than five acres planted to oats, and about eighteen acres in wheat. The saw and grist mills, burned in 1869, were just being completed--the grist mill was not quite ready to operate when he was there. Smith shops lacked complete tools, and some of the employees were only boys whose chief function was to draw pay.[41] Perhaps this situation helps to explain Charlot's reluctance to move.

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[39]Shanahan to Commissioner, monthly report of May 1873, 2 June 1873, and Shanahan to Commissioner, 7 June 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 497.

[40]Shanahan to Commissioner, 18 June 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 497.

[41]Wright to Commissioner, 28 March 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496; and Garfield to Commissioner, 15 November 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492.

There was some hope for awhile, however, that the chief would change his mind. When Charlot visited with Wright at St. Mary's in March 1873, he claimed that he had been promised agency buildings if he removed. This is evidently untrue, but nonetheless Wright--hopeful of success--recommended to the Commissioner that construction begin on a new set of agency buildings so that Charlot might be accommodated.[42] This was never done. Wright was also buoyed by the fact that although Charlot did not consent to remove, this time he did not explicitly say he would not. Shanahan also thought that Charlot might reverse himself. "I am of [the] opinion," he said, "that those Indians can be removed without anymore trouble than compliance by the Government of its part of the contract made August 27, 1872."[43] Prior to this time, Charlot had said that he would move to the plains if compelled to leave the Bitter Root Valley; but now he said that he "would consider this matter." "Those who have heard him then and heard him previously," wrote the agent, [said] "that his answer to me was equivalent to a promise to come and if he comes the whole tribe will come."[44] Wright

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[42]Wright to Commissioner, 28 March 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

[43]Shanahan to Commissioner, monthly report of March 1873, 1 April 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

[44]*Ibid*.

felt sanguine of success, but to make sure, he wondered to the Commissioner whether he should offer Charlot more inducements. (The answer was no.)[45]

Another account of the April meeting between Shanahan and Wright and the Indians does not suggest that Charlot was beginning to soften. The Helena Daily Herald reported that Charlot spoke thus:

> Your promises of property and money make no impression on me. I once said No, and will not break my word now. I will obey force only; but (giving his hand to the Major) never will I raise my hands against the white man.[46]

The paper was to prove more correct than Wright and Shanahan.

Still, Arlee was about to move, and the conditions that the government was obliged to meet had nearly been fulfilled. A year after Garfield made the agreement with Arlee and Adolph, the Bitter Root lands were still being surveyed, and a few houses were still under construction in the Jocko area. At Arlee's insistence two provisions had been added to Garfield's agreement: the chief would never have to move again, and no whites could trespass on his land. Good homes had been finished for the Indians, and the promised cash was in his hands.[47]

Shanahan's efforts were about to bear fruit. By the fall of 1873 the last houses having been finished, and the

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[45]Wright to Commissioner, 19 April 1873 and 21 April 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

[46]Helena Daily Herald, 1 May 1873, p. 3.

[47]Arlee to Commissioner, 10 October 1872, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 492.

Bitter Root crops that had held the Indians in the valley having been harvested, Agent Shanahan sent a wagon from the agency to aid Chief Arlee and his followers in their move, which was accomplished despite the chief's letter of a year before imposing the additional demands mentioned above. As a final concession to Arlee, Shanahan committed personal funds for the purchase of a cooking stove which the chief claimed that General Garfield had promised him. (Little did Shanahan know how much trouble he would have collecting for the stove, which with stove pipe cost seventy-five dollars.) By 11 October 1873 Shanahan could report that "Notwithstanding the determined efforts of some white settlers in the Bitter Root Valley to retard the removal of the Flathead Indians to this Reservation and provoke a war between them and the Government. . .," Arlee and ten other families had joined five who had moved earlier, "thus practically settling the Flathead Question."[48] The total number of Indians removing in 1873 was fifty-four, hardly the major portion of the tribe; twenty-seven more moved from the Bitter Root to the Jocko in 1874 and 1875.

Only a few Indians remained in the Bitter Root Valley, said the Agent. They claimed that the land was theirs by natural right, and they stayed there as Indians, not citizens. Shanahan reported the valley Indians as saying that the whites

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[48]Shanahan to Commissioner, 11 October 1873 and 6 September 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496; and Shanahan to Commissioner, 14 May 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 503.

could survey the land as much as they pleased, but that the Indians would refuse to recognize boundaries or pay taxes.[49] These "few Indians" included not only Charlot and his followers, but Adolph and his followers also, for the "third chief," who had signed the Garfield agreement, refused to honor his contract and remained behind with Charlot and the others. Hall, the surveyor, testified to the good behavior of the Bitter Root Flatheads who did not leave, mistakenly assuming that they would accept their allotments. He called them "an honest and industrious and peaceable tribe of Indians many of them being quite large farmers and disposed to work and make a living for themselves. . . ." He hoped that allotment for these Indians would "forever close the doors against designing politicians dishonest Agents and religious fanatics [Catholics] who have been using this tribe of Indians as a hobby horse for the last twenty years and would use it much longer only for the present policy of forwarding their own ends."[50]

If there had been even the slightest chance of Charlot's moving to the reservation to join Arlee sometime in the future, it was squashed by a fateful move of Shanahan. In a letter to the Commissioner dated 12 December 1873, he recommended that

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[49]Shanahan to Commissioner, 28 November 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

[50]Hall to J. V. Bevier, 17 July 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 500.

> in order to secure the active cooperation of "Arlee" 2nd chief of the Flathead Indians in securing the removal of that tribe from the Bitter Root Valley. . .I have promised to recommend him as Head Chief in place of Charlo who forfited [sic] his right by refusing to remove to the reservation. . . .[51]

Shanahan also recommended that the promotion be made retroactive to 1 October. The request was approved, and Charlot, hereditary Head-chief, became the object of the most direct and massive insult that could have been leveled at him. In 1876 the Flathead agent noted that Arlee's position is the "greatest drawback now to removal." Not until Arlee died would Charlot again listen to any pleas to move from his homeland.[52]

For his part, Arlee did not wait long to make his presence felt--as he would do repeatedly until he died in 1889. An unknown writer, "K," from the Flathead Agency or Reservation, wrote to the New North-west on behalf of the Indians in October 1873 mentioning a speech made to Agent Shanahan by Arlee on 18 October of the same year. "K" said that although Garfield had firmly promised that the annual annuity of $5,000 would be paid for ten years [as the law of 5 June provided], he had suggested that the payments might be extended for an additional ten years pending a discussion with the President. In fact, said "K," Arlee was disappointed that he had not heard again from Garfield and

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[51]Shanahan to Commissioner, 12 December 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

[52]Charles S. Medary to Commissioner, 28 January 1876, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 505.

now wanted the extension lengthened to fifteen years.[53] This appears to have been a ploy by Arlee to gain additional money from the government, and he backed it with a threat. He said, in effect, that the government should act quickly to keep the good faith of the Indians, since "many white men are in the Bitter Root Valley who told my people not to go to the Reservation, that we would be poor there and starve." According to Arlee, that was exactly the condition of his people at the time of his speech--28 October 1873. A month later Arlee threatened to move back to the Bitter Root Valley if he was not given the first $5,000 payment after removal, and Shanahan desperately reiterated his own need for money in several letters.[54] (Matters were complicated by Shanahan's taking a leave of approximately two months--November and December 1873--at a critical time for the agency.) In 1874 Arlee refused to cut his hay and grain and demanded that Agent Whaley cut it for him. Whaley's mowing machine, team, and two employees could not manage the additional work, and the agent requested instructions from the Commissioner. At the same time, Whaley reported that "The chief Arlee is in easy circumstances having farmed for a number of years in the Bitter Root valley," and owning

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[53]New Northwest, 28 October 1873, Letter to the editor from "K," Flathead Agency.

[54]Shanahan to Commissioner, 28 November 1873 and 9 December 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

many stock animals. It was Whaley's opinion that given the chief's salary, he could hire the mowing done without hardship.[55]

The Pend d'Oreilles and the few Kootenais living near St. Ignatius seldom made demands of the agents, but Arlee's Flatheads initiated a new period of agency affairs that was marked by frequent crises and many demands. It eased the life of the Flathead agents in busy times so that they could now officially ignore the Flatheads remaining in the Bitter Root Valley. But there would be long and trying times ahead for them on the Jocko.

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[55]Whaley to Commissioner, 14 August 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 500.

CHAPTER VIII

FLATHEAD RESERVATION, 1872 TO 1891

The matter of Flathead removal to the reservation has been discussed. Germane at this point is the nature of reservation life following Arlee's relocation. The attention Daniel Shanahan and his successors gave to the Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles, and Kootenais; the living conditions of the Indians; the degree to which the agency complied with the conditions of the 1855 treaty; the successes and failures of the attempts to civilize the Indians; and interaction between reservation Indians and whites bordering the reserve are all problems which will be considered in this chapter. These things have a bearing on how well Arlee and his followers adapted to reservation life; and to a lesser extent they also had an effect upon what Chief Charlot and his band of Indians in the Bitter Root Valley did in this nineteen year period.

In addition to preparation for the removal of the Flatheads, Agent Shanahan was responsible for maintaining the usual agency services for those Indians already on the reservation. He failed to do a satisfactory job. In the year and a half during which he served he faced multiple problems

relating to employees, money, and the Catholic priests at St. Ignatius. Ultimately he was dismissed from the service.[1]

The general affairs of the agency were poorly controlled. Superintendent Wright visited the reservation in March, 1873 and noted that farming on agency land was wholly ineffective--even the agency work stock had to be fed at the expense of the Indian Department. The overworked oxen were run down and unreliable. Wright found it necessary to order an irrigation ditch constructed, additional teams purchased, and 100 acres of agency land broken in an attempt to make the agency self-sufficient. He noted that a reaper and mower were also needed, as were tools for the carpenter, gunsmith, tinsmith, and wagon and plow maker. Wright did not place the blame directly on Shanahan, who had inherited problems from Agent Jones, although censure would have been in order: Shanahan made virtually no requests that would have improved the situation.[2] The head farmer--with no farming to do--performed a clerk's duties, while the gunsmith and wagon maker were working as common laborers.

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[1]James Wright to Commissioner, 28 March 1873, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496 (1959)--hereafter this will be referred to as Letters Received, Montana Superintendency; J. H. McKee to Commissioner, 29 June 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 502; Daniel Shanahan to Commissioner, April 1875 (no day), Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 503; Shanahan to Commissioner, 11 April 1874 and 1 June 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 500.

[2]Wright to Commissioner, Report of Visit to Flathead Agency on 27 March 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

Wright's assessment was evidently accurate. Shanahan's successor, Peter Whaley, blamed Shanahan for the absence of garden crops during 1874. Shanahan must have thought that hiring a three-horse team to break agency land ($100 per horse per month), as he had done in 1873, was not worth the price; and agency stock was not up to the task of plowing.[3]

Part of Shanahan's problem was a shortage of operating funds. On 18 September 1873 he replied to a questionnaire from the Commissioner asking whether there were any remaining funds from the last quarter and from the fiscal year before 1 July 1873 by saying that "I am embarrassed for funds at present, not having received a dollar applicable to the present fiscal year."[4] Partly at the prodding of his superintendent, Shanahan finally applied for funds to end some of the shortcomings of the agency: $32,100 for a hospital and employee subsistence relating to it, and for agricultural equipment, irrigation ditches, and other things necessary for setting up the Indians in farming.[5] His requests were very late and were made in Washington, D. C. where he spent two months before being turned down for an extension of his leave. Developments on the reservation indicate that the agency never received this money.

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[3]Whaley to Commissioner, 25 July 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 500; Voucher for 1 to 30 April 1873, signed by Shanahan, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 497.

[4]Shanahan to Commissioner, 18 September 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

[5]Ibid., 27 August 1873.

As Wright noted, however, Shanahan was very much concerned about the condition of the Indians under his charge: "He seams [sic] alive to the interests of the Indians and as anxious as any one to correct all these abuses."[6] Shanahan revealed in a letter to the Commissioner that only $300 a year was spent on medicine for about one thousand Indians, and that there were no records of cases and treatment of the ill. In April of 1874 the resident physician added to the picture of distress, saying, "The Agency is in a most deplorable condition as far as its medical department is concerned." The instruments were "hardly fit for Postmortem operations, much less for use upon living tissue," and the medical books on hand had been written in the 1850's. The physician pointed out that when he had applied for a hospital in January 1874, the Bureau's reply was that there were "no funds available on hand."[7] Shanahan requested subsistence monies for "poor and destitute Indians," saying that

> the amount of the above estimate is small in proportion to the destitution amongst the Indians of this Agency [.] Those who remained at home from the Annual Bufallo [sic] hunt are poor and have been depending on the Agency for some means of subsistence, and those who have been on the Bufallo hunt are now returning without any, and in fact come back more destitute than they left-, as they were driven from the hunting ground by hostile tribes of Indians [.][8]

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[6]Wright to Commissioner, Report of Visit to Flathead Agency on 27 March 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

[7]L. Stesson to Shanahan, 30 April 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 500.

[8]Shanahan, Estimate of Funds for Quarter Ending 31 March 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

To help maintain control of the Indians and to protect them from the evils of unlawful whiskey sales, Shanahan recommended that the agency be allowed to hire a detective. This is the first reference to any formal attempt to supervise this aspect of Indian life, and an Indian police force would be established in the future.[9] Despite the agent's genuine concern for the Indians, however, he was largely ineffective in bringing about any significant changes in their circumstances.

Shanahan's dismissal came while he was in Washington on leave. William Clagett wrote to James A. Garfield about the basic problem as if Garfield was well aware of it ("you remember"), saying that Shanahan wanted to use appropriated school money for an agency school, while the priests at St. Ignatius, accustomed to receiving the money for their school efforts, wanted the old practice continued. Shanahan was actually trying to do what was expected of him; Clagett noted that the Indians in the Bitter Root Valley understood at the time of the Garfield Agreement that a school would be established at the agency for them. Catholic protests were too much to be ignored, however, and Shanahan "resigned," requesting that action against him be withheld until he could clear himself from charges by missionaries concerning his conduct and management of agency affairs. Precisely what these charges were is not known, though they are easily

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[9]Shanahan to Commissioner, 22 September 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

guessed. To some degree they were probably correct, too, inasmuch as Shanahan advanced agency and Indian conditions but little.[10]

Agent Peter Whaley, who was officially appointed to his post in April, 1874[11] and arrived in July, was one of Montana's pioneers. He was remembered by many Alder Gulch miners of 1863 and 1864 whose trail had crossed the Whaley brothers' claims. At the time of his appointment, Whaley was a farmer "in easy circumstances" residing in Deep Creek Valley about one hundred miles west of Helena.[12] Despite the initial approval of the Catholic clergy at St. Ignatius, Whaley remained at the Flathead Agency less than a year and accomplished little.

In fairness to the agent, it should be said that he found the agency in a general state of disrepair. Livestock was worn out or sick, and tools and implements were broken or worn out. Most buildings were unfinished (one exception was the barn), and the flour mill barely functioned.[13]

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[10]Shanahan to Commissioner, 31 March 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 500; Secretary of the Interior to Commissioner, 15 April 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 499.

[11]Edward E. Hill, The Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1880: Historical Sketches (N.Y.: Clearwater Publishing Company, Inc.), p. 102. In a letter to the Commissioner, Peter Whaley acknowledges his appointment of 11 May 1874 (Whaley to Commissioner, 30 May 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 500).

[12]Weekly Independent (Helena), 8 May 1874 (clipping), found in file "A few newspaper articles relative to Jocko Indian Agency and Ignatius Mission," presented by Charles Schaft, Jocko Agency, 1 May 1874, Montana Historical Library.

[13]Whaley to Commissioner, 25 July 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 500.

Still, Whaley contributed little during his ten months at the agency. He requested little of the government, asking for example, only $1,000 for the subsistence of thirty employees and fifteen hundred Indians for the winter of 1874-1875, and only $150 for the repair of the hospital (more properly called a dispensary) and for its medicines and furniture.[14] He spent only thirteen dollars of the $100 allowed for vaccination of the Indians, and he was unable to meet Indian demands for annuity goods. In fact, his successor, Charles S. Medary, reported that Whaley even returned $2,732.28 to the government because he had been unable to spend it on the Indians in time. All agents prior to Whaley had frequently complained about a chronic shortage of funds![15]

The lack of sound leadership by Whaley, coupled with questionable practices such as paying "exhorbitant prices" and destroying all accounts of agency transactions, resulted in his suspension on 3 May 1875.[16]

If Whaley and Shanahan faced charges from one quarter or another, their problems were trifling compared to those

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[14]Ibid.

[15]Whaley to Commissioner, 28 April 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 503; and Charles S. Medary to Commissioner, 4 March 1876, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 505.

[16]Secretary of the Interior to Commissioner, 3 May 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 502; and Medary to Commissioner, 20 July 1875 and 26 July 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 502.

against Charles Medary. Appointed in April, 1875, he arrived at his post on 1 July and served for eighteen months before facing grand jury charges.[17]

The grand jury investigation was precipitated by the voluntary appearance and complaints of Chief Arlee and another chief, and interpreter Duncan McDonald. Specifically, they complained about Medary's administration of the agency. In a broader sense, however, their grievances were the result of mismanagement by several agents and by the government's failure to live up to the 1855 treaty and the Garfield Agreement.

The grand jury determined that the 600 bushels of grain provided for in the second article of the Garfield Agreement had never been delivered to the Flatheads, and that the government had not complied with the Fifth Article of the Stevens Treaty, which provided for an agency school. Arlee said, "I did not want to move down to the Jocko Reservation but Garfield promised us that we should have a public school according to the old treaty. I was glad. . .but we have no school." His only comfort was that the Catholic school, which was located seventeen miles from the agency at St. Ignatius, would be too far away to serve the Flatheads. The jury further reported that two men--a miller and a carpenter--

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[17]According to Hill (The Office of Indian Affairs, p. 102), Medary was appointed 30 April 1875, but a letter from the Secretary of the Interior to the Commissioner indicates that Medary was appointed 3 May 1875 (Secretary of the Interior to Commissioner, 3 May 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 502).

also tried to do the work of a blacksmith, tinner, gunsmith, and wagon and plowmaker. The head farmer was a cripple whose legs or feet had been amputated; he never did outdoor work. The jury also concluded that the flour mill was not working most of the time, as Whaley had noted, and that when it was, the Flatheads were charged tolls.

Other grand jury allegations were made. The saw mill was of little service to the Indians, who were charged for lumber at the rate of twenty dollars per thousand feet, and for shingles at seven dollars per thousand. There was no semblance of a hospital, and the doctor was usually drunk. Annuities under the Garfield Agreement had not been fully paid, and debts of individuals to the store trader had been paid from the monies owed to the Indians by the agent, in violation of Article Seven of the Stevens Treaty. Only four of the sixty buildings provided for by the Garfield Agreement had been built. (The statement is in error, however, for Garfield had not promised sixty buildings, and about twenty houses had been constructed.) The report concluded by saying that

> while the Indians have so signally failed in almost every particular in securing the observance on the part of the Government of its solemn treaty stipulations the present Agent seems to have found on every hand sources of private revenue. He has sold lumber from the saw mill and collected tolls from the Grist Mill, the Threshing machine yeilds /sic/ him five cents for every bushel of wheat and three and a half cents from every bushel of oats threshed. He has four or five hundred head of horses, cattle and hogs

> pasturing on the reservation herded and cared for by Government employees--even the products of the Garden are sold.[18]

Just as Arlee and Michelle were not completely accurate in their statements, so too was the grand jury inaccurate in some respects. William Clagett wrote to General Garfield, enclosing a copy of the grand jury report and adding his observations.[19] He noted that when he had inspected the agency during Shanahan's administration he thought that work on the buildings for the Flatheads was coming along well, and that after Arlee had moved to the reservation he appeared to be satisfied and did not complain. The complaints seemed to stem from Whaley's administration. "I began to receive messages from the Indians complaining of his management and these complaints grew worse and worse up to the time he left, but during his incumbency I never heard of any fault being found. . .against him by the Fathers." He said he did not know why Whaley had left.

The complaints continued after Medary took over, said Clagett, and in at least one instance the Indians and the grand jury were correct. He did use the school fund for support of the mission school, in violation of the understanding reached with Garfield. Clagett thought that the main problem was one of disputed control over the school fund.

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[18]"Report of the Grand Jury of United States District Court of Second District, Montana Territory, at Deer Lodge." 15 December 1876, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 507.

[19]William Clagett to James A. Garfield, 14 December 1876, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 507.

He said that

> when the school Fund goes to the Mission the Fathers seem to be satisfied with the Agent without apparently troubling themselves about how matters are managed at the agency but the Indians complain; when the school Fund is withheld from the Mission, the Fathers seem to find fault with the Agent even if the Indians are satisfied with him.[20]

He found further fault with the missionaries, who wanted to keep the Indians under their close control in order to claim credit for progress made by the Indians. He dismissed further discussion of this matter, noting that in any event, he understood that Flathead agents had been "ordered from Washington to pay the school Fund to the Mission Authorities."[21] In the future, he said, the school fund would be expended at the agency.

The grand jury indicted Medary on two counts of selling government property. Clagett was not too concerned about the matter, however, and told Garfield that "these indictments amounted to nothing and do not raise a suspicion against the present Agent." In fact, Clagett found it difficult to sort out all of the statements made and positions taken at the hearing, and confessed that "from what I have heard on both sides I am unable to form even an opinion as to the question of blame." He could conclude only that some of Arlee's grievances were justified, and that the government was not living up to the agreements of Garfield or Stevens.[22]

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

Medary replied in a letter to the United States Attorney General, saying that the charges against him were false. He had not done some of the things with which he was charged, he said, and those things that he had done had been approved by the Commissioner. He believed, as did Clagett, that Jacques Demers, a white man who was married to a Pend d'Oreilles and who pastured large herds of cattle on the reservation without formal consent of the Indians, was in league with the District Attorney. Medary was also critical because only four witnesses had been called before the grand jury: two Indians and two agency employees. He affirmed "that the strict letter of the treaty has not been complied with. . . , but my many letters on file at the Indian Dep't on that subject, urging a strict fulfillment of the Treaty obligations, will attest my zeal in behalf of the Indians."[23] Medary's assessment of his own integrity and position seems to be correct and agrees with what Clagett observed.

Not long after he had dealt with the grand jury charges and the criticism from Demers and M. C. Page, the District Attorney for Montana Territory, Medary was forced to respond to a suit by the District Attorney to recover damages and costs from Medary for having grazed his own livestock on the

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[23]Medary to Attorney General of the United States, 5 January 1877, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 507.

reservation. As far as one can tell, Medary never paid the $191 demanded in the suit, and the Commissioner did not even bother to respond to his letters about the matter.[24]

If Medary had difficulty meeting the requirements of the Garfield Agreement and the Stevens Treaty, and if he stretched the rules in operating the agency, it was because he found himself on a reservation that had been in continuous disorganization. When he took over in the summer of 1875, he wrote to the Commissioner that the buildings were in disrepair, the tools were in short supply or worn out, and the livestock was in sorry condition. Furniture was missing from the employees' quarters (the agent's residence contained a few chairs, a mattress, a lounge, and some worn out tinware and kitchen utensils); and the farm service had been sadly neglected. The agency farm, he said, contained only thirteen unirrigated acres of wheat. The road from the agency to Missoula was almost impassable, even in good weather, and Medary requested $3,800 to repair it. He asked for another $1,200 to repair the roads from the mission to the agency. The sorry state of the roads made only light wagon loads practicable, and trips took extra time and caused longer stays in Missoula.[25]

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[24]Medary to Commissioner, 2 March 1877 and 28 February 1877, and Summons of the District Court (Second District, Montana Territory), 4 February 1877, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 508.

[25]Medary to Commissioner, 19 July 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 502.

Problems dogged Medary during his term. Orders failed to arrive. There was a running controversy among Flathead chiefs about whether to allow half-breeds, and whites married to Indians, to remain on the reservation. Arlee was a source of trouble for Medary, who suggested that if the Indians were allowed to elect their own head-chief, it would be a man named Partee, and not Arlee. Medary was unable to secure sufficient farming tools for Indians eager to begin farming, nor was he able to furnish them with all of the annuity goods to which they were entitled. Money, turned back by Whaley, was in short supply for Medary, who requested that the sums turned in by his predecessor be credited to the agency.[26]

The state of agency services to the Indians caused them to be openly hostile toward Medary in small but significant ways. They were sullen, and Medary was concerned. He reported in July, 1875 that they were holding a mass assembly near St. Ignatius, and a few days later he telegraphed the Commissioner that if the Sioux were successful in their uprisings, the Flatheads might follow their example.[27] He urged that at least two hundred troops be sent

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[26]Medary to Commissioner, 7 August 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 502; and Medary to Commissioner, 28 January, 19 February, and 7 October 1876, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 505.

[27]Medary to Commissioner, telegram, 16 July 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 502; and Medary to Commissioner, telegram, 28 July 1876, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 505.

to Missoula or to the Agency, since the Flatheads "insolently assert and truly believe that the Sioux. . .will whip all of the US. troops that can be brought against them. This is /a/ central point for the indians to operate from & the least protected in the territory." Medary was concerned that the "wholesale slaughter of the people of Montana" be avoided.[28] He repeated his request for troops to General John Gibbon, of Fort Shaw, M.T., in December 1876--evidently the anticipated trouble had not yet occurred. He worried that he had no power to punish the Indians, that nearby white settlements could not give "material assistance," and that the head-chiefs were "worthless--and" were "mere tools in the hands of half-breeds and unprincipled white men." Still worse, there was talk among the Indians, he said, that he would be forced from the reservation and his stock appropriated by the Indians. Since his summer request for two hundred troops had not been granted, Medary modified his request: could the general send fifteen or twenty men? The general could, and did, noting this in a letter to Medary on 21 December 1876. An officer and twenty men were sent to the agency, although Medary never mentioned their coming.[29]

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[28]Medary to Commissioner, telegram, 28 July 1876, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 505.

[29]Medary to Gen. John Gibbon, 7 December 1876, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 505; and Gibbon to Medary, 21 December 1876, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 507. Gibbon, addressed as General by Medary, was actually a colonel.

Beset by a grand jury, the District Attorney, half-breeds, Arlee, and troublesome whites, Medary resigned in May, 1877 and then retracted his resignation in order to correct the wrong impressions it might cause. He wanted a chance to clear his name, with, he hoped, the Commissioner's blessing and help--"Plain and simple troubles exist but these could be immediately removed by a few words from the Hon. Commissioner."[30] Medary was too late. According to official records, his successor, Peter Ronan, was appointed as of 12 April 1877.[31]

Ronan's administration of the agency actually began 1 June 1877, and it lasted until 1893. He was a well-liked man of thirty-eight when he took over, and he had an ideal credential for the job: he was a Catholic. Although the territorial governor, Benjamin Potts, was a Republican, Ronan had been an outspoken Democrat since before the Civil War. He was one of the three principals associated with the Rocky Mountain Gazette, a Helena newspaper which waged a running battle against civil rights amendments and Republican newspapers from 1866 to 1874.[32] He was also the author of a useful book, Historical Sketch of the Flathead Indian Nation from the Year 1813 to 1890, first published in 1890 and

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[30]Medary to Commissioner, 6 May 1877, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 507.

[31]Hill, The Office of Indian Affairs, p. 102.

[32]Michael P. Malone and Richard B. Roeder, ed., The Montana Past (Missoula: University of Montana Press, 1969), "Confederate Backwash in Montana Territory," by Stanley R. Davison and Dale Tash, p. 115.

originally put together for a newspaper. Far from producing a classic, Ronan lifted most of his material verbatim from Congressional sources.[33]

Ronan received almost unanimous praise from observers of his administration--comments frequently resembling those of William Junkin, a Bureau of Indian Affairs inspector, who said that "A better man for this position could not well be secured." He added that

> I have not come in contact with a better or more conscientious agent. He possesses superior qualifications for the position, and is a man of good moral character. He has an excellent wife. They have nine children, seven of them having been born on the reservation. In my opinion, Mr. Secretary, there are few men who can better discharge the duties of an Indian agent than Peter Ronan. He is calm, deliberate, a man of fine judgment and careful in his action, and an officer who will not reflect discredit on the Department.[34]

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[33]Peter Ronan, History of the Flathead Indians (Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, Inc., 1965--a reprint of the original, published in 1890).

[34]William Junkin to Secretary of the Interior, "Special Report in Relation to Indian Agents and Superintendents at the Several Agencies and Bonded Schools Visited Since June 1889," 18 February 1890, Letters Received by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group Number 75. (Hereafter all letters and reports cited will be from Letters Received files of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group Number 75, unless otherwise noted.)

Other reports pertaining to the Ronan administration include: Junkin, "Report to the Department of the Interior, United States Indian Inspection Service," 14 December 1889; Inspector Howard (no first name available), "Inspection of Flathead Agency," 4 December 1883; Inspector Ward (no first name available), "Report of Inspector Ward on Flathead Agency, M.T.," 17 November 1884; Inspector Thomas (no first name available), "Synopsis of Report of Inspector Thomas on the Flathead Agency," 1 October 1885; Inspector Gardner (no first name available), "Report of Inspector Gardner on the Flathead Agency," 30 January 1885; George B. Pearsons to Secretary of the Interior, "Report of Inspection of the Flathead Indian Agency," 11 November 1886; Junkin, "Synopsis of Report of

During Ronan's administration, correspondence became more significant but less frequent. Small matters were excluded when not required. At the same time, a combination of Ronan's accurate record keeping, his frugality, and the maturing of the Bureau of Indian Affairs made it easier for him to fulfill his responsibilities. Since money came to the agency more regularly, Ronan seldom wrote about it. There seems to have been no continuing shortage of money for general agency operations. Purchases were made with increasing frequency on the open market. As Ronan settled into his work, he gained the respect of most Indians (Arlee was one exception) and of the reservation's white neighbors. The historian can finally concentrate on the basic problems of reservation life, to the exclusion of the more petty details of agency administration that have hitherto demanded so much attention.

To some degree the condition of the agency physical plant is a measure of how successful the agency was. Martin Maginnis, one-time territorial representative, was one of the first to notice the difference between Ronan's management of the agency and that of previous agents. After a visit in September, 1879, he wrote that "more has been done in the last two years than during the whole time previous

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Inspector William W. Junkin on the Flathead Agency, Montana," 13 September 1889; Inspector Gardner, "Synopsis of Report of Inspector Gardner on the Flathead Agency," 7 August 1890; Inspector Cisney (no first name available), "Synopsis of Report of Inspector Cisney on the Flathead Agency, Montana," 28 February 1890; and Inspector Cisney, "Synopsis of Report of Inspector Cisney on the Flathead Agency," 23 July 1891.

thereto since the treaty was made."[35] He was pleased with the condition of both the agency and the Indians, although he noticed that the mill was inadequate and that the old threshing machine, about to be replaced, was worthless. He suggested that the agency be moved closer to the center of Indian activity.[36]

The old problem of the agency's poor location continued. Nearly each of nine inspectors between 1883 and 1891 mentioned it, suggesting that only a few Indians lived in the ten-mile area south of the agency to the reservation border. The distance of the agency from the center of Indian life near St. Ignatius Mission precluded frequent visits by Ronan and his staff, and the services of the agency were seldom used by the Indians. Ronan requested the removal of the agency in a letter of January, 1884, pointing out that it was of minimal use where it was, on the southern edge of inhabitable reservation land. He added that he had long since petitioned the government for permission to move it.[37] Later that year he wrote again to remind the Bureau of his request and to say that the total cost of relocating the agency would be about thirty thousand dollars.[38] Ronan made a final request in 1891, but the agency remained where it was.

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[35]Martin Maginnis to E. A. Hayt, 25 September 1879, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 514.

[36]*Ibid*.

[37]Ronan to Commissioner, 15 January 1884.

[38]Ronan to Commissioner, 18 February 1884.

The series of nine inspections previously mentioned indicate that the agency buildings were in good condition. There were twenty buildings in 1885, including an office, employees' dwellings, the agent's house, shops, sheds, and root cellars. Five years later Ronan's own list showed the same twenty buildings.[39] Some inspectors noted that a few buildings bore the marks of time, while others found particular things wrong.[40] None of the problems, however, were serious.

The condition of the buildings was one measure of the kind of care and attention given to any Indians who did come to the agency for help; another was the competency of the staff. Ronan's reliability has been partially documented. With only one exception, all inspectors praised him. Only George Pearsons, whose inspection was made in 1886, deviated from the pattern; thus his remarks should be considered cautiously. According to him, Ronan was kind to the Indians but cared little for them. He was, said Pearsons, a hard drinker who was inclined to let matters run their course.[41] The inspector seems to have got much of his information from a few unhappy Indians. The other employees seldom

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[39]Gardner, "Report of Inspector Gardner on the Flathead Agency, 30 January 1885; Ronan, "Statement Giving the Number and Description of Buildings Belonging to the United States, and Used for the Benefit of the Indian Service, 1890 (no day or month).

[40]Howard, "Inspection of Flathead Agency," 4 December 1883 and Junkin, "Synopsis of Report of Inspector William W. Junkin on the Flathead Agency, Montana," 13 September 1889.

[41]Pearsons, "Report of Inspection of the Flathead Indian Agency," 11 November 1886.

incurred criticism from an inspector. If their abilities were mentioned at all, it was often in a cryptic "found all employees at work, and seem well fitted for their respective positions,"[42] or "agency a credit to the service."[43]

The agency was not run smoothly at all times, however, if only because of problems inherent in any territorial operation. One could compile a long list of annoyances which, together, could do much to hamper agency functions. For example, communications were a problem. In 1882 Ronan discovered in a mail carrier's way-pouch a "statement of funds" that had been carried over the route and never removed.[44] Ronan was required to write for permission to buy most of the items for the agency, and none was too small to escape scrutiny. To receive approval to purchase horse collars and a whip, common items available in Missoula and valued at $11.50, Ronan wrote to the Commissioner, who communicated with the Secretary of the Interior, who responded to the Commissioner, who then wrote to Ronan.[45]

Once approval was received, securing goods from the East was sometimes difficult. When supplies did get through,

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[42]Ward, "Report of Inspector Ward on Flathead Agency, M.T.," 17 November 1884.

[43]Thomas, "Synopsis of Report of Inspector Thomas on the Flathead Agency," 1 October 1885.

[44]Ronan to Commissioner, 13 June 1882.

[45]Secretary of the Interior to Commissioner, 22 July 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 510.

they were often a year late, and they might not be what had been ordered. In what must have been a fit of exasperation, Ronan wrote,

> In the same requisition I asked for one dozen blacksmith drills at a cost of 50¢ apiece, instead of which, were sent me 12 enormous machine-shop drills, for which I have no use, whereas the small drills are greatly needed. I, also, asked for one set each of hollow and round planes, sizes from 1 to 2 inch instead of which I received one-half dozen each of hollows and rounds, all of the same size. In place of one box of 10 x 14 inch glass, there was sent to me the same quantity of 10 x 12 glass, which, even were not the greater portion of it broken, is of no use to me unless cut into 8 x 10 lights for windows of the Indians' houses.[46]

He pleaded for more open market purchases (i.e. purchases in Montana, without bids or specific Bureau approval), because he could get things more quickly; provisions for employees could only be purchased in small quantities, often at short notice; and breakage of mill and shop machinery could not be anticipated in quarterly requisitions.[47]

A statement of the condition of agency buildings, and of staff qualifications, is not an adequate indication of the kind of service that was being provided for the Indians. For one thing, the agency was partly ineffective because of its location. For another, the staff was too small to reach the majority of reservation Indians, even if the agency had been relocated. The Indians, numbering between eleven hundred and fourteen hundred at various times during Ronan's

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[46]Ronan to Commissioner, 8 October 1879, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 515.

[47]Ronan to Commissioner, 3 June 1877, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 507.

administration, were distributed over most of the reservation of one million, three hundred thousand acres--an area about the size of the state of Delaware. Thus such services as the agency did render the Indians were mostly done at the agency--milling grain, sawing lumber, repairing wood and metal items, and dealing with health problems.

The supplying of annuity goods to the Indians was one service of the agency, and in this Ronan was fairly successful despite some delays during the 1870's. The usual goods included blankets, food, and clothing--items that Ronan firmly believed were critical in keeping the Indians pacified. During the Nez Perce troubles of 1877 he bought goods with his own money to satisfy the Indians and keep them on the reservation, despite the fact that he had not secured authorization to do so. He likewise bought goods for some of the more destitute Indians just before Christmas, 1877.

The annuities promised in the 1855 treaty continued for twenty years after its ratification and expired in 1879, but the government continued to aid the Indians intermittently by giving them food, clothing, and tools. Agricultural implements were distributed on a small scale, and Ronan protested a Bureau circular directing agents not to distribute such implements without specific authority. He had been doing this for years, he said, and delays would discourage the Indians from farming. He pointed out in 1884 that although they may not have amounted to more than five dollars a year for each Indian, government gifts (often erroneously called

"annuities") were a sign of friendship on behalf of the government, and withholding them would cause enmity among the Indians.[48]

Annuities and gifts were but one facet of reservation life, which by 1880 was in the midst of significant change. As years passed, white ranchers took up land once the range of buffalo. At the same time, the efforts of agents and church officials to "civilize" the Indians were beginning to tell. Under pressure the Indians increasingly abandoned their nomadic hunting life for one of farming and restless settlement. Statistics and other information pertaining to the Flathead Reservation bear this out.

A few basic facts will acquaint the reader with some of the circumstances of life on the reservation. In 1880 about thirteen hundred and fifty Indians lived there: nine hundred Pend d'Oreilles, three hundred and fifty Kootenais, and only one hundred Flatheads. Nearly four hundred Flatheads lived in the Bitter Root Valley, officially beyond the control of the Flathead agent.[49] The birth rate appears to have been stable; no large fluctuations in population were recorded between 1875 and 1895. Few of the Indians

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[48]Ronan to Commissioner, 15 January 1878 and 27 July 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 511; and Ronan to Commissioner, 10 January 1880, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 517; and Ronan to Commissioner, 11 March 1884.

[49]Ronan to Col. Thomas H. Ruger, 5 May 1880, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 517.

left the reservation for hunts and extended trips, except in times of poor crops. Then they might leave on a hunt as some Pend d'Oreilles did in 1879, with a military escort to supervise their actions.[50] Of the thirteen hundred and fifty Indians, the Kootenais were chronically in the worst condition. They lived farthest from the agency--about seventy miles, and as Ronan indicated in 1886, they were "in great want and need the fostering hand of the government more than any others. . . ." Unlike their brothers, the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles, they cultivated the land in common without the instructional aid of a government farmer.[51]

All three tribes turned from hunting to a combination of farming and hunting. The Pend d'Oreilles had long depended on the hunt, but as early as 1877 they had difficulty obtaining ammunition and arms for it, despite Ronan's verification of their peaceful intent and the intervention of Martin Maginnis. The alternative was to maintain the Indians on the reservation at an approximate annual cost of five thousand dollars. This alternative was not so brutal, punishing, or limiting as one might think, for the hunts were becoming increasingly unproductive as the number of buffalo declined in the wake of white settlement and the influx of white

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[50]Ronan to Commissioner, 3 March 1879, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 515.

[51]Ronan to Commissioner, 2 December 1886.

hunters.[52] The Flatheads also participated in hunts. Ronan wrote to the Commissioner in May 1879 on behalf of Arlee, who had promised some of the younger tribesmen that they could go on a hunt. (Ronan recommended that the hunt be allowed and favored Arlee's accompanying his braves as a supervisor.)[53] When crops failed, hunting was one alternative. Another was to look to the federal government; increasingly supplies were issued to the Indians most in need, financed by $3,000 annually from a Flathead Reservation Budget fund for "beneficial objects."

In better years the Indians were nearly self-sufficient, and some Indian farmers were relatively wealthy. Chief Arlee, for example, owned two hogs, one hundred head of cattle, and one hundred horses in 1878. Others could boast of owning fifty or sixty head of cattle, and nearly that many horses, while a select few owned over one hundred and fifty head of cattle.[54] (Cattle were readily acquired by an initial purchase or by marrying someone who owned cattle, and by the natural increase of a small herd. The size of a herd was dictated chiefly by the amount of pasturage one owned). In all, estimated the staff of the Rocky

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[52]Lieut. T. Burnett, by order of Col. John Gibbon, to Ronan, 4 October 1877, and Ronan to Commissioner, 27 November 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 511.

[53]Ronan to Commissioner, 6 May 1879, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 515.

[54]Ronan to Commissioner, "Report of Heads of Domestic Animals on Flathead Reservation," 8 January 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 511.

Mountain Husbandman, Indians on the reservation owned six hundred head of cattle, close to three thousand horses, and about five hundred hogs.[55]

Farm produce figures also suggest a healthy state of independence from the hunt. The Rocky Mountain Husbandman estimated that twenty-six hundred acres of farm land were cultivated on the reservation in 1878 (virtually none of it by the agency), and that ten thousand bushels of wheat, five thousand bushels of oats, and fifteen hundred bushels of potatoes were harvested. The agency threshing machine and flouring mill were kept busy, and the agency blacksmith repaired ninety-three Indian plows in preparation for the spring planting season. Ronan's requests of the Commissioner frequently included double harnesses, plows, and wagons, and he noted in 1878 that the Indians had an aversion to receiving their annuities in food or blankets. They preferred farming implements.[56]

If the figures are accurate, in 1879 the Indian harvest surpassed that of 1878 by a considerable margin. Ronan wrote that twenty thousand bushels of wheat, four thousand bushels of oats, and large amounts of vegetables came from Indian fields. He reiterated that some of the finest

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[55] Rocky Mountain Husbandman, Vol. IV, No. 24, 1 May 1879, p. 2.

[56] Rocky Mountain Husbandman, Vol. IV, No. 24, 1 May 1879 p. 2; and Ronan to Commissioner, 25 May 1878 and 5 July 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 511.

agricultural range in Montana was on the Flathead Reservation, and that this was being taken advantage of since few Indians hunted any more.[57] This "advancing spirit of civilization and progress " warmed the hearts of whites, who were pleased that the Indians were "almost self-supporting" and aware of the value of money.[58]

The general condition of the reservation Indians was good. Senator Vest, chairman of the "Subcommittee of the Special Committee of the United States Senate, Appointed to Visit the Indian Tribes in northern Montana," visited the Flatheads in 1883 and said that "we feel justified in reporting that in a very few years they will be as useful and prosperous a community as any in the far West. They are kindly, intelligent, and anxious to learn. . . . They appreciate. . . the necessity for self-support by honest industry."[59]

Other citizens also observed the improvements. The Weekly Missoulian reported that "comfortable houses and small, well-fenced and cultivated fields extend for fifty

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[57]Ronan to Ruger, 5 May 1880, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 517.

[58]Ronan to Commissioner, 28 July 1884.

[59]George Vest, from the Select Committee to Examine into the Condition of the Sioux, Crow, and Grievances of Indian Tribes in the Territory of Montana, etc., and including the Subcommittee of the Special Committee Appointed to Visit Indian Tribes in Northern Montana, Senate Reports, 48th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 2, Document 283, pp. xiv-xv, Serial 2174.

miles from the head of the Jocko and Mission valleys."[60] The article noted that progress had been greater since destruction of the great buffalo herds, and that stock raising was a major factor in their new well-being, the roots of which were the mission school and Peter Ronan's efforts. Special Agent (Justice Department) John T. Wallace wrote in 1886 that

> Major Ronan drove me fifteen miles through a beautiful valley, nicely laid farms, good dwellings, barns and barn-yards, all exhibiting a high order of civilization and industry, that compare favorably with any portion of this Territory inhabited by white settlers.[61]

In truth, however, not all was well on the Jocko Reservation. A few traders monopolized trade and caused concern about their goods and their fairness. Joseph Loyola ran an honest post at the St. Ignatius Mission. Duncan McDonald ran a store about a quarter of a mile from the agency buildings. He was not licensed, probably because he was a half-breed. The most prominent trader, and one who had figured in antagonistic action against previous agents, was Jacques Demers, whose store was also near the agency. Ronan said that Demers' prices were generally fair and equal to those in Missoula, except that freight charges--$16.50 a team, three teams to a wagon--were added. Although traders were instructed by the Commissioner to pay the Indians in

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[60] Weekly Missoulian, 26 June 1885, p. 1, quoted directly from Helena Live Stock Journal, June 1885.

[61] John T. Wallace to Attorney General of the United States, 1 March 1886.

cash, much business was transacted by barter.[62]

Farm produce was about all that the Indians could trade by 1880, since furs were seldom accepted as trade items. According to Ronan, it was not profitable to ship them to the East.[63] (Although some white men still trapped for a meagre or partial income, the combination of a glutted local market caused by too many Indian and white trappers, and the decreasing demands in the East for fur, precluded much success on the part of any trapper.) Fortunately, many Indians were capable of effective bargaining. Wrote Ronan:

> As a general thing the reservation Indians are fully capable of protecting themselves in trade, and where prices do not suit them at the licensed trading post (being well informed as to prices) they have an intelligent and independent way (like white people) of hitching up their teams and carting their produce to where they can make the best terms. The trader is aware of this fact and it is not to his interests to over-charge or under-pay an Indian in his barter.[64]

Occasionally someone complained about the way things were being run. A poignant and simple letter from Flathead Chief Arlee to the "Rt onerebell Suprtenant of indian afares" (the Commissioner) presented a list of grievances and discussed the shortcomings of Flathead Reservation life. He suggested, first, that the Indians "say that they are a frade to ask him [Ronan] for any think for fer of him giting

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[62]Ronan to Commissioner, 14 October 1878 and 19 February 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 511, and 5 November 1879, Roll 515.

[63]Ronan to Commissioner, 19 February 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 511.

[64]Ronan to Commissioner, 5 November 1879, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 515.

made [mad] and I am a frade alsow."[65] Among the complaints or charges were these, that an old woman had starved to death while the government held a supply of rations, that the sick and needy were refused rations and medicine by Ronan, that the agent and the Mission priests cut and sold reservation timber for their own profits, that the agency mill took half of the wheat milled as payment for the task, and that an Indian who received provisions from the agency had to work for them. Requesting an answer "amedially," Arlee said that "there is plenty of pore her of my children that is nedy. . . ."

Two years later, in 1889, another Indian joined Arlee in objecting to the sale of reservation lumber obtained with the aid of agency teams and equipment. They thought that the white men who sold the lumber pocketed the money. "Major ronan fales to fork over to he pore indians which is in grate nead this season in conciqunce of now crops. . .I only wish you to understand that his reservation is very lously run. . . ." This writer, however, pointed out that since most of the Indians were "well desposed," they were blinded to agency policies that ran against their interests.[66]

Other complaints were also registered. In 1892 J. B. McLaren, of the Bitter Root Land Agency, wrote on behalf of

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[65]Chief Arlee to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 17 February 1887.

[66]Unsigned letter to Secretary of the Interior, 27 July 1889.

the reservation Indians to say that the Indians resented what they thought was a short-changing transaction in which the Mission received from the agency food that was intended for the Indians. They also complained that Ronan was in the habit of getting drunk--one complaint which recurred with enough frequency to merit some consideration. McLaren said that although he believed the Indians, he had no proof that they were right.[67]

These complaints constitute the objections to Ronan, and when weighed against the stability of the reservation under his leadership and the reports praising his work, their significance diminishes. Ronan was inclined to let some matters such as feuds and food shortages and medical problems run their course and refused to lend his influence to their solutions. Had he shown an interest in virtually all reservation and Indian problems, the Indians would have pressed him to the extreme in their search for solutions. His actions in critical situations were decisive--as a discussion of troubles on the reservation will indicate. Moreover, many of the complaints came from a few troublemakers--particularly Arlee.

Intertribal and interracial friction were the norm during this period. The interracial incidents--usually labeled "Indian Trouble" in the newspapers--occurred most frequently and had the greatest impact on the quality of reservation

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[67]J. B. McLaren to Commissioner, 29 March 1892.

life. This "trouble" occurred without respect to the condition of the agency, the effectiveness of its services, or the living conditions of the Indians, and at times the potential for overwhelming disaster was great. It was only because of the firm hand of Peter Ronan, the occasional, rapid response of a few cavalry troops, and the usually friendly disposition of the Salish that the incidents were not more frequent.

The Nez Perce uprising during 1877 was one especially significant cause for white concern about the predilections of the Jocko Indians, even though they remained loyal to the whites throughout the Nez Perce episode. Ronan made frequent reports on the disposition of the local Indians during that period, and he always reported them to be peaceful. On the surface, however, it did not seem so. The reservation chiefs proposed to allow Chief Joseph to camp free from danger on the Flathead Reservation if he wished. Ronan vetoed this idea. A few renegade warriors and some straggling women from Chief Joseph's band actually did remain on the reservation for a time. It was perhaps these sympathetic gestures on the part of the Flatheads that prompted Ronan to say that

> Although I have no apprehension of any Indian trouble here, it is always well to be prepared for the worst, and I am, therefore disappointed that you cannot furnish me the arms and ammunition I requested to be kept at the Agency to defend our lives and Government property, in case of an attack.[68]

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[68]Ronan to Benjamin F. Potts, 17 July 1877, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 508.

By the 1880's the threat of the Nez Perce was stilled, and Ronan faced other law enforcement problems. He reported in 1884 that "a gang of Indian outlaws from Spokane and the lower Columbia who come for no other purpose than to gamble with the Indians of this place" indulged in "wild carousals," under the influence of easily obtained whiskey. If Indians were turned over to county officials, they were released on a plea of non-jurisdiction by the court; if turned over to the military authority, they were soon released in accordance with an order forbidding their confinement in a stockade. Sometimes they were released by civilian authorities because of their having been "already tried by Indian law on the reservation."[69]

To cope with violations of reservation codes, whether by alien or resident Indians, the tribes relied on a police force that was only marginally effective. The force had existed for a "long time" in 1878, said Ronan, and consisted of about twenty of the best Indians from the three tribes. They were cooperative and quite willing to obey instructions. Ronan looked to them to set an example during the Nez Perce uprising, and whenever there was a crisis resulting from murder or friction between reservation and non-reservation tribes. The fact that the Indians were volunteers diminished their effectiveness. As volunteers they avoided the charge of being "pets of the government," but at the same time they

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[69]Ronan to Commissioner, 30 December 1884.

had no uniforms, no firearms, and no ammunition. In 1878 Ronan suggested the issuing of these items in lieu of pay, but his suggestion was not accepted at the time.[70]

In 1884 Ronan asked for uniformed, paid, and armed police, employed on a regular basis, indicating that nine police and three officers would be a good start. His request seems to have been granted, for in 1885 he listed the membership of the force: nine privates and one officer (a Flathead). Eight of the privates were Pend d'Oreilles, the other a Flathead. The Kootenais, out of touch with reservation matters, were not represented.[71] By 1886 the police were uniformed, and this did help them achieve an increased degree of authority. The biggest problem, however, remained the limited respect accorded them, chiefly because they were not yet armed, and because no good jails existed on the reservation. The force was, moreover, too small for the reservation, especially after the coming of the Northern Pacific Railway in 1882. It became common sport for the Indians to shoot insulators from the telegraph poles and to throw stones through railroad car windows, and

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[70]Ronan to Commissioner, 2 August 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 511, and Ronan to Commissioner, 20 December 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-235, Roll 515.

[71]Ronan to Commissioner, "Descriptive Statement of Proposed Changes in Indian Police Force at Flathead Agency," 11 February 1885.

even on occasion to try to derail a train.[72] Increased rebelliousness among the young half-breed Indians also increased law enforcement problems. Ronan complained that

> the young men are more vicious and harder to control than the Indians of full blood. They are addicted to drinking, gambling and bringing whiskey on the reserve; and often resist arrest by the Indian police, owing to lack of arms and sufficient force to overawe them. The young half-breeds consider themselves superior to the Indians and above the law governing offences on the reservation. . . .

Ronan thought that the matter could be handled well by fifteen armed police.[73]

Perhaps more important to the Indians than agency rules was the administration of traditional justice by the tribal court made up of chiefs. The Indians had no written laws, and punishment--decided as the occasion merited--often consisted of whippings, or payment of fines in horses or other property. The Weekly Missoulian was contemptuous of the system, saying that "it shows an Indian's idea of justice, which seems to partake not a little of the idea of the principle of addition, division and silence."[74] The paper was referring specifically to the murder of Frank Marengo by Koonza, a Kootenai. After Koonza surrendered himself to Chief Michelle, the court decided that his horses were to be taken from him (one to be given to Michelle, one to Chief Arlee, and the others divided among Marengo's relatives).

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[72]Ronan to Commissioner, 17 December 1886.

[73]Ibid.

[74]Weekly Missoulian, 19 January 1883, p. 1.

As Arlee explained to the press, "When an Indian is drunk and kills another Indian we don't consider that he did anything. The Indian never had whiskey before the white man came here, and we blame the white people who gave the liquor."[75]

The administration of justice was frequently the subject with which Chief Arlee took issue when he chose to make trouble--and he was indeed the primary troublemaker on the Flathead reservation. His usual tactic was to promise one thing and renege on that promise, or to go over Ronan to newspapermen, prosecutors, or other prominent officials with a complaint of a sensational nature. His history of cantankerous demands and interference reaches back to the days when he moved to the reservation--if not before. At that time he escalated his demands of the agent to the point that he sometimes met with refusal. This served to make Arlee look good in the eyes of his peers while discrediting the agent, who--according to Arlee--did not keep his promises.

Agent Medary was particularly critical of the chief. Although he was called a troublemaker by only one investigator, Arlee appeared in virtually all troubles on the reservation, in one role or another, often switching sides in midstream. Medary complained about him to the commissioner, saying that Arlee wanted to act as disbursing agent for Flathead Indian payments (a role which he subsequently

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[75] Ibid.

assumed to some degree). The agent charged that Arlee tried to persuade Whaley to cooperate with him in skimming off part of the money. This proposal, said Medary, had been turned down by Whaley.[76] Medary further charged that violence causing him to request troops had been engineered by Arlee, in association with Michelle of the Pend d'Oreilles, and the traders McDonald and Demers. The agent characterized the adopted Flathead (he said Arlee was partly Snake, partly Nez Perce) as a miser, a chronic gambler, and a lazy, unpopular Indian whom many Flatheads wished to have removed as chief, either by force or by an election. He hated religion, said Medary, and turned a deaf ear to the advice of all agents; he was also ungenerous to his own people, in direct contrast to Eneas of the Kootenais.[77]

Peter Ronan had his troubles with Arlee too. An unfavorable report written by an inspector in 1883 and mentioned by Ronan, but not found, caused the agent to write that the inspector probably received much of his information from Duncan McDonald and Chief Arlee, information not given by them for the good of the reservation, "but simply for personal and unwarrantable ends." Said Ronan:

> It would be a very easy matter for me to enroll among my warmest supporters such men as Arlee and McDonald who can each easily be estimated as worth $10,000--are fond of money & thoroughly selfish in acquiring it;

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[76]Medary to Commissioner, 8 December 1876, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 505.

[77]*Ibid*.

> but I believe it is my duty to afford greater help to those not so capable of helping themselves, & from those, I have heard no complaints as to the amount of assistance required in the saw mill or elsewhere.[78]

Shortly thereafter, Ronan wrote that Arlee was insubordinate and interfered with policemen in the performance of their duties.

Others also had trouble with the chief. Lt. Col. George Gibson, the commander at Fort Missoula, complained that Arlee had tried to turn over to white authorities a suspect in a murder case, despite the fact that he did not have the power to do so. Shortly after this incident, Arlee meddled in a disturbance between the trader at Arlee Station and a drunken Indian who tried to reclaim a gun taken from him for a small debt in violation of the Indian Intercourse Act. John T. Wallace, special agent for the Department of Justice, reported that the incident was capably handled by Ronan and that the only difficulty on the reservation came from the "self-constituted Chief, named Arlee, and a few others who by the advice and counsel of Arlee, were somewhat defiant. . . ."[79]

Another special agent for the Department of Justice, Henry M. Marchant, called to the attention of the United States Attorney General several charges of cruel treatment

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[78]Ronan to Commissioner, 26 December 1883.

[79]Col. George Gibson to Gen. Alfred H. Terry, 28 December 1885; and John T. Wallace to Attorney General of the United States, 1 March 1886.

of prisoners made by Arlee to the Missoulian. Marchant investigated and found that Arlee referred to the mistreatment of prisoners in the Mission jail by Indian judges and police. He also found that the complaints were without foundation and said of Arlee:

> He is getting quite old and at times does not quite know right from wrong. He is, as I understand from the Agent, a refractory element on the reservation, making trouble by advising the Indians not to respect the laws and regulations governing the court of Indian offences.[80]

Marchant added that Judge Louison, of the Indian court, wrote that Arlee interfered and tried to break the law whenever he could, although the Indian judges tried not to pay much attention to him.[81]

Whatever the problems among Indians, none were as significant as the friction between white and Indian, and the most intense issue in the frequent racial clashes was murder. The Flathead tribe had a long, proud tradition of not having killed a white man, and it steadfastly maintained this tradition despite some tense moments. The Pend d'Oreilles, and especially the more unruly Kootenais, however, had no such tradition and gave several causes for alarm. The general scare caused by the Nez Perce uprising has been mentioned. It rapidly created a series of unfounded rumors among the

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[80]Henry M. Marchant to Attorney General of the United States, 23 May 1889; also Marchant to Attorney General of the United States, 23 May 1889; and Weekly Missoulian, 1 May 1889, p. 4.

[81]Marchant to Attorney General of the United States, 23 May 1889.

whites in and around Missoula and western Montana generally, and though the principal focus of the rumors was the Bitter Root Flatheads under Charlot, they also extended to the reservation Indians. Typical of white feelings was the statement by Duncan McDonald:

> There may not be any hostilities in Western Montana and it does not seem probable there will be immediately. But the most experienced frontiersmen, the coolest and most reliable, do not like the present aspect of affairs, and regard the situation as grave.[82]

Although white fears were not realized at this time--no white men met death at the hands of any Salish Indians--murders did occur later. Between 1887 and 1889, in isolated incidents, six whites were murdered near or on the Flathead reservation by Kootenai Indians. Some of the murders were blood murders, others were the product of racial tensions. Four Indians (two of them confessed murderers) were hanged in 1890. General disquiet did not prevail on the reservation, however, and Ronan had no fear of an uprising. This time Chief Arlee cooperated, as did Kootenai Chief Eneas, in having the Indians arrested and tried in a white court. The jury took twelve minutes, and the defense had but one witness, an accused pleading self-defense.[83]

Sometimes Indian and white murders were connected. Most unfortunate was the murder of Chief Eneas' son by whites

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[82]James H. Mills to Potts, 1 July 1877, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 508.

[83]Missoula Weekly Gazette, 24 December 1890, pp. 1-2; also Ronan to Commissioner, August 1890 (no day); Weekly Missoulian, 29 May 1889, p. 2; Ronan to Ruger, 19 September 1889; and Junkin to Commissioner, "Report on Indian Murders," 11 September 1889.

in a drunken brawl resulting from the illegal sale of whiskey. Several other Indians were killed at the same time. Two other Kootenais were lynched by white men for an alleged murder. Another was struck and killed by a revolver in the hands of a white man. Eneas and others vowed revenge and thus precipitated some murders of white men mentioned above.[84] During the same period a sheriff's posse killed another Indian suspected of murder.[85]

Because of the "Kootenai Incident," citizens near the reservation, understandably worried about the Kootenai threats, vigorously requested the establishment of a military post at Demersville. Brig. General Thomas H. Ruger, commanding the Department of Dakota, did not favor it, saying that cavalry at or near the town would not stop boundary crossings by Indians and whites and would be ineffective in rapidly developing emergencies such as lynchings. What was needed, he said, was "an enforcement of the civil law, especially with reference to the sale of whiskey, rather than the establishment of Military Posts." He pointed out that most roving bands of Indians were harmless and that the chief

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[84]Ronan to Commissioner, 1 August 1890; Ronan to Elbert D. Weed, 22 October 1889; and Ronan to Commissioner, telegram, 4 March 1889.

[85]Sgt. R. Williams to Adj. Gen., U.S. Army, Washington, D.C., telegram, 26 June 1889; Inspector Marcium to Secretary of the Interior, 1 July 1889; Ronan to Commissioner, telegram, 24 June 1889; Maj. Gen. George Crook to Adj. General, 30 June 1888; Weekly Missoulian, 4 September 1889, p. 3; Ronan to Commissioner, 1 August 1890; Ronan to Commissioner, telegram, 21 July 1890; Weekly Missoulian, 3 August 1892, p. 4.

benefit of a military post would be as a new market for local farmers.[86]

Troops were eventually called in on a temporary basis, however, to discourage further incidents. In July 1890 a band was surrounded by forty troops who demanded the deliverance of murderers thought to be among the Indians. None were found, and the troops left.

There is no question that the selling of whiskey to the Indians was the primary cause of much trouble. This problem had been the bane of Indian-white relations for well over a century, and the Flatheads were no exception. Superintendent Viall commented on the problem in 1870, saying that a Hudson's Bay Company post on the reservation, as well as half-breeds, quarter-breeds (often called half-breeds), and other British subjects, frequently traded whiskey with the Indians.[87]

Peter Ronan faced a continuing problem of whiskey trade and Indian drunkenness and resulting vandalism during virtually every year of his administration. Although he boasted of putting an end to the problem in 1881, observing in his monthly report that the whiskey trade had been broken up and that not a single case of drunkenness had occurred on the reservation during the fiscal year, he admitted that

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[86]Ruger to Assistant Adj. General, 8 December 1888.

[87]James Viall to Commissioner, 19 December 1870, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 490.

sometimes the Indians became drunk in town and simply did not return until sober lest they be arrested by the volunteer police.[88] In 1883, however, he swore out a warrant for a white man who was selling whiskey on the reservation in association with two of Arlee's sons-in-law and his stepson. Although Ronan requested military assistance in making the arrests, he did not receive it.[89] Inspector Howard wrote of the increase of crime caused by whiskey and of the difficulty in prosecuting guilty whites.[90] Ronan and his Indian police arrested drunken Indians in 1885 after they had found a barrel of whiskey in the river, lost from a freight train three years earlier.[91] The Weekly Missoulian reported the same year that three drunken Indians beat a white man during a spree, and a year later there was a report that drunken Indians had again terrorized whites.[92]

Next to the sale of whiskey as a source of friction were border violations along the frontiers of the Flathead Reservation. Occasional mutual crossings--simple trespass on another's property--were not regarded as serious; but

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[88]Ronan to Commissioner, Monthly Report, 1 August 1881, Special Cases No. 55, Office of Indian Affairs, Land Division.

[89]Lieut. Jordan to Fort Snelling, telegram, 9 August 1883.

[90]Howard to Secretary of the Interior, 19 January 1884.

[91]Ronan to Secretary of the Interior, 13 March 1885, Special Cases No. 55, Office of Indian Affairs, Land Division.

[92]Weekly Missoulian, 23 October 1885, p. 3 and 20 August 1886, p. 3.

trespass combined with other violations was serious. Vandalism, robbing of white traps, stealing and slaughtering of white cattle, and horse stealing by the Indians were all frequent enough to cause continuing complaints. At the same time, the whites were often guilty of cutting timber on reservation land, and especially of grazing cattle on Indian land--although frequently with Indian permission.

Part of the problem was the result of honest mistakes by both Indians and whites, since the boundary lines were imprecise. Agent Daniel Shanahan wrote to Martin Maginnis in 1875 that this vagueness had "for some years past been the cause of considerable trouble between the white settlers and Indians of the above named confederacy."[93] Indian and white alike complained about mutual encroachments on the same parcels of land, particularly at the north end of the reservation. Although Maginnis recommended a survey,[94] it was probably not made--in 1880 Ronan forwarded to the Commissioner a letter from Roswell H. Mason, United States Surveyor General for Montana, bearing out Ronan's assertion that there had been no survey of the Indian boundary.[95] In 1883, however, Ronan examined the northern area carefully

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[93]Shanahan to Maginnis, 21 January 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 502.

[94]Maginnis to Commissioner, 22 January 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 502.

[95]Ronan to Commissioner, 16 June 1880, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 517.

and found boundary markers from a forgotten survey.[96]

Even after Ronan became agent, the search for gold continued to bring whites onto the reservation. In 1880 rumors of the discovery of placer gold near the western boundary of the reservation were heard, and miners passed through. The Indians claimed the land where gold was expected to be found. Ronan investigated the boundary area and concluded that not only did the border run to the east of the area in question, but also that there was no paying mine. Three men were working the mine when he appeared, he said, but only slight color had been found, and all others had abandoned their claims.

In 1882 Ronan proposed a solution to part of the boundary problem. He urged the extension of the northern boundary of the reservation to absorb the disputed land around Flathead Lake. The Indians were eager for this arrangement, he said, and the region wanted by them was fit only for hunting and fishing (except for a small area north of Flathead Lake, where some settlers were located). Indeed, he thought it would be worthwhile for the government to grant the northern land in exchange for the lower part of the reservation. The change was never accomplished, and problems continued.[97]

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[96]Ronan to Commissioner, 20 August 1883.

[97]Ronan to Joseph K. McCammon, 7 November 1882, Special Cases No. 55, Office of Indian Affairs, Land Division.

Ronan's request was motivated by speeches of both Chief Arlee and Chief Eneas given at the 1882 council to arrange for the passage of the Northern Pacific Railroad through the reservation. Arlee complained that he was "crowded on both sides." White men ran cattle on the reservation, and at the same time stole Arlee's. "I want you," said Arlee to a government representative, "to get the whites off the land at the head of Flathead Lake." He claimed that Indians would "always be in trouble with white men if they remain so near us." Further, complained Arlee, "At Camas Prairie they sell whisky; they go there and get whisky, and our boys bother us about whisky."[98] Eneas also protested the presence of whites and the ending of the reservation half way up Flathead Lake.[99]

In 1883 Ronan found on Indian land four herds of cattle belonging to the whites. The Indians did not object, since they were receiving payments for the use of their land, but Ronan sent telegrams to the ranchers giving them thirty days to remove their cattle or have them impounded--probably the first order of this type ever given on the Flathead

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[98]McCammon, "Report in Relation to an Agreement Made Between Joseph Kay McCammon, Assistant Attorney General, on behalf of the U.S., and the Confederated Tribes of the Flathead, Kootenay, and Upper Pend d'Oreilles Indians, for Sale of a Portion of Their Reservation in Montana for the Use of the Northern Pacific Railroad," p. 9, Montana Historical Library, Helena, Montana.

[99]Ibid., pp. 9-10.

Reservation.[100] The ranchers protested, saying that they thought that they were beyond the reservation border. They admitted that their cattle strayed over the line occasionally, and that they each paid $300 to the Indians, mostly for their goodwill. They claimed that except for a few Indians who dug roots for themselves, none came within twenty miles of the area.[101] Ronan intended to take a liberal view of whites living on or using reservation land without causing friction, and since nothing more was said about this matter, the ranchers' arrangements with the Indians probably continued.

No direct or decisive action was ever taken regarding white trespass on the reservation; reports of trespass (usually in relation to grazing cattle) continued to occupy some of Ronan's time as long as he was agent. The Indian council once ruled that all charges would be waived if white cattle were removed from Indian land; and Ronan once said that trespassing whites should be arrested as a test case. No whites were arrested, but Chief Eneas was threatened with arrest for trying to push claim jumpers off Indian land.[102]

If white violations of the reservation were sometimes troublesome, Indian actions outside the reservation were

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[100]Ronan to Commissioner, 20 August 1883.

[101]*Ibid*.

[102]Ronan to Commissioner, 9 August 1892.

frequently more destructive and almost always caused more fear. Where white actions had been peaceful for the most part, despite their illegal nature, Indian acts were often magnified by liquor and racial antagonism. These acts, too, extended back nearly to the commencement of the Flathead Reservation. Horse stealing by Indians was widely reported as the Indians roamed the country around the reservation.[103] Governor Potts once wrote to Agent Medary that Flathead Indians from his Agency were roaming over non-reservation settlements. "A band caused a great fright in Meagher Co. a few days since," he said. He pointed out that the mere presence of Flatheads caused fright, since hostile Indians were also about.[104]

Drinking frequently accompanied Flathead actions (whites used the word "Flathead" without differentiating between Flathead, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille, and therefore it is usually impossible to distinguish them). Jack Edmonson and Irwin Callier, Beaver Creek residents, wrote that Indians had been camped in the area for about two weeks, daily getting drunk and raiding the houses around them. Said the writer,

> I have tried to get them out two or three times. They are very sasy, to day the /_y_/ set fire to the prarie and burnt up one mans house and every thing around it. They are a party of Flat Heads and I believe they are on the road to the Judith.

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[103]Sully to Commissioner, 29 September 1869, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 489.

[104]Potts to Medary, 6 August 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 502.

> I would like to know if we have got to stand this kind of thing or not. if we have all right and if we aint I would like to know what to do.[105]

Others wrote of roving Flatheads killing sheep and scattering flocks, and some whites petitioned the government to enforce its reservation restrictions:

> We the undersigned Settlers of Selish Missoula County Territory of Montana, wish the Indians of the Flathead reservation would be retained on said reservation. They are braking our fences, trespass on our lands and destroy our crops, and otherwise annoy our familys.[106]

Other settlers, more atuned to the frontier "tradition" of self-reliance, were not as proper about solutions. Thomas Smith of Montana Territory wrote in 1885 to Peter Ronan as follows:

> i beg leafe to ask you to be kind anuf to keep your indians at home. . .as they are a bothering some here at present. there is a gang of them Camped now at bull river. . .and they are a stealing game out of our traps and a takeing the traps also and if there Cant be a Stop put to it Riete away i will for my part put 2 Winchester Rifels and 2 .45 army Revolvers to work at them and i will make Short Work of uncle Sams pets i have plenty of fire arms and plenty amonnishion and i will shote an indian as soon as i would a Wolf or Ciotey if they don't keep out of here and let the traps and game alone that is in them and i wont be alone in the mater as there is 5 more trapers that are fighting mad by the acshions here but i told them that i would Write to you to Day and Se What could be Dun about it before we commenced on them. . . .

If nothing was done, Smith promised, "the Wolvs will have a feast for a Couple of months to Come."[107] While this may be

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[105]Jack Edmonson and Irwin Callier to Major Reed, 11 October 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 505.

[106]Petition of 30 to 40 citizens of Salish, Missoula County, Montana Territory, no date, received by the Bureau of Indian Affairs 17 July 1884.

[107]Thomas Smith to Ronan, 10 October 1885.

an amusing letter, it is also revealing. It suggests the attitude of many white men toward the Indians, who could be troublesome, to say the least. It also suggests the kind of petty but continuing activities of Indians roaming off the reservation.

Another letter also aired valid complaints. Rebecca Grade Shaw, of Egan, Montana, wrote to President Harrison in 1889, noting that her earlier petitions and letters to President Cleveland had not been answered. Her complaints were familiar to area residents: Ronan let Indians roam wherever they wished, and they entered cabins and took what they liked; they frightened her children; they repeatedly entered her house and ordered her "to 'go cook.'" She was writing during the time of the Kootenai-white murders, and on behalf of other settlers she threatened that a massacre "equal to Minnesota" would develop if soldiers did not corral the Indians. She closed her letters with these words:

> Please do not throw this into the scrap basket but rember /sic/ how unprotected we all are. A short time since I was thrown from my saddle horse and broke my right arm in three places so please excuse my left hand it did not learn to write in Indiana and I dont want to be scalped by Indians. Send us help.[108]

There seemed to be little that Ronan or anyone else could do under the circumstances. Policing the reservation to the degree that bands of Indians could be prevented from leaving would be virtually impossible, and whites insisted

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[108]Rebecca Grace Shaw to President Harrison, 20 August 1889.

on living as close to the border as it was possible for them to do without violating Indian titles. The Indians continued to roam, and whites continued to challenge them. One settler, responding to what he considered to be inequities, wrote that "We settlers do not consider that the Indian Agents report of facts obtained largely through an interpreter should be taken as conclusive evidence of the settler being in the wrong. . . ."[109]

Several allusions have been made to the presence of the Northern Pacific Railroad on the Flathead Reservation. The 1855 Stevens Treaty made allowances for rights of way for future roads or railroads. In September, 1882, the Indians signed an agreement with Joseph K. McCammon, Assistant Attorney General, to cede a strip of land 200 feet wide along a railroad line which entered near the Coriagan Defile, moved via Finley Creek to the Jocko River and thence to the Pend d'Oreille River, passing out of the reservation near the mouth of the Missoula River--a distance of fifty-three miles. The strip contained 1,300 acres, to which was added five station house tracts totalling 130 acres. In return for this land, the Indians were paid $16,000 ($11.18 per acre), plus $7,625 for damages to improved areas. The money, for which the government was reimbursed by the Northern Pacific Railroad, was deposited in the Treasury to the credit of the

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[109]Letter, unsigned, unaddressed, from citizens complaining about Indians holding land outside reservation boundaries, 18 March 1892.

Indians and was to be spent for their benefit at the direction of the Secretary of the Interior.[110]

Although they signed the agreement, the Indians--particularly Arlee, one of the negotiators--were fearful that the reservation would be overrun by whites. More than a year before the negotiations, Arlee had written to President Garfield that the Jocko Reservation was now the Flatheads' home and that they were comfortable and contented. He worried, he said, that his people would be debased by the influx of white men, and he asked that he be permitted a trip to Washington, D. C. to discuss the matter.[111] Arlee had reason to worry, for he had never seen a railroad, as his responses during negotiations in 1882 suggest. At one point in the talks he asked, "I want to know about the depots; what are they?" Upon learning what they were, he demanded a million dollars for the land cessions to the railroad--a blocking tactic and one of many such efforts throughout the meetings.

McCammon relied on his initial statement to the Indians, that the railroad company had the right to build through the reservation, and that the government was more than generous

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[110]"Treaty Between the U.S. and Confederated Tribes on the Flathead Reservation, 2 September 1882, Special Cases No. 55, Office of Indian Affairs, Land Division; Commissioner to Secretary of the Interior, 13 January 1883, in "Report in Relation to an Agreement Made Between Joseph Kay McCammon. . . ," pp. 2-3.

[111]Arlee to Garfield, 6 May 1881.

in offering to pay ten dollars per acre, four times what it was paying for private land.[112]

Dissention among the Indians and the obvious strength of the government's position decided the outcome. Arlee was opposed by Chief Michelle of the Pend d'Oreilles, the only Indian who stood to gain directly from the railroad--he had fifteen acres of land in the proposed right-of-way.[113] Most of the chiefs--Arlee, Adolph, Eneas, and Michael--and headmen favored exchanging the strip of land for land to the north of the reservation, and although McCammon promised to recommend that this be arranged, an exchange was never made. Finally the Indians bowed to the inevitable and 219 signed the agreement.[114] McCammon had done what he had been told to do: he had secured the signatures of the majority of all adult males on the reservation.

Construction of the railroad began soon after the agreement was signed. About twenty-five hundred whites were expected to begin working on the reservation, and although no one expected serious trouble, it was agreed that it would be advisable to have a small number of mounted troops in the area.[115] From the beginning--in February, 1882, when survey

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[112]"Report in Relation to an Agreement Between Joseph Kay McCammon. . . ," p. 12.

[113]Ibid., p. 24.

[114]Ibid., p. 20.

[115]Lieut. M. C. Wilkinson to Office of Superintendent of Construction, Western Division, Northern Pacific Railroad Company, 5 February 1883.

crews appeared six months before the agreement was signed--the Indians had exhibited "a praise worthy friendliness and docility of disposition" toward the workers, even though they felt uneasy about the unknown aspects of a railroad.

There were occasional scares. In the summer of 1883 a frantic telegram from the operator at Arlee, one of the stations, alerted the military: "Indians have a party corralled and more Indians coming. Have commenced shooting. For God's sake send help."[116] Troops were dispatched, but little came of the matter. At other times drunken Indians tried to halt work trains or made demands on isolated railroad men. Ronan managed to handle most situations, although he was often forced to resort to threats of using Indian police or the military.[117]

Actually Ronan was amazed that problems were not compounded. There were, he said in October, 1882, no serious problems and none anticipated. There were annoyances from non-railroad whites who took advantage of the open condition of the reservation, and from railroad employees "whose every petty cause of complaint against the Indians is immediately reported to me. . . . I am expected at once to drive to the scene and settle the most triffling [sic] matters of

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[116]Telegram and correspondence regarding 1883 Indian Trouble at Arlee, 8 August 1883.

[117]Ruger to Adj. Gen., Department of Dakota, Ft. Snelling, telegram, 9 August 1883; J. H. Buckley to J. H. Mitchell, telegram, 11 March 1885, Special Cases No. 55, Office of Indian Affairs, Land Division; Ronan to Comm., 17 December 1885; Ronan to Commissioner, 9 March 1892.

dispute."[118] He was also forced to be especially watchful that whiskey was not brought onto the reservation. He worried because, as he said, with thousands of men in the construction crews, "camp followers, gamblers, ex-convicts, lewd women, etc., are rapidly advancing to the borders of the reservation, accompanied by portable saloons, gambling houses, etc., merchants and traders of all description who also advance with the construction party. . . ." He did not know how long the fairly calm state of affairs would continue.[119]

Fortunately the calm state prevailed, and the Northern Pacific contributed to the welfare of the Indians by buying timber from their reservation and employing them to cut and mill it.[120] Perhaps the determination of the usually anti-Indian Weekly Missoulian to see that the railroad kept its promises helped: it said that "Our untutored brethren don't propose to be bulldozed by any railroad company."[121]

Prior to the coming of Peter Ronan in 1877 it is clear that the Hell Gate treaty of 1855 was not being carried out by the United States on the reservation. A rapid turnover

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[118] Ronan to Commissioner, Monthly Report, 1 October 1882.

[119] Ronan to Commissioner, Monthly Report, 1 November 1882.

[120] H. Villard to Secretary of the Interior, 28 October 1882, Special Cases No. 55, Office of Indian Affairs, Land Division; and Secretary of the Interior to Commissioner, 25 October 1882, Special Cases No. 55, Office of Indian Affairs, Land Division.

[121] Weekly Missoulian, 5 September 1884, p. 2.

of incompetent agents, the shortage of money for reservation needs, and the run-down condition of the agency all contributed to hard times for the Indians. Had the presence of whites near the reservation been as great in 1875 as it was in 1885 or 1890, serious trouble might have caused the Indians to erupt into violence.

In summation, it can be said that by the mid-1880's reservation life had become bearable for most Indians, the Kootenais excepted. The Flatheads in particular seemed to settle into a stable way of life. Agency affairs were honestly conducted and in good order; Ronan, despite some reports to the contrary, was generally well-liked and respected by both Indians and whites. The various incidents both within and without the reservation never really came close to touching off a general uprising among the reservation residents. Agency services, though hampered by distance from most reservation Indians, and not totally effective, were nonetheless available and used by some Indians. Farming by the Indians was ever advancing; fenced farms, good crops, and ample herds of livestock helped ease their transition from hunting-gathering peoples to sedentary, agrarian peoples who traded in the white market and were ever more aware of infringements on their rights.

As the Flathead Reservation matured, life for Chief Charlot and his band became more difficult. Prior to about 1872 they would have gained little by moving to the reservation, and thus reality sustained their proud refusal to leave

the Bitter Root Valley. But after 1872 dual developments demanded a change: the settlers in the valley pressed in upon the Bitter Root Indians and their lands until they became homeless and reservation benefits became more predictable. Charlot, however, worried about losing face by giving in to removal, and he was repelled by the appointment of Arlee to the headchieftainship. Pride, not concern for his people, caused him to shun the reservation beyond the time when removal became pragmatic.

CHAPTER IX

ST. IGNATIUS MISSION

In 1854 the Jesuits relocated St. Ignatius Mission, abandoning their establishment on Clark's Fork and beginning anew on their present site on the Flathead reservation. What follows here is not a history of the mission, for that is not necessary. Rather, a brief study of the mission's role is more in order, for it was considered by many to be a leader in the civilization of the Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles, and Kootenais who moved to the reservation. The mission rather than the agency became the educator; the day school, which marked the beginning of its work in education, was later transformed into an industrial boarding school. The mission provided needed services--that of millers and smiths, for example--when the agency was virtually non-functional. St. Ignatius Mission was also the center of some community life; the majority of the reservation Indians lived closer to the church than to the agency.

Once the idea of relocating the mission was proposed in the summer of 1854, the Jesuits wasted no time making the idea an accomplished fact. By 24 September 1854 Father Pierre de Smet had helped select a site which is still known

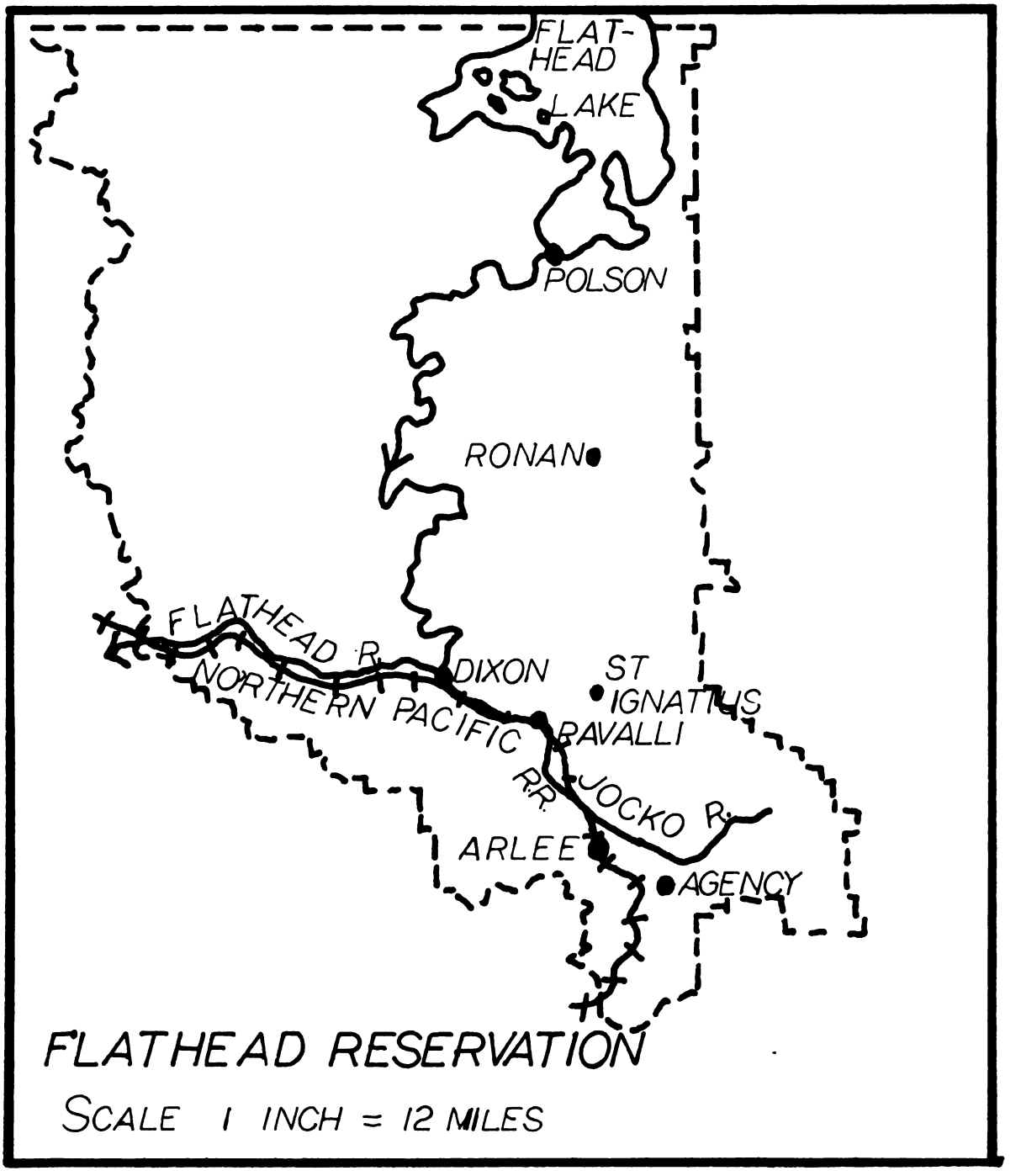
FLAT-
HEAD
LAKE
POLSON
RONAN
FLATHEAD R.
DIXON
ST
IGNATIUS
NORTHERN PACIFIC
RAVALLI
R.R.
JOCKO R.
ARLEE
AGENCY
FLATHEAD RESERVATION
SCALE 1 INCH = 12 MILES

FIGURE 4

for its natural beauty.[1] Not far from the mission--and the present town of St. Ignatius--is Flathead Lake, and behind the community looms a ridge of mountains that is striking if forbidding, teeming with game and blanketed on its lower quarter with trees. By 1857 Father Adrian Hoeken could write that in addition to himself, the mission staff included a farmer, two brothers (one of whom acted as dispenser, carpenter, and miller); a blacksmith; a baker and gardener; and a carpenter and sacristan.[2] By 1860 a large church had replaced the log church. Sixty-one feet wide and 100 feet long, and constructed chiefly by Indians and half-breeds at a cost of ten thousand dollars, the handsome new building could seat about twelve hundred people. (It was replaced in the 1890's by a brick church.)[3] Two years later, in 1862, Agent Charles Hutchins noted that the mission's buildings were spacious and were serving as the headquarters of a rather large operation. Enclosed fields produced surplus crops that were sold to whites and the agency. The Brothers employed a corp of helpers--assistant millers, sawyers, farmers, and general laborers. Saw and flour mills were running smoothly.[4] In 1870 forty-five acres were cultivated and

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[1]Hiram Chittenden and Alfred Talbot Richardson, Life, Letters, and Travels of Father de Smet, Vol. IV, pp. 1233-1234.

[2]Ibid., p. 1242.

[3]Missoula Pioneer, 24 November 1870, p. 3.

[4]Charles Hutchins to Calvin H. Hale, 2 December 1862, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 908.

FIGURE B

St. Ignatius Mission--church and school for Indian Girls; note the original church, on the extreme right, which was built in 1860 (Photograph courtesy of the Montana Historical Society)

produced six hundred bushels of wheat, and in 1874 Inspector J. D. Bevier wrote of mills, barns and residences, large school houses, and gardens. He estimated that between three and four hundred acres were being cultivated and that large herds of horses and cattle were being tended.[5]

It is significant that the site was chosen in 1854, a year before the making of the Stevens Treaty. The Church's prior claim to the land seemed to preclude, at least informally, any challenge to its extralegal existence. Charles Hutchins wrote to Calvin H. Hale, his superintendent, that although the Brothers directly violated the Stevens Treaty, which forbade white persons to live or trade on the reservation without express permission, custom was prevailing. They gave no trouble, he said, and he would not attempt to remove them from the reservation without special instructions.[6]

Apart from the matter of schools (which will be considered below), the mission proved to be a boon to the reservation. Hutchins was pleased that the Indians were receiving help there and thought that the mission promised to be a restraining influence on them. He said,

> I believe they possess a hold on the Indian mind, that could not be obtained by religious preachers of other denominations or by any secular influences. The single aim of the priests has been to make Catholics of the heathen, there their work is done; but they say, that it is practicable to elevate these tribes into civilized

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[5]J. D. Bevier to Commissioner, 18 July 1874, from Inspectors' File No. 37, Office of Indian Affairs.

[6]Hutchins to Hale, 2 December 1864, Letters Received, Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 908.

> pursuits and habits to some degree and what had restrained them from the attempt of such cultivation has been the want of requisite means.[7]

From time to time the mission sold supplies to the agency. Beef and flour were the usual commodities, often delivered to the agency but sometimes distributed directly to the Indians. Occasionally the priests had difficulty collecting payment for their produce, although in this respect they were simply experiencing the frustrations of many a merchant in the area.[8]

It seems that the presence of the mission also improved the moral climate of the Flathead Agency--if Superintendent Wright's observations are accurate. He said that this agency was the only one in his superintendency that met in any way the standards he believed necessary for the service. Bureau employees, he said, should be of fine moral standing and "strictly temperate," and they should have families. Each agency should have a boarding school and a mission to furnish examples to the Indians.[9] But if Wright saw that the influence of the mission on the Flathead agency was good, his was an observation missed by most inspectors.

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[7]Ibid.

[8]Vouchers issued by Charles Jones to Lawrence B. Palladino, 1872; Commissioner to Palladino, 11 September 1873 and 14 October 1873; Commissioner to Board of Indian Commissioners, 18 July 1874; letter to Bevier (writer's name illegible), 24 July 1874; and Commissioner to Bevier, 25 August 1874, all found in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 498.

[9]James Wright to Commissioner, 11 March 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

Still, area whites were gratified that success was being made in the giant effort to "civilize" the Indians. No doubt it confirmed their belief that white values were superior. In 1870 the Missoula Pioneer sent reporters to St. Ignatius, who were invited to church "by a full-blooded 'child of the forest.'" The observers said that "the air of contentment and comfort amongst this small colony of the heretofore 'untutored minds,' is extraordinary." They took note of

> . . .the Indian occupants dwelling in peace and harmony with themselves, and the scalping knife forever buried in the deep furrows of the plow; and where once the silence of ages reigned undisturbed, glad hosannas are now wafted on the breeze by those who, a few years ago, glorified in torture and the tomahawk; the sterile valley has been made to yield fields of waving grain, and the range of the buffalo to contribute to the products of industry and agriculture.[10]

That the article contained poetic liberties did not bother the Pioneer; it was what the subscribers wanted--indeed, expected--to read about St. Ignatius Mission, even though the paper still ran stories about the untrustworthiness of the "savages."

The mission also furnished a jail that seldom held many prisoners--at least for very long. For many years it lacked the necessary gratings for the windows. Special Justice Agent Marchant wrote that "as it is now it affords every means

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[10]Missoula Pioneer, 24 November 1870, p. 3.

of escape for prisoners confined in it, and is, therefore, perfectly useless as a place for confinement of prisoners."[11]

In cases of need the Jesuit doctor, rather than the agency doctor, served the Indians. Father Ravalli, who lived so long in the area and who had had training as a physician, filled in frequently. Daniel Shanahan sent in a voucher, which had been signed by Jones, for one hundred dollars for Ravalli's services and added that it was "very little in proportion to the services rendered."[12] Peter Whaley hired Ravalli in 1875 until a new doctor could arrive on the reservation.[13]

The efforts of the priests to strengthen their position on the reservation sometimes led to friction between agency and mission officials. In 1859 John Owen requested Henry M. Chase to investigate allegations that the missionaries were interfering with the operation of the Hudson's Bay Company post on the reservation and that they were "using influences with the Indians. . . ." He instructed Chase to be tactful: the priests were "forgivers" and they might have done wrong

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[11]Marchant to Attorney General of the United States, 23 May 1889, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, National Archives and Records Service, Record Group No. 75 (hereafter all letters will be from this source unless otherwise noted).

[12]Voucher for Antony Ravalli, signed by Jones on 1 July 1872, forwarded by Charles Shanahan to Commissioner, 17 June 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 495.

[13]Peter Whaley to Commissioner, 20 January 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 503.

things without knowing it.[14] Chase found that Father Menetry was "guilty" of interfering with the administration of the Stevens Treaty. Chase was upset that the mission sought to win the devotion of the Indians by furnishing services that the agency was expected to provide. (He did not acknowledge that most of these services were not being provided by the agency.) "From what I can see, and hear," said Chase, "I am satisfied, and I speak without prejudice, that the Rev. Fathers are using their influence with the Indians of this Nation much to the detriment of the public Service." Chase asked Owen to warn the Indians when they returned from the hunt that they were not to listen to the preaching of the priests any more.[15]

As the above suggests, cooperation in the early period between the government and the mission was largely lacking. When Lansdale took up his duties in 1855 at what was to become the permanent site of the agency, Father Hoeken, who claimed to have given Lansdale "all the assistance of which we were capable," hoped for reciprocal action from the government--perhaps the construction of a small church at St. Ignatius. There was, however, no real basis for this hope.[16]

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[14]John Owen to Henry M. Chase, 12 October 1859, Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1853-1874, letters from Employees assigned to the Eastern District, or Flathead Agency, and the Blackfeet Agency, 7 December 1854-9 June 1863, M-5, Roll 22 (1945).

[15]Chase to Owen, 18 October 1859, Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1853-1874, M-5, Roll 22.

[16]Chittenden and Richardson, de Smet, IV, p. 1241.

In 1871 Father Palladino wrote to agent Jones, hoping to capitalize on the wish of many that the agency be moved. He suggested that after the agency were moved closer to the mission, the government could rent the mission's mill.[17] A year later, when the Flatheads were telling Garfield that they preferred to live away from the mission, Palladino was writing to the Commissioner that they preferred to locate near the mission and not near the agency. Commissioner E. P. Smith telegraphed Superintendent Wright that the confusion should be cleared up.[18] By the time Ronan became agent in 1877 church-agency relations had smoothed out a bit, having weathered the storm of school funding to be considered below. Ronan was especially favorable to the efforts of the missionaries.

The school at the mission had humble beginnings. Late in 1862 Father Urban Grassi told Charles Hutchins that the mission was willing to assume the responsibility for the educational provisions of the Stevens Treaty. For funds to pay teachers, and a first year consideration that Hutchins estimated would be nearly eight thousand dollars, the Brothers would furnish the required teachers. The services of the Sisters of Charity would be obtained for the girls. The mission would maintain the physical facilities at no cost to the government, perhaps even adding buildings at its own

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[17]Palladino to Jones, 14 June 1871, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 491.

[18]Commissioner to Wright, telegram, 9 April 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

expense. On the recommendation of Hutchins, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs approved the proposed arrangement.[19]

Despite very tentative funding and an uncertainty about the number of students, the school opened in 1863 as a day school. Father Grassi insisted that it should be a boarding school, which would eliminate parental influence and separate the new students from their uneducated peers.[20] Money shortages, however, precluded such a venture at the outset. The average attendance in 1863 and 1864 was about twenty-five or thirty students, only a tiny fraction of the number of children who could have attended; and their record was spotty. Children often left on hunts with parents or failed to attend school for other reasons. There was in fact some doubt among the Indians about the efficacy of the school.

Two years after it opened, the school closed for a year. According to Charles Hutchins, after two years of schooling and the expenditure of about two thousand dollars, not one Indian yet knew the alphabet. School had lost its novelty, he said, and the Indians had stopped coming; clearly the day school concept would not work, and a boarding system had to be established.[21] John Owen, writing to Father Grassi, confirmed what Hutchins had said.[22]

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[19]Hutchins to Hale, 2 December 1862, Letters Received, Washington Superintendency, M-234, Roll 908.

[20]Peter Ronan to Commissioner, 1 September 1890.

[21]Hutchins, Annual Report for 1865, written 15 October 1864, H.R. Executive Document 1, 39th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 2, pp. 424-426, Serial 1248.

[22]Hutchins to Urban Grassi, 10 October 1864, in Montana Historical Library, Helena, Montana.

The Jesuits were persistent, however, and reopened the school in 1865 with government help. The boys were served by a day school, but a boarding school was soon developed for the girls. The entire operation appeared to be moderately successful and served twenty or thirty children at a time until 1878, when the first contractual arrangements between the mission and the government were made for forty children at twenty-five dollars per capita per quarter. In 1882 the number of students was raised to sixty. On 1 June 1883 that number was increased to 100, only to be expanded to 150 later that year. (The last fifty children came from the Blackfoot and Piegan tribes.) During this time the school was especially helpful to children of indigent families and to orphans. Manual labor was taught to both boys and girls, although the curricula differed. The former learned smithing, carpentry, painting, and farming, while the girls were taught how to keep house, wash, sew, and cook. J. W. Daniels, an inspector, reported that the progress of the girls "would have been creditable to a class of white girls of similar ages." He also said that the day school for boys was not satisfactory even though the students appeared to be industrious.[23] Inspector J. D. Bevier visited the mission in 1874 and reported that it had an "extensive establishment." Their

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[23]J. W. Daniels to Commissioner, 13 November 1873, Inspectors' File No. 99½.

boarding school was working out well, he said, but the day school fluctuated between ten and fifty students, depending on the time of the year.[24]

On 1 July 1885 several workshops were opened, and the school was accepted by the government as an industrial school. The contract with the government was still for 150 students, but now at the rate of $37.50 per person per quarter. Meanwhile construction of school facilities was progressing; additional quarters were built, converting the boys' day school into a boarding school. Soon the government allowed money for up to 300 pupils at the new rate. The Weekly Missoulian published an article by Col. W. F. Wheeler, who inspected the school just before its opening. Wheeler, a prominent citizen of Montana, a twenty-year resident of the Territory, the publisher of the Helena Live Stock Journal, and a Protestant, was very much impressed. He was highly complimentary of the neat farms, houses and sawyer enterprises being operated by the Indians. They were, he thought, good ranchers who knew livestock and horse values. He particularly liked the three-story quarters for the fathers, and he spoke of roomy accommodations in separate buildings for eighty-four girls and eighty-two boys.[25]

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[24]Bevier to Commissioner, 18 July 1874, from Inspectors' File No. 37.

[25]The Weekly Missoulian, 26 June 1885.

By 1890 the school was a thriving, well-developed enterprise serving Flatheads, Kootenais, Pend d'Oreilles, Blackfeet, and Piegans. The buildings and other facilities were accurately described by A. J. Standing, Assistant Superintendent of the Carlisle Industrial School in Pennsylvania. A water tower supplied water for general use and for a fire brigade. The boys' three story dormitory was the most prominent structure of the mission, having a frontage of 120 feet and two wings ninety feet long and thirty feet wide. A three story girls' building was also outstanding but not quite so large. The Sisters of Charity operated the girls' school, and the Ursuline Nuns, a kindergarten for fifty-four children from three to ten years of age. The sisters ran their own farm independently of the mission farm; with the aid of their students they cultivated 160 acres and kept a herd of cows and work stock. The mission farm of 480 acres of irrigated land was worked by the male students. Fourteen hundred cattle provided an income for the mission when sold for beef. Forty-five milk cows supplied all of the mission needs and 1,400 pounds of surplus butter to be sold throughout the area. Standing noted that the mission ran saw and grist mills, both water powered, and raised hogs and horses for revenue.[26] Four years earlier Ronan had reported that employees for the boys' school included two teachers of academic subjects, two industrial teachers, a

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[26]A. J. Standing to Commissioner, 9 October 1890.

FIGURE C

St. Ignatius Mission--church and boarding school, November, 1895 (Photograph courtesy of the Montana Historical Society)

seamstress, a cook, laundress, gardener, dairy maid, and a baker. The girls' school and farm were run by fewer people: a teacher and an assistant, a carpenter, wheelwright, blacksmith, harness and shoe maker, and a farmer. Several of the Brothers and Sisters taught, too, as frequent references indicate.[27]

Like Col. Wheeler, most observers had praise for the mission's work in education. Perhaps they were surprised by any improvements in the Indians. In 1873 Superintendent Wright reported that the twenty or thirty boys in school were making some progress, and that the girls were spelling, reading, and writing very well. He recommended the boarding school for boys and was pleased with the general progress of the students.[28] Peter Ronan liked the mission's work so much that he requested government money to purchase cattle for graduating students to give them a good start in farming. (His request was denied.)[29] Martin Maginnis telegraphed the Commissioner in 1883 that the mission school did more for the Indians than anything else on the reservation and that it deserved the government's full support.[30] John T. Wallace, Special Agent for the Justice Department, confessed after a

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[27]Ronan to Commissioner, 1 May 1886.

[28]Wright to Commissioner, Report, 27 March 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

[29]Ronan to Commissioner, 28 September 1886, No. 26395.

[30]Martin Maginnis to Commissioner, telegram, 1 October 1883.

visit to the school that "for the first time in my life I realized the force of refined Christian influence upon the Indians."[31] General Henry B. Carrington thought that the conduct of the Indians at the school was superior and that they were very polite and industrious. Said the general,

> The fact that the English language alone is used tends to civilize and Americanize, and in conversation with several of the boys I found such an intelligent recognition of the true Great Spirit and of the mission of Jesus to earth that I could not realize that I was among men, whose devastation has [sic] been so evil in the District of my old command, twenty years ago.[32]

Perhaps observing programs such as that honoring "Franchise Day" helped convince visitors of the merits of Indian education. On this occasion, the boys' band played the "Star-Spangled Banner," "Tuba's Joy," and a march called "Red, White and Blue." The program also included patriotic recitations, "Hail Columbia," and a grand finale, "Three Cheers for Our Country."[33]

By 1890 official recognition of the mission's educational accomplishments was included in the reports of many observers. Merial A. Dorchester, a special agent for the Indian School Service, wrote that the Mission's efforts were successful and that she was especially pleased with the kindergarten.[34] Inspector Miller echoed her praise, noting

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[31]John T. Wallace to Attorney General of the United States, 1 March 1886.

[32]Henry B. Carrington to Commissioner, 28 October 1889.

[33]Program, included with letter J. D'Aste to Commissioner, 21 February 1890.

[34]Merial A. Dorchester to Commissioner, 10 December 1890.

as she had that girls remained in school longer than boys.[35] The supervisor of the Crow Agency filed a report of the mission school and pronounced it a "very complete plant." "The location is beautiful and healthy," he said, and "the school as a whole is in advance of anything I have seen yet."[36] William T. Leeke, another inspector, gave a glowing report of the students and the facilities, although he, like most of the visitors, lamented the fact that boys did not remain in school as long as girls.[37] The reason for this is clear to anyone familiar with family patterns of Indian life. The women did much of the hard work, and Indian girls often preferred to stay in school rather than join their mothers in the work, while boys, faced with a more carefree existence outside of school, were glad to leave. In all, about half a dozen other inspectors also made similar comments about the school system at St. Ignatius.

The only real complaints about the school from Indians came from the Bitter Root Flatheads who moved to the reservation during the early 1890's. Charlot said that "there is too much church and not enough to eat" at the school. The comment was contained in a letter written in 1892 by J. R. McLaren, a prominent Bitter Root citizen, who said that

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[35]Inspector Miller (no first name available), extracts of report, 15 December 1891.

[36]O. H. Parker to Commissioner, 30 May 1892.

[37]William T. Leeke to Commissioner, 25 February 1892.

because the Church in the Bitter Root Valley had controlled them, the Indians resented its influence on the reservation.[38] Another letter to the Commissioner, from L. Van Gorp of St. Ignatius, pointed out that the newly-arrived Flatheads did not mingle well with the rest of the reservation Indians. The mission, however, was furnishing school facilities near the agency and wanted permission (and funds) to run it as a branch of the main school.[39]

After the first, stumbling years, and particularly after the contractual funding of the mission school in 1878, money was usually not a problem. The exception was in 1874, during Charles Shanahan's administration. Faced with the extensive cost of constructing buildings in preparation for the removal of some Flatheads to the reservation, and aware of Garfield's promise that a school for them would be established at the agency, Shanahan suspended the salaries of the mission teachers.[40] He could have saved $2100 a year by this action, but strong opposition to this policy precluded its continuation. Only $525 was saved before agency funding of mission teachers was resumed.[41]

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[38]J. R. McLaren to Commissioner, 29 March 1892.

[39]L. Van Gorp to Commissioner, 4 April 1892.

[40]Whaley to Commissioner, 12 August 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 500.

[41]"K" from Jocko Agency to editor of New North West, 15 April 1874, found in "A few newspaper articles relative to the Jocko Indian Agency and St. Ignatius Mission," presented by Charles Schaft, 1 May 1874, found in Montana Historical Library, Helena, Montana; Charles Ewing to Commissioner, 11 December 1876, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234,

Reaction to Shanahan's move was swift. Probably most influential was Charles Ewing, Catholic Commissioner for Indian Missions, who wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs requesting that Shanahan be ordered by telegram to revoke his suspension order and, at the same time, re-appoint the agency blacksmith, who had been dismissed in the effort to save money. Ewing said that just as millers, smiths, and carpenters were provided for by the 1855 treaty, so too were teachers; and money for these functions could not be applied to other things.[42] In the press, L. Van Gorp wrote that education was critical to the Indians' development and that the mission was providing it at bargain prices. The teachers' salaries were of little attraction, he said, and only dedicated sacrifice on the part of the Sisters and Brothers at the mission could achieve a full teaching staff. Further, said Gorp, the teachers' salaries were the only school funds received from the government. The mission had erected the boarding school buildings at its own expense; in 1864, 1865, and 1866 no money had been received from the agency; and many of the Sisters had taught without any salary, and without vacations for up to four consecutive years in an effort to meet demands.[43]

Roll 504; Sister Paul Niki to Commissioner, 31 October 1875, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 502; and William Clagett to James A. Garfield, 24 December 1876, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 507.

[42]Ewing to Commissioner, 4 May 1874, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 498.

[43]L. Van Gorp to Helena Weekly Independent, 3 March 1874, found in "A few newspaper articles. . . ."

Despite the protests of Shanahan, and support of his stand by an anonymous letter writer at the agency who said that Shanahan had built up "an entirely new Agency" within a year, renewed funding was soon achieved--and Shanahan lost his job. It was chiefly because of his action in respect to the mission teachers that he was replaced by Peter Whaley. It appears that Shanahan may have intended the suspension to last for only a few months, at a time when many of the Indian boys were not in school. This was suggested by "K," in a letter to the New North West. Shanahan did not confirm this, however, and although his intentions may have been honorable, his diplomacy was unenlightened.[44]

Despite the praise for the school, and support for its continued funding, its success was limited. At best it enlightened a relatively small number of Indians. Its total complement of children never exceeded three hundred, and often it was half that, at a time when the school drew from a total population of over a thousand Salish plus a considerable number of Blackfeet and Piegans. Virtually every inspector or visitor noted that although the kindergarten and girls' boarding school were impressive, the boys' program was less successful. Boys were frequently withdrawn from the school for hunts; and attendance, not required and usually not encouraged by parents, was often sporadic. (In fairness, however, it should be pointed out that white attendance at white,

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[44]"K" to editor of New North West, 15 April 1874, printed in 25 April 1874 edition of New North West, p. 2.

rural schools may not have been much better, since school attendance at this time was casual in many parts of the country.) There was opposition to the school from the Flatheads who moved to the reservation with Arlee, and only a few of these children attended the mission school.

Thus, if the school succeeded with many of the children who did attend, its overall influence on the reservation was not great. A. J. Standing correctly gauged its success. In a report more perceptive than that of any other inspector, he said,

> In my judgment, the [the missionaries] are faithfully filling the conditions of their contract with the Government, but with a thoroughly proselyting Catholic bias which, whatever it may do for the Indians in the future under the impetus of education, shows no adequate civilizing results for its past efforts in the immediate vicinity of the mission."[45]

There was, according to Standing, no evidence of thrift or "advanced civilization among the Indians who attended the church or lived. . ." nearby. He found no specific fault with the school, but it bothered him that "the system is not consonant with American educational ideas, and the Faculty and staff are foreign by birth, whatever may be their present condition as to citizenship." "Their lives," he said, "aside from their duties as managers and instructors, are those of men zealous for their Order, and the interest of their Church." Standing concluded that although the mission school was possibly the best school of its class in the country, its system--

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[45]Standing to Commissioner, 9 October 1890.

including strict separation of boys and girls--could not prepare students for life under normal conditions.[46]

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[46] *Ibid*.

CHAPTER X

FUTILE YEARS AND FINAL REMOVAL

Considered in earlier chapters were President Grant's order of removal, James Garfield's agreement with the Flatheads, the attempts of reservation officials to comply with this agreement, and the subsequent departure of Chief Arlee and his followers from the Bitter Root Valley. His removal to the reservation in 1873 split the Flathead Tribe: eighty-one people went with him and 360 remained behind with Chief Charlot, who did not sign the Garfield Agreement, and with Adolph, who did but changed his mind.[1] Reservation life has also been considered. What follows is an examination of Charlot's band, which remained in contact and competition with Bitter Root whites for nineteen more years.

About nine months after the Garfield Agreement was made, the Missoula County Surveyor, W. Hall of Stevensville, was instructed to secure a list of all Flatheads entitled to remain in the valley under the law of 1872, to prepare a

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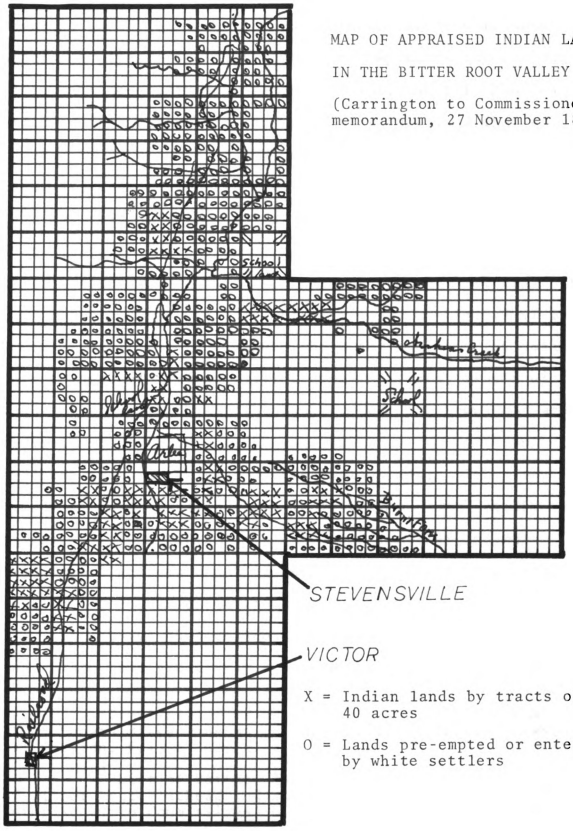
[1]U.S. Department of the Interior, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873, H.R. Executive Document 1, part 5, 43rd Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 4, part 1, pp. 617-618, Serial 1601. In the future the annual report will be referred to as Annual Report, Commissioner, 18--.



MAP OF APPRAISED INDIAN LANDS

IN THE BITTER ROOT VALLEY

(Carrington to Commissioner, memorandum, 27 November 1889)

X = Indian lands by tracts of 40 acres

O = Lands pre-empted or entered by white settlers

FIGURE 5

description of the land claimed by them, and to mark such places on plats. The list that was accepted by the government contained fifty-four Flathead farms, and this land was excluded from the public sale of Bitter Root land that was ordered on 4 December 1873 by the Commissioner of the General Land Office of the United States. Not all of the non-Indian land was sold at once, and an act of 11 February 1874 (18 Stat. 15) extended the benefits of the Homestead Act to valley settlers, who eagerly expanded their activities.[2]

According to President Grant's order of removal of 14 November 1871, the Indians who chose to remain in the valley were to become citizens, living upon individual tracts of land no larger than that obtainable under the homestead and preemption acts (320 acres). The law of 5 June 1872 set another limit on the size of the Indian farms: 160 acres. Thus when inalienable patents to fifty-one farms (claims to three tracts conflicted with John Owen's claims and were disallowed) were made out to individual Indians, they were usually for 160 acres (although nineteen were for fewer).[3]

The survey that delineated the individual tracts was inaccurate, and grudgingly approved by Agent Peter Whaley

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[2]Commissioner of General Land Office, 2 February 1874, Senate Miscellaneous Document No. 45, 43rd Congress, 1st Session, Vol. I, Serial 1584.

[3]"List of Patents issued to Carlos [sic] Band of Bitter Root Flathead Indians," enclosed with letter of Peter Ronan to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 6 November 1885, National Archives, Records of the Montana Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Letters Received (Flathead). In the future all letters cited will be from this source unless otherwise identified.

after a cursory examination. Only those actually living on and farming land in the area were to be permitted to remain. Some of the Indians not only farmed but hunted, however, and were away when Garfield asked those entitled to patents to sign up if they wanted to accept Bitter Root land. At the same time, other Indians with no intention of staying in the valley signed up in ignorance, fearing that they might lose some rights or benefits if they did not. Peter Ronan, basing his remarks on the observations of Father D'Aste, a twenty-year resident of the Jesuit Mission of St. Mary's near Stevensville, said that "the surveying was done without even consulting the Indians interested in the matter, and almost only according to the caprice of the surveyor, locating a good many of the Indians w[h]ere he pleased; and some on worthless lands." He thought that the survey was arbitrary and done to provide settlers with good land once the valley was opened to them.[4] Some patents were made out to Indians who did not intend to make use of them, while other Indians who were entitled to do so did not receive any land.

To confound the matter further, the patents were never delivered to the Flatheads. Fifty-one patents were sent from the Acting Commissioner of the General Land Office to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on 29 March 1876, and from him to the agent on the Flathead Reservation, Charles

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[4]Ronan to Commissioner, 6 November 1885.

Medary. When Ronan became agent in the summer of 1877, however, he found the patents among the papers turned over to him by Medary; they bore the date of 13 March 1876, and with them was a letter of 4 April 1876 ordering their immediate distribution. Ronan requested instructions and was told in August, 1877 to deliver them immediately. It was too late. The Indians were on a hunt and would not soon return.[5]

It was not until the summer of 1878 that Ronan managed to meet with Charlot and the principal head-men of the tribe at St. Mary's Mission with the intent of delivering the land patents to them. On behalf of his tribe, Charlot refused to accept the patents. The law said that the Indians would get title to the land they were living on and farming, but the law also considered the inaccurate patents to be the legal descriptions of the farms. Inasmuch as many Indians lived on land that was not covered by the patents, and since they often cultivated several strips of land, and were continually picking up small parcels of land here and there in the valley, the failure of the government to deliver the patents caused many of them to become virtually landless. Many never learned where they were supposed to be living,[6] and the land they were on illegally was eventually purchased by whites.

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[5]Ronan to Commissioner, 6 August 1877 and 31 October 1877, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 507. In the future this will be referred to as "Letters Received, Montana Superintendency."

[6]Ronan to Commissioner, 20 August 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 511.

Charlot's rejection of the patents was the culmination of his resistance and was not undertaken lightly. When the documents were presented to him, he reminded Ronan of the "forged" signature on the Garfield Agreement, and insisted that the Stevens Treaty of 1855 gave the valley to the Indians permanently--a hope that he had translated into a fast position over the years. He claimed--rightly--that the survey was never properly explained to his people, who thought that their signatures on the Hall survey papers guaranteed them the valley.[7] Charlot also objected to the taxation of Indian land which had been ordered by Governor Potts, who believed that it should be treated similarly to other valley land.[8] The chief worried that acceptance of the patents, which were not always for lands adjacent to other Indian lands, might break up his band. Inconsistently, he also argued that if the patents were accepted, the Indians would not know where to find their land, since much of it was already overrun by white settlers. It is ironic that Charlot, who did not wish to move to the reservation, rejected the one sure way to avoid such a move: acceptance of the patents. But he was proud and obliged to stand on his earlier statements that the entire valley was his. In an understatement, Ronan concluded that "the affairs of the Flathead in the

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[7]Ronan to Col. Thomas H. Ruger, 5 May 1880, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 517.

[8]Secretary of the Interior to Benjamin F. Potts, 31 May 1876, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 504.

Bitter Root Valley are in a most deplorable and unsatisfactory condition."[9]

The chief's rejection of the patents caused problems. Some Indians wanted to farm but could not tell which land was theirs. Moreover, the fact that many Indian tracts were bordered by white farms meant that the Indians who wanted land and somehow managed to learn the location of their tracts would have to struggle to keep them intact. Whites were not averse to using Indian land if it was standing idle. In some instances whites fenced as many as forty, eighty, and even 120 acres of the individual 160 acre Indian tracts, and some of the most prosperous white farmers in Missoula County used Indian land, some of which they leased for ninety-nine years.

Sometimes the Indians picked up parcels of land wherever they found them, unaware of the legal ramifications of their actions. Finding land occupied by Indians who did not have title to it, white men quickly secured title and then ejected the Indians.[10] The Indians could not afford a surveyor to straighten out their land claims. Furthermore, as time passed, new families without deeds found that they had

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[9]Ronan to Commissioner, 20 August 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 511; and Ronan to Commissioner, 19 July 1883.

[10]Henry B. Carrington, Report of General Henry B. Carrington, Special Disbursing Officer in the Field, Senate Executive Document 221, 51st Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 12, pp. 10-12, Serial 2689; Statement of Case, State of Montana, Missoula County District Court in Relation of the U.S., Senate Executive Document 221, 51st Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 12, p. 35, Serial 2689; and Ronan to Commissioner, 6 November 1885.

no chance of gaining land other than that which was too poor for whites to file on. Some Indians found that they had no right to land that had been deeded to another Indian who might have died or moved to the reservation.

An examination of the status of the fifty-one patented tracts and those entitled to them in 1885 suggests the problems involved. Eight tracts were still in the names of Indians who had moved to the reservation with Arlee and had renounced claims to Bitter Root land. The holders of six more patented farms had moved to the reservation later. Two couples held two farms each. At the same time, four families were farming on good land without title to it or the money to hire a surveyor. Only eighteen Indians occupied lands that actually belonged to them. Of these eighteen tracts, no more than ten were considered improved, and most of the "improvements" were merely fencing and plowing. Two of these "improved" farms were actually worthless, and the Indians who owned them were farming elsewhere; one of the improved farms had been improved by a white neighbor who obtained much of the Indian farm through a surveyor; and one Indian had sold the improvements on his farm to a white man. Many Indians in the valley had married and were no longer living on their patented land, preferring to live on unpatented land with their spouses. Because of Charlot's decision to refuse the patents, virtually no Indian was actually living on his own land and farming it in a profitable manner. There was room for illegal white activity, and white officials were reluctant

to protect Indian rights.[11]

Charlot's rejection of the government offer came as no surprise to area whites, for his position was well-known. In 1873 Daniel Shanahan reported that

> Charlo cannot be induced to remove, but after having read your letter to him also your telegram and spoken to him for a long time, he said, "you may use force to remove me from here the land of my fathers and people, but they will not make me afraid for I have no fears. use what force you will, but you I will consider my friend, and no matter what may be done I will never raise my hand against a white man."[12]

"The most difficult matter is to get them to believe what you say," said the agent.[13] The Weekly Missoulian during the same year quoted some sources who thought that three-quarters of the Flatheads would remove but for Charlot. Unfortunately, said the paper, "so many promises have been made them, and so few fulfilled, that they put but little faith in Superintendents and Agents."[14]

The position adopted by Charlot severed his people not only from their land, but also from formal relations with the federal government and the benefits of the Stevens Treaty. Partly because agency affairs were confused and agents ineffective, they had received few considerations from the

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[11]"List of Patents issued to Carlos Band of Bitter Root Flathead Indians."

[12]Daniel Shanahan to Commissioner, "Report of Disposition of Indians in Bitter Root Valley Relative to Removal," 21 April 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 496.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Weekly Missoulian, 23 May 1873, p. 2.

government prior to Ronan's 1878 attempt to deliver the patents. For seven years afterward the agent virtually ignored them. In 1880 Ronan wrote to Col. Thomas H. Ruger, commander of the Eighteenth Infantry at Helena, that Charlot's band was receiving absolutely no benefits and that the fifty-one patents were undelivered.[15] In his annual report to the Commissioner in 1878, Ronan scarcely mentioned the band, saying only that the chief and some three hundred and fifty followers continued to cling to homes in the Bitter Root Valley.[16] In August of 1878 Ronan wrote the Commissioner that he could not stop the Flatheads from hunting buffalo, since they were now non-treaty Indians who were beyond his jurisdiction.[17] The following year he wrote that

> I have no intercourses with them as they hold no communication with the Jocko Reservation, and I would suggest that the Commanding Officer at Fort Missoula is the proper person to put them under restraint in regard to leaving the Bitter Root valley for the purposes of hunting, as the Bitter Root valley is not considered an Indian Country and is located a long distance from this reservation and does not come under the jurisdiction of this Agency; and also the Bitter Root valley Indians are designated as "non treaty Indians" and so consider themselves.[18]

Ensuing reports to the Commissioner also mentioned the Bitter Root band only in passing.

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[15]Ronan to Ruger, 5 May 1880, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 517.

[16]Annual Report, Commissioner, 1878.

[17]Ronan to Commissioner, 29 August 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 511.

[18]Ronan to Commissioner, 3 March 1879, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 515.

Thus the matter rested until the fall of 1884, when it became clear that the Flatheads, defiant as they were, needed help. Ronan asked permission to issue to them sixty sets of harnesses, forty plows, ten wagons, and ten breaking plows. "The heads of families to whom I contemplate issuing these various articles are deserving and industrious Indians, each having a small ranch which he cultivates. . .," said Ronan.[19] In January, 1885 he received the permission he sought, and his distribution of items was the first official issuance since the Garfield Agreement. He hoped that the Indians would take advantage of the equipment and settle down, abandon the hunt, and become more prosperous.[20] He also issued to the Indians 2,000 pounds of bacon and 400 pounds of coffee in 1884, since the hunting season had been especially poor.[21] Later in 1885 Congress appropriated $2,100 for support of the Bitter Root Flatheads, and the recalcitrant band was not thereafter without some support. For example, in 1886 the band received a large amount of garden seeds. The following year Ronan again asked for permission to issue plows to deserving Bitter Root Indians, and without permission he issued 6,000 pounds of flour and some bacon, since they were

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[19]Ronan to Commissioner, 22 November 1884.

[20]Peter Ronan, History of the Flathead Indians (Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, Inc., 1965), p. 75. (Originally published in 1890 as Historical Sketch of the Flathead Nation from the Year 1813 to 1890).

[21]Ronan to Commissioner, 25 November 1884.

virtually without provisions.[22] He was not free to serve the Flatheads under Charlot as readily as those on the reservation, however, and he still had to request permission to visit Charlot's people.[23] Unfortunately, what aid the Indians did receive proved to be scant compared with their needs and with the supplies issued to the reservation Flatheads.

The majority of Charlot's Bitter Root band, numbering 337 in the summer of 1884, began a life of wandering. They sustained themselves by hunting or by scrounging food where it was to be found. Lacking traditional tribal patterns and controls--which had been destroyed by fragmentation of the tribe and the loss of homeland--the Indians grew more troublesome. Faced with an increasingly difficult hunt each year, they also became hungrier. The record clearly shows their deterioration between 1872 and 1891, despite continued if half-hearted efforts to dissuade them from the course they had adopted.

The agents' observations on Charlot's band are a good source of information about these Indians--better than the newspaper, which largely ignored them. In 1874 Peter Whaley reported that

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[22]Annual Report, Commissioner, 1885; Ronan to Commissioner, 19 February 1886, 17 January 1887, and 23 February 1887.

[23]Ronan to Commissioner, 19 February 1889; note, signature illegible, attached to letter Carrington to Commissioner, 3 January 1890; and Ronan to Commissioner, 19 November 1887.

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> their condition is neither propitious nor satisfactory. A small portion are on farms and appear to be advancing towards self-sustenance, but the greater majority are careless and idle. I am informed that they have been committing thefts upon the Crows and Blackfeet, in consequence of which they fear to go to the buffalo country this winter.[24]

Four years later Peter Ronan filed this observation:

> Charlos and his people will be compelled to go again to the hunting grounds this Fall or starve, and as a matter of humanity I would suggest that they be not restrained from the chase unless some aid or assistance be furnished by the Government.[25]

Ronan was writing on behalf of the Flatheads because the officials of Montana were still concerned that the aftereffects of the Nez Perce uprising might lead to violence on the part of the Flatheads. In 1886 the state of the band was emphasized by Ronan when he wrote of those who had recently transferred to the reservation. These Indians, he said, "cannot be classed among the most industrious or civilized members of the tribe. In fact the colony is composed mostly of Indians who with their families followed the chase and the Buffalo until the game became almost extinct, and continued to make a precarious living by hunting, fishing and wandering among the settlements."[26]

There were other reliable observers on the scene. In 1883 Martin Maginnis, Montana Territory's delegate to Congress, wrote that the Bitter Root Indians "are wandering about

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[24]Peter Whaley, Annual Report 1874, H.R. Executive Document 1, part 5, 43rd Congress, 2nd Session, Vol. 6, part 1, p. 571, Serial 1639.

[25]Ronan to Commissioner, 29 August 1878, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 511.

[26]Ronan to Commissioner, 2 December 1886.

committing depredations among the settlements of the territory which will lead to trouble."[27] The following year Father D'Aste saw impending trouble of a different sort. He wrote to Ronan as follows:

> If these Indians do not receive from the Government some help, now, we will have some deaths of starvation. Just yesterday I had to give 100 lbs flour, 50 of which to the chief, because they have nothing to eat. The chief had prepared two fields to put in crops, but all he could get have been two sacks of wheat. The very roots /the camas root/, this year, are scarce, most of the places where they were used to dig them having been fenced in, or being rooted out by hogs who are running abroad every where here in the valley.[28]

The disappearance of the great buffalo herds hastened the undoing of the Bitter Root band. The settlement of buffalo country by whites and the extinction of hunting land were vastly accelerated in the late 1870's; and the Northern Pacific Railroad furnished transportation for thousands of buffalo skins, which were used for industrial power belts. By 1880 the end of the herds was in sight; the Indians' annual harvest of winter hides for shelter had diminished by three-fourths, and they were forced to hunt for summer hides of poor quality. After 1880 railroads registered ever-diminishing shipments of skins, and by 1889 only small herds of buffalo--often no more than ten to twenty animals--could be found in a given place.[29]

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[27]Martin Maginnis to Secretary of the Interior, 13 February 1883.

[28]Fr. Giordo D'Aste, S.J. to Ronan, 1 May 1884.

[29]William T. Hornaday, "The Extermination of the American Bison," in Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, for year ending 30 June 1887, House of Representatives Miscellaneous Document 600, part 2, 50th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 18, p. 506, Serial 2582.

The degradation of the Indians was also hastened by contact with the white community, which proved to be a corruptive influence. The tribesmen picked up gambling and drinking habits and became irresponsible and "lazy."[30] Because of their circumstances they could not compete with whites for land or food. They were in danger of contracting smallpox from the men who worked in the lumber camps and passed through the valley each day, and vaccine was not always available.[31] Henry B. Carrington, who was assigned to effect the removal of the Flatheads in 1889 (more will be said of this later), spoke more directly about the effects of white settlement: "The pressure of White settlement has almost precluded improvement of their lands by the Indians of this Valley." They were, he said, without ambition.[32]

The fact that Charlot and his people roamed the valley when not on the hunt sometimes frightened the whites. The records for the period of the Nez Perce uprising abound with communications regarding the whereabouts of Charlot and the unfounded rumors that he was about to attack the settlers in the valley. Two Bitter Root Flatheads died in a shootout in a saloon in 1881.[33] In 1884 two more were murdered in cold

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[30]Annual Report, Commissioner, 1887, pp. 140-141; and Ronan to Commissioner, 19 July 1883.

[31]Ronan to Commissioner, 13 January 1888.

[32]Carrington to Commissioner, 18 November 1889.

[33]Ronan to Commissioner, Monthly Report, 1 November 1881, Special Cases No. 55, Office of Indian Affairs, Land Division.

blood while herding ponies homeward; the Weekly Missoulian suspected whites of the deed.[34]

The best description of the Flatheads' plight is found in the "Report of the Subcommittee of the Special Committee of the United States Senate, Appointed to Visit the Indian Tribes in northern Montana." The subcommittee was chaired by Senator George G. Vest, a Missouri Democrat. In 1883 Vest, in company with Major Martin Maginnis, congressional delegate from Montana, and Schuyler Crosby, the territorial governor, visited the Flathead Reservation, including St. Ignatius Mission, and then conferred with the Indians in the Bitter Root Valley.

Senator Vest reported that Charlot was "an Indian of fine appearance" and "impressed us as a brave and honest man. That he has been badly treated is unquestionable. . . ."[35] After giving a brief history of the band, Vest noted the result of mistakenly including Charlot's "X" in the printed Garfield Agreement:

> The Indians who adhered to Charlot are yet in the valley, miserably poor, with one or two exceptions, surrounded by whites who are anxious for their removal, and the young men, with no restraint upon them, lounging around saloons in Stevensville and utterly worthless.[36]

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[34] Weekly Missoulian, clipping, about 14 April 1884.

[35] George Vest, from the Select Committee to Examine into the Condition of the Sioux, Crow, and Grievances of the Indian tribes in the Territory of Montana, etc., and including the Subcommittee of the Special Committee Appointed to Visit Indian Tribes in Northern Montana, Senate Reports, 48th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 2, Document 283, p. xvi, Serial 2174.

[36] Ibid.

The attitude of the Weekly Missoulian toward the Vest subcommittee's visit and conferences with Charlot is interesting. Charlot, once reviled in the press as a cantankerous Indian, and sometimes as a threatening savage, must no longer have been considered a threat to the valley whites. Following a council between Vest and Charlot at St. Mary's, the paper playfully reported that

> Charlos, the Flathead chief, has suddenly loomed up as one of the most eloquent of his race, some of the eastern papers claiming that this chieftain of the Bitter Root has outdone Logan, the Mingo chief, both in eloquence and dramatic effect.

Quoting from the Inter Mountain paper, the Missoulian continued: "The old redskin talks like King Philip, or one of Cooper's lords of the forest, and thought to impose upon the commissioner by menacing airs." Vest "won," however, "taking the warrior down." The incident, asserted the Missoulian, "is worth printing in a school reader to give our young tyros in education a chance to declaim."[37]

Before Senator Vest left for Washington, C. D., he invited Charlot to visit that city and discuss his grievances with others. The idea was not new. Superintendent James Wright, at the insistence of the Flatheads, had suggested such a journey in 1873. They were, said Wright,

> the friends of the whites. They however like many of the Indians fancy that they have cause of complaint against the whites. We have assured them that every contract made with them should be fulfilled. They say

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[37]Weekly Missoulian, 28 September 1883, p. 1.

> that they have had those assurances before, Now they want to visit the Great Father and talk to him fase to fase [sic][38]

Charlot was pleased with the prospects of a trip to Washington in 1884. The party, which left by train on 21 January 1884, consisted of Peter Ronan, Charlot, and five other Indians: Antoine Moise, Louis, John Hill, Abel or Tom Adams, and Michael Revais (the interpreter).

The Indians spent nearly a month in the city and had several interviews with the Secretary of the Interior. The Government was interested in persuading Charlot to abandon the valley, and officials tried to entice the chief with promises; a house and plowed land, a supply of cattle, horses, seed, and tools. He was even promised reinstatement as the head-chief, with a yearly pension of $500, if he and his band would move. Throughout the visit the Indians were treated well. Ronan purchased clothing for them, since they apparently had brought little. A district doctor offered to operate on Charlot and his interpreter for the exorbitant fee of $500; it is not known with what they may have been afflicted. Perhaps because of such evidences of exploitation, Charlot was more stubborn than ever and flatly refused to leave his valley--though pride, not principle, more accurately explains his stand at this point. The Secretary of the Interior finally saw little choice but to give Charlot permission to remain in the valley without guaranteed compensation or aid, as long as he kept peace with the whites. Ronan,

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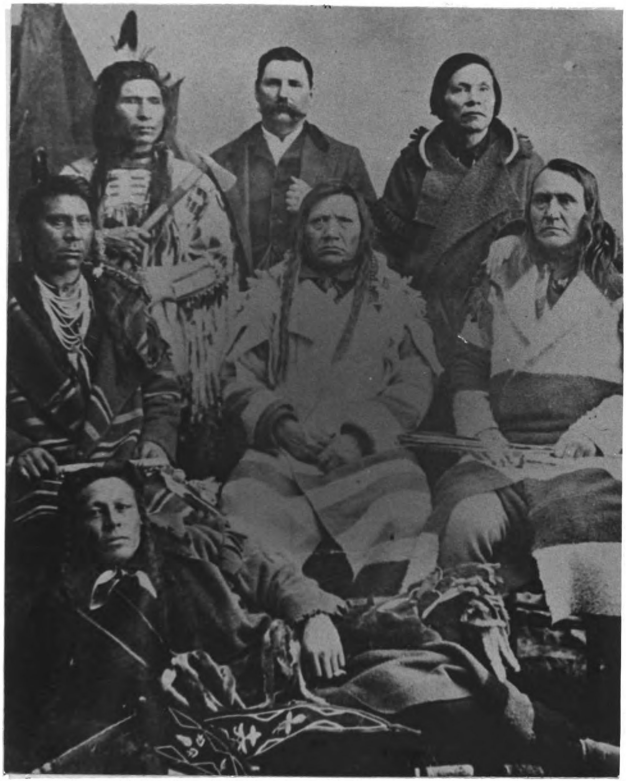
[38]James Wright to Commissioner, 7 May 1873, Letters Received, Montana Superintendency, M-234, Roll 497.

FIGURE D



Delegation of Flathead Indians to Washington, D.C., January, 1884. Back row, L. to R.: Hand Shot Off; Peter Ronan, Agent; Michael Revais, Interpreter. Center row, L. to R.: Antoine Moiese; Chief Charlot; Grizzly Bear Far Away. Front row: Abel (Photograph courtesy of the Montana Historical Society)

however, was privately instructed to report upon his return the needs of Charlot's band and the best method of relieving them.[39]

Back in Montana, Ronan followed his instructions. He was convinced that many Flatheads wanted to move, and at a council with the band twenty-one did agree to go to the Jocko where they would each have a choice of 160 acres of unoccupied land along the river. Ronan promised assistance in erecting good homes and establishing farming operations. Each family would receive two cows, a wagon and harnesses, a plow and other necessary farming equipment, and seed and provisions for the first year.

The offer was generous, but although sixty-one Indians moved to the reservation from the Bitter Root in 1884, Ronan could fulfill his promises to only the first ten families to arrive. The fault did not lie with him: the Commissioner refused to approve all of his requisitions. The eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth families to remove under the arrangement were given only land and cows. The last twelve families received only land, and they complained bitterly to Ronan that they also deserved houses. The cost per house would have been an estimated $170, but the money was not forthcoming.[40] In time thirty-two families moved from the

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[39]Ronan, History, p. 25.

[40]Ronan to Commissioner, 27 August 1891, 16 August 1884, 20 October 1884, 27 February 1885, 12 March 1887; Annual Report, Commissioner, 1888, p. 157; and Annual Report, Commissioner, p. 278.

Bitter Root Valley to the Reservation, hoping that Ronan's promises would be kept, while their chief remained behind with others.[41]

Clearly, some solution to the problem was yet to be found, for fewer than one-third of Charlot's band had moved prior to 1889. In 1888 Ronan expressed the opinion that if the right of alienation were permitted, the Indians (including Charlot) would sell their patent lands and come to the agency. The chief, he said, had finally lived to regret his refusal of aid.[42] The Weekly Missoulian also suggested that if the territorial delegate could secure the passage of legislation enabling the Indians to sell their lands in the valley, the Indians might be persuaded to leave. The paper said that it had sympathy for the Indians, but that their presence in the valley was a hindrance to the citizens.[43]

The desired act was passed on 2 March 1889.[44] It authorized the Secretary of the Interior, "with the consent of the Indians severally," to have the Indians' lands appraised and sold in tracts not exceeding 160 acres. It authorized $500 to pay the cost of such proceedings. In September of the same year General Henry B. Carrington (U.S. Army, Ret.), of Massachusetts, was put in charge of the

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[41]Ronan to Commissioner, 23 January 1888.

[42]Annual Report, Commissioner, 1888, p. 157.

[43]Weekly Missoulian, 27 January 1888, p. 2.

[44]Stat. 871.

operation. His task was to appraise not only the land, but the improvements as well, secure the permission for sale from each Indian who had an interest in the land, and see that the Indians were then moved peacefully to the reservation. The net proceeds of the sale were to be placed to the Indians' credit in the United States treasury and allotted as the Secretary of the Interior saw fit.[45] Carrington went about his task with efficiency and wrote frequent reports on his progress.

Coincidental with these events Chief Arlee, who had been named head-chief in lieu of Charlot, died near the agency on 8 August 1889. Arlee and Charlot had long been at irreconcilable odds. The government had recognized that Charlot would not suffer the embarrassment of living under Arlee's rule when it offered to restore the head chieftainship to him in 1884. Charlot's pride precluded acceptance of the offer, and it is questionable whether he would ever have removed had Arlee not died.

When Carrington reached the Bitter Root in October, 1889, he listed the factors favoring the success of his mission. He thought that Charlot would be impressed that a special agent had been appointed to deal with the matter. The general intended to place responsibility for acceptance

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[45]Annual Report, Commissioner, 1889, pp. 24, 447.

or denial upon Charlot alone. Father D'Aste, deeply respected by the Flatheads and familiar with every Bitter Root Flathead family, had moved to St. Ignatius to become the principal of the school. Finally, Charlot was the only surviving chief of the Flatheads and would not have to take second place to Arlee.[46]

From the inception of the talks with Charlot, Carrington displayed a shrewd but understanding attitude, quickly placing the burden for the future of the entire band upon Charlot's shoulders. He told the chief that he was "the only representative of the tribe who could command the respect of all and prevent its demoralization and waste." He added that Victor's memory would be better honored by his helping to keep the living from intemperence and gambling than by keeping aloof from the tribe. Carrington was referring to Charlot's weakening position. In full charge when he rejected the patents, Charlot had lately been unable to control the younger men of his tribe, and he had been unable to prevent the departure of sixty-one of his tribesmen for the reservation in 1884. The general was aware of the widespread dissatisfaction with Charlot's leadership, and suggesting this to the chief "seemed to impress him."[47] Carrington also knew that although Charlot's pride was in opposition to the violation of his earlier vow to remain in the Valley, he was

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[46]Carrington to Commissioner, 20 or 21 October 1889.

[47]*Ibid*.

"wrestling with a conscious sense of duty to his people." The general spread out his paper containing the signatures of Indians who had agreed to permit the sale of their land. Charlot could see that many had already signed without his permission, and Carrington made it clear that he would continue to seek signatures regardless of Charlot's decision. In fact, during the conference seven Indians came to Carrington and signed in the presence of the chief. Charlot was being gently forced into accepting removal by circumstances that were finally beyond his control. At the same time, Carrington tried to sweeten the reward for Charlot by saying that it was "only a wise and able chief who had the courage to change his mind."[48] Charlot would "have a light heart once more; and feel that the spirit of Victor said to him, Charlos Save our people."

Carrington worked carefully, always avoiding the application of undue pressure on the Indians, gaining their trust. He paid courtesy visits to Charlot, who returned them. He visited the homes of other Indians to talk with them. The general wrote once that an Indian told him, "You seem to understand us! I have eyes full of tears when I think of my children and grand children. So give them a settled home, and I will be happy."[49] The entire valley seemed to be excited about his mission. One morning more than one hundred Indian children swarmed about Carrington's cabin. The whites,

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Carrington to Commissioner, 1 November 1889.

whose expansion and progress were slowed by the existence of scattered Indian lands, looked forward to the final solution of the problem. Carrington observed that the Indians had suffered even more than the whites.[50]

On 7 November 1889 Carrington telegraphed this message to the Secretary of the Interior: "Negotiations perfected, my mission a success, all Flathead Indians will go to Jocko reservation in the Spring."[51] He was sure of this because on the third of November he and Charlot had signed an agreement to effect a move from the Bitter Root Valley to the Flathead Reservation. The paper acknowledged that Charlot had not signed the Garfield Agreement in 1872, and it contained the Chief's relinquishment of his own personal land rights. The chief agreed to move with his tribe to the Jocko Reservation in the spring of 1890. According to the terms, Charlot would have his choice of any plot of unsettled land on the reservation and would receive the property of deceased Chief Arlee. The document promised the chief that the Indians who moved with him would receive sufficient flour, sugar, coffee, rice, and bacon to see them through until the end of the first harvest. Carrington also promised to protect the burial ground of the Indians at St. Mary's Mission.[52]

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Carrington to Secretary of the Interior, telegram, 7 November 1889.

[52] "Articles of Agreement" between Charlot and Carrington, 3 November 1889, enclosed with letter Carrington to Commissioner, 3 December 1889.

The highest hurdle had been cleared, but Carrington still had work to do. He was expected to secure consents for all fifty-one patents. During much of November until snow squalls stopped him, he rode from thirty to forty-five miles a day, appraising lands and interviewing Indians. The tracts to be examined were located in nine different townships and were as much as twenty-four miles apart. Carrington was convinced that "Congress had no conception of the physical as well as mental, judicial, legal and diplomatic labor involved." He had to hire a team at five dollars per day to "follow blind trails, sometimes make lines by compass, and often open fences to reach tracts beyond."[53] He was kept busy sorting out white encroachments on Indian land. Many tracts had to be investigated "on the spot," and all conflicting claims had to be resolved. On several occasions he had to file petitions and briefs with the District Court of Montana in order to settle claims.[54] He forwarded forty-nine "consents" to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on 29 November 1889, and these included non-patent land that may have been owned by Indians.[55]

Carrington's exhaustive investigation of the patents was remarkable and helped secure the Indians' trust in him.

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[53]Carrington to Commissioner, 18 November 1889.

[54]Carrington to Commissioner, 27 November 1889; and State of Montana, County of Missoula, District Court Petition, filed by Carrington, no date (but December, 1889).

[55]"Memorandum of Perfected Consents to Release Patents in Bitter Root Valley," enclosed with letter Carrington to Commissioner, 29 November 1889; and Carrington, Report of General Henry B. Carrington.

Charlot, who once said he would kill himself before giving up his land, learned that his people would receive the benefits promised them in Washington in 1884. After demanding the delivery of a two-seat wagon for use in visiting his people, and stating that he was merely exercising "verbal power of attorney" in selling his dead father's lands, the chief cheerfully signed the final agreement.[56]

The matter of Flathead removal should have been settled conclusively within six months after Charlot signed the agreement, but this was not to be. Word had been out since early February 1889 that the Indian lands would be sold for at least their appraised value, which by December of that year Carrington had fixed at $96,931.33. The Indians were told that the government expected to sell their land by the spring of 1890.[57] Inexplicably, however, no date for the land auction was set, and by April 1890 they were wondering whether to plant crops or wait for removal and begin new farms on the reservation.[58]

The winter had been a hard one for Charlot's people. Agent Ronan had to issue the band 5,000 pounds of flour and 2,000 pounds of bacon as early as March 1890, and this supply of food was nearly exhausted by early April.[59] Ronan

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Ronan to Commissioner, 9 April 1890; Weekly Missoulian, 13 February 1889, p. 2; and Carrington, Report of General Henry B. Carrington, p. 13.

[58] Ronan to Commissioner, 9 April 1890.

[59] Ibid.

wrote that the Indians were "helpless and poverty-stricken on their land in that valley, looking forward to the promise for the sale of their lands patented. . . and their removal to this reservation." If they were not moved or supplied, said Ronan, they would "certainly suffer from starvation."[60] By June the situation had worsened. Fred Brown, manager of the Butte Butchering Company, complained that Indians (identified by Ronan as members of Charlot's band) were camped on his property and begging for offal.[61] In December 1890 Ronan wrote that in March of that year he had advised the Indians to plant crops for 1890, but they had not done so. He had heard that they were completely without supplies and forced to barter wagons, harnesses, plows, and even stoves for food. Severe rheumatism prevented Ronan from checking on this, but Charlot had informed him of the matter by messenger.[62] Permission for distribution of more supplies by the agent was slow in coming; Ronan telegraphed the Commissioner in January that Charlot and five other Indians had come to the agency to say that they were out of food, nearly out of clothing, on the verge of starvation, and in need of help.[63] Relief, however, did not come.

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[60] Annual Report, Commissioner, 1890, p. 124.

[61] Ronan to Commissioner, 2 June 1890.

[62] Ronan to Commissioner, 6 December 1890.

[63] Ronan to Commissioner, telegram, 7 January 1891.

Finally the government reappointed General Carrington special agent "to remove the Indians of the Bitter Root Valley to the Jocko reservation in Montana and settle them thereon, under the provisions of the Indian Appropriation Act of March 3, 1891."[64] The Secretary of the Interior noted that the expense allowance for Carrington had been increased from five dollars to ten dollars per diem, in addition to travel and incidental expenses, and he directed the general to proceed to Montana as early in July as possible and settle the matter.[65]

The urgency was clear. Ronan wrote that Charlot was not going to leave his home until all land sales were effected and that forty families would remain in the valley with him. Carrington, writing in June before leaving for the West, said that the delays were already causing "mischief, suffering, and loss." He urged the government to set a date for the sale of land, so that Charlot could be persuaded to remove prior to the actual sale.[66] "Many are very destitute," he wrote, confirming that many Indians had indeed sold their wagons and implements during the past winter for food. He added that they were beginning to distrust everyone.[67]

Carrington's task was now more difficult than before. He reported that "Charlot and his principal men have been

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[64]Secretary of the Interior to Commissioner, 28 March, 1891.

[65]Ibid.

[66]Carrington to Commissioner, 27 June 1891.

[67]Carrington to Commissioner, 29 July 1891.

quite sullen, and somewhat defiant of late. . . ." Ronan, he said at the end of July, had not been to the Bitter Root Valley since spring and had made almost no preparations at the agency for the reception of the Flatheads. The Indians still remained essentially friendly, but they seemed to have lost confidence in Ronan and relied more than ever on what Carrington said; it was only through the general's influence that they were "kept in patient preparation."[68] Carrington characterized Congressional neglect of the matter as inexcusable. Senator Dawes, he said, had repeatedly assured him of prompt attention to the case.[69] The special agent was convinced that only by seeing that supplies continued to be issued to the band could trouble be averted, especially from the young men.

Although a fragile peace was being maintained with the help of white saloon keepers, Carrington was making no progress toward removal. Since some definitive move had to be made, he called a three-day conference with Charlot and the entire band to settle the question of whether the Indians would go to the reservation at once or wait until their Bitter Root lands had been sold. The council would also consider whether or not the Jocko Reservation was prepared for the Indians.

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[68] Ibid., and 17 August 1891, 8 September 1891.

[69] Carrington to Commissioner, 29 July 1891 (two letters of same date).

The council began on 8 September 1891, nearly two years after Carrington had first obtained Charlot's cooperation. The chief, carrying an eagle's wing as his badge of chieftainship, demanded the fulfillment of the Act of 3 March 1889. His people, he said, wanted to move to the Jocko, but they insisted that their land be sold first. Carrington wrote the Commissioner that all Indians would have more faith if preparations were actually underway on the Jocko; and although he must have known that the Indian's behavior was true to his pattern, Carrington said that he feared that "bad advisers" were misleading Charlot.[70]

It was not until the conference had extended into the fourth day that the Indians agreed to move immediately. Carrington wrote:

> It seemed at times as if all would fail, from Charlot's absolute control of everybody. He expected to handle the money. I told him. . .he had nothing to do with the money of anybody but himself; and that I would go with those who wished, whether he went with us or not. All agree to go.[71]

Carrington had finally forced the issue. He had seen to it that Father D'Aste was not part of the council because he would have advised the Indians to wait until they had their money from land sales; and he had told the Indians that the government could not feed them any longer in the valley, and

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[70]Carrington to Commissioner, 8 September 1891.

[71]Carrington to Commissioner, 11 October 1891.

that "the time had come." "I hope," he told the Commissioner, "the twenty-year labor of Removing the Flatheads, is about accomplished."[72]

Still, there was the matter of lands. Although the Indians had promised to move regardless of the sale, they were counting on the money. Said Carrington,

> The subject-matter, has a simple form, viewed at a distance; but the Indians view it as a test of good faith, after years of deferred hope, and two years of financial distress on account of unfulfilled expectations.[73]

Theoretically the removal of the Indians was not contingent upon the sale of their lands. By 29 September 1891, however, the Indians had not left the valley, and they had reversed their earlier position and were again refusing to move before the land sale was held. "Every effort," reported Carrington, "to move any, prior to the sale, has failed. . . . Charlot will go, when he gets his money, and all will go with him. Hence I have urged the citizens to assure the sale of his special tracts."[74]

The date of the sale had been known for some time, and men of both races were looking forward to it with expectations. The Weekly Missoulian announced in August 1891 that the sale would be held on 6 October. There would be a public auction, and land would go to the highest bidders for not less than the appraised values. Anyone who purchased land on time and

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Carrington to Commissioner, 5 September 1891.

[74] Carrington to Commissioner, 29 September 1891.

who defaulted for sixty days on interest or payments forfeited the title to the land, along with any previous payments. The first payment was to be one-third of the value of the land. Cash sales were also permitted, but homesteading was not.[75]

The Weekly Missoulian misreported the date of the sale by one day; it was actually set for 5 October, but there was ample publicity to that effect. The land receiver of Missoula saw to it that plans were outlined in the press, and he proposed that citizens settle for cash if possible for the sake of the Indians.[76]

Carrington wondered whether the sale would be held on the date set. On his arrival in the summer he had noted that his instructions said that the land office would be ready for the sale in July, but the advertisements for the sale did not appear until 5 September, and then for the October date and with a ten dollar per acre error in respect to the appraised value of the best tract of land adjoining Stevensville.[77]

The general had worried about the outcome for several days. On 29 September he wrote that "times are hard. Money is scarce. Real estate is down. And--the sale at Missoula, on a Monday, instead of here [in Stevensville] will tell

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[75]Weekly Missoulian, 26 August 1891, p. 4.

[76]Carrington to Commissioner, 28 August 1891.

[77]Carrington to Commissioner, 5 September 1891.

upon the result; very possible."[78] Two days later he pointed out that although credit was available for purchasing land, the improvements on any lots were to be paid for in cash, and

> not one of them can do it. Not one man of a thousand, in Boston, could meet a similar demand. It is making a farce of sales sufficiently imperilled, by delay; and selecting the Missoula land Office as the place of sale. The Indians think they are to have the value of the improvements; and, grow suspicious, of every matter which has set the whites to talking.[79]

Carrington warned that the Flatheads "have had experiences which carry them to the verge of out-and-out dissent from everything that is in-future;--and want promises met, right away."[80]

The sale occurred on schedule, but the results were far from what Carrington and the Indians had hoped for. At the end of the day of sale only four tracts had been sold, and further selling was postponed until an undetermined date. A telegram from Washington authorized the extension of credit for improvements, but it came too late to restore confidence. . .only five low bids from moneyless bidders resulting. Both Ronan and Carrington were embarrassed, and the Indians refused to move. Ronan tried to persuade them to leave the valley, but as Carrington understated it, "these delays and sudden obstructions are difficult of explanation to the Indians."[81]

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[78]Carrington to Commissioner, 29 September 1891.

[79]Carrington to Commissioner, 1 October 1891.

[80]Ibid.

[81]Carrington to Commissioner, 5 October 1891.

Charlot's vacillations finally ceased. On 12 October Carrington wired the Commissioner: "Expect to move entire band immediately. Please hurry Ronan to be rapid in preparations. The Council today including Charlotte place themselves under my protection absolutely."[82] By 19 October every family, with over four hundred head of stock, was camped near the agency. They had moved with but one casualty: the wife of Joseph Laumphrey was thrown from a stumbling horse and broke her hip.[83] Ronan slaughtered three steers for a celebration feast and sent them, with other supplies, to the camp. A delegation from the other agency tribes officially welcomed them, and throughout the affair the saw mill was running at top speed. Ronan wrote that the weather was beautiful.[84]

Although the weather was fine and the reception was festive, preparations on the reservation for the incoming Flatheads were less than satisfactory. Carrington had frequently pressed Ronan to begin construction of Indian houses, but to no avail. As early as 29 July 1891 he complained that no instructions had been sent to Ronan and that no lumber, nails, or fittings were on hand for the houses. In late August the agent defended the unreadiness at the agency, saying that he could not estimate the amount of supplies and materials needed nor the number of buildings necessary until

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[82]Carrington to Commissioner, telegram, 12 October 1891.

[83]Carrington to Commissioner, 19 October 1891.

[84]Ronan to Commissioner, 24 October 1891.

FIGURE E

Twilight on the Flathead River, Flathead Indian Reservation
(Photograph courtesy of the Montana Historical Society)
This may have been taken after 1900.

he knew how many Flatheads would be coming to the agency. Ronan wrote three days later that Carrington's estimate for a frame house, using purchased lumber, was $272, while Ronan had earlier submitted an estimate of $170 for a log house which, he said, would be warmer in winter and cooler in summer and which was preferred by the Indians. Thus the agent still did not know the number or kind of houses he was to build.[85]

Delays in building houses for the Indians continued well past the time when tangible results should have been seen, and Carrington blamed Ronan, who had little to say in his own defense. By 1 October there was still no progress, and Carrington complained to the Commissioner that the long delay could cause trouble. "The logs," he said, "from which boards, flooring and shingles, are to be fabricated, for the Indian winter quarters, are in the tree, on the mountains. The Indians know it." He added that the threatening harshness of the coming winter (presaged by unusually thick hair on the stock and the early, hard frosts), and the lack of teepees or even teepee canvass among the Indians, made construction of houses for the Flatheads critical. Moreover, he said, the matter of trust was still involved.[86] Three days before the Indians arrived at the agency Ronan had still not begun work on the dwellings. He explained to the Commissioner that he had been gone, distributing allotments to

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[85]Carrington to Commissioner, 29 July 1891; and Ronan to Commissioner, 27 August 1891, 30 August 1891.

[86]Carrington to Commissioner, 1 October 1891.

the Kootenais. Again he said that he could not erect houses until the Indians arrived and selected their lots. The best he could do was commence cutting timber.[87] Carrington had another explanation: Ronan had not expected that removal would be accomplished so soon. The planing machine had just been set up and but a few thousand feet of lumber sawed--about one day's work--by 19 October.[88] Work was finally finished in mid-December, having been accelerated following receipt by Ronan in late November of authority to spend $1,160 for materials and $2,240 for labor to construct twenty log cabins. The newly arrived Flatheads accepted Ronan's offer of $100 for doing the work themselves.[89]

Even the construction of houses did not end Ronan's problems. The agency Indians were jealous because the newcomers received not only new houses, but two new stoves for each house and an issue of beef in addition to the regular agency distribution of supplies. This seemed to be the Bitter Root Indians' reward for holding out against the government,[90] although they were not happy either, and Ronan had to request that some of the money from the patent sales be turned over to them. Seventeen tracts in the Bitter Root Valley had been sold by 30 November, and the Indians wanted

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[87]Ronan to Commissioner, telegram, 16 October 1891.

[88]Carrington to Commissioner, 19 October 1891.

[89]Ronan to Commissioner, 27 November 1891 and 14 December 1891.

[90]Ronan to Commissioner, 14 December 1891.

proof of the government's good intentions. The money, said Ronan, was one large inducement for them to move. But, although it had been suggested that the Indians be given cash for their lands,[91] no promises had been made. In fact, it had been understood that the receipts from the sale of lands were to be deposited in the United States treasury, to be used for the good of the band at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior.

Charlot, who had been uncooperative in the past, continued to exercise his right of protest by complaining of the government's failure to fulfill all of its promises to him regarding removal. He claimed that he had been promised a four-room house with a brick fireplace. Whether he was telling the truth is unknown, but Carrington had mentioned in August of 1891 that such a house would cost only four hundred dollars and could easily be built.[92] Ronan finally promised to add a sixteen-foot-square addition to Charlot's house and to build a fireplace. Charlot also reminded Ronan of the provision in his agreement with Carrington that he receive Arlee's property. Chief Arlee's ranch was a prosperous one, which he had left to his granddaughter and her husband, who raised 800 bushels of wheat and oats, forty tons of hay, and 100 head of cattle and horses on it in 1891. Charlot may also have had his eyes on the new house that the

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[91]Ronan to Commissioner, 30 November 1891.

[92]Carrington to Commissioner, 28 August 1891.

couple had built. Ronan, in a letter of 14 December 1891, expressed the hope that the Commissioner would not recommend giving the ranch to Charlot, who wanted to live there more than anywhere else on the reservation. The Indian must have realized that his chances of getting the Arlee ranch were slim, for he also tried to get ownership of a ranch belonging to the Indian widow of a white man who had a large family. Ronan made it clear that Charlot would have to pay $5,000 for improvements on the widow's property.[93] At the time, Ronan did not blame Charlot too much for his demands, saying,

> I have no complaint to make against Chief Charlot--he is a just and agreeable man, but is a believer in the fulfillment of promises. He has always kept his word and expects the word of others to be kept.[94]

Enclosed with Ronan's letter of 14 December is an unsigned, penned note to the effect that Charlot was not to receive any of Arlee's property unless someone could find such a promise among the records of Charlot's trip to Washington in 1884.[95] Ronan informed the Commissioner that no such promise had been made at that time, but that Carrington had made such a promise in the Bitter Root Valley prior to removal. Since the instructions to him pertaining to the Arlee property also said that any promise made by Carrington should be carried out, Ronan admitted that he was at a loss as to how to proceed. It would be, he said, a great hardship on Arlee's heirs if they were to lose their land. As an

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[93]Ronan to Commissioner, 14 December 1891.

[94]*Ibid*.

[95]*Ibid*.

alternative, he suggested giving Charlot the agency farm which, in any event, would be cheaper to buy than Arlee's ranch. The government farm had an irrigation ditch, potato and vegetable gardens, and hay areas and should appeal to the Chief, and it could be replaced by a new farm for only two hundred dollars.[96]

The agency farm was turned over to Charlot in the spring of 1892 in lieu of Arlee's farm. Charlot agreed that this fulfilled the government's obligations and said that while he could not do much actual farming himself, since he was going blind, his son, son-in-law, and others of his tribe would make good use of the land.[97]

Charlot's band had moved to a reservation that had made remarkable progress in the thirty-six years since its establishment and particularly since Ronan had become agent in 1877. They had the advantage of an established educational institution, the smooth-running services of the agency, the strength of a confederated tribal structure, a fine church, and an increasingly stable and agrarian Indian community.

Although Charlot's band fared better on the reservation than in the Bitter Root Valley, adjustment was not easy. For one thing, this lately-arrived, small group had failed to share in the growth of the Flathead Reservation community. Ronan was moved to say of Charlot (and, indirectly, of his people) that

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[96]Ronan to Commissioner, 23 January 1892.

[97]Ronan to Commissioner, 10 March 1892.

> Chief Charlot is an Indian with a grievance, who is always complaining of broken promises from the government. . . . That chief is a nonprogressive Indian; opposed to education and advancement; opposed to the Indian court of offenses and Indian police paid by the Government; opposed to civilized dress, and [he] threatened to take the Indian children of his band from school if their hair was cut.[98]

For another, Ronan--a tower of strength for the tribes since 1877--died in August of 1893, leaving a vacuum of leadership that was not filled by his immediate replacement and former clerk, Joseph Carter. At the same time, old pressures mounted: the matter of tribal versus white authority resurfaced as more settlers pushed into the margins of the large and still partially unmanageable reservation. Citizens clamored for the allotment of Indian land and white settlement of the excess area; this was to be accomplished shortly after 1900, as the farseeing Isaac Stevens had provided for in the Hellgate Treaty.

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[98] Annual Report, Commissioner, 1892, H.R. Executive Document No. 1, Part 5, 52nd Congress, 2nd Session, Vol. 13, p. 292, Serial 3088.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION: MISUNDERSTANDING AND INEPTITUDE

The nineteenth century began on a note of encouragement for the Flatheads and ended in disappointment, frustration, poverty, and disillusionment with the white man. Never numbering more than five hundred people, the Flatheads were happy to cooperate with white explorers and traders and take advantage of their firearms, and the Indians eagerly awaited the coming of Jesuit missionaries. Soon, however, the newness of the Christian experience wore off and resentment set in. The Stevens Treaty inaugurated a brief period of hope, but the inattention of the federal government spawned distrust among the Indians, who were given many reasons to complain of broken promises. After a century of inter-racial relations, the white men were dominant in western Montana, and the Flatheads--though still numerically strong--were in other respects but a shadow of their former selves.

The first contacts between Flatheads and white men were not overly dramatic, but subtle inroads were quickly made on traditional Flathead life. Lewis and Clark, the first whites to pass through Flathead country, wrote of

friendly, attractive Indians who followed the ways of the hunter and gatherer. Trappers and traders came next, frequently from the west; these men, usually employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, the American Fur Company, or other fur companies, confirmed what members of the Lewis and Clark expedition had noted. In exchange for furs they left a few trinkets and beads, and steel tools, firearms, and ammunition. Although none of these things turned the Flatheads from their hunting and gathering traditions, they gave the Indians new strength in the struggle against a powerful enemy, the Blackfeet, and made them dependent upon the white suppliers.

More influential than the traders, however, were the Jesuit missionaries who responded to Flathead calls for priests made over a period of several years. Finally Pierre de Smet, a Belgian priest, journeyed to the Flatheads to establish initial contacts and returned a year later, in 1841, to establish St. Mary's Mission in the Bitter Root Valley.

The newness of the mission assured its immediate but not total success. After the novelty wore off, the Indians began to resent Jesuit intrusions into inter-tribal relations and insistence on moral codes different from that of the Indians. St. Mary's was closed in 1850 in the face of the gradual estrangement of the Flatheads. Although it was reopened in 1866, it never regained the position it held during the first five years of its existence.

Four years after the closing of St. Mary's, the Jesuits opened St. Ignatius Mission at its present location, on what would soon become the Flathead Reservation. This mission prospered and became the educator of the Indians throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. De Smet was instrumental in initiating this mission also, and it is testimony to his fervor and the dedication of the Jesuits that the mission played a central role in Indian life, sometimes to the exclusion of the agency.

Meanwhile, white settlement of the Bitter Root Valley had begun on a modest scale. John Owen, trader, farmer, and the owner of Fort Owen (which, despite its name, was never a military fort), leased the land of St. Mary's when the mission closed, and remained a leading figure in Bitter Root Valley events for twenty years thereafter. Other whites settled near him forming a small nucleus that was to become the heart of a substantial white settlement within fifteen years.

The general opening of the Northwest, including what is now Montana, brought an intensive effort on the part of Isaac Ingalls Stevens, the first governor of Washington Territory, to extinguish Indian title to much of the land in the region. Stevens, accompanied by Lieutenant John Mullan and others, passed through Flathead country in 1853 and promised the Indians two things: protection from the Blackfeet and, in consequence, easy hunting on the common buffalo grounds; and prosperity under the aegis of the federal

government. Lieutenant Mullan stayed through the winter of 1853-1854 to conduct local exploratory surveys and to assure the Flatheads that Stevens had meant what he said.

When Stevens returned to the Bitter Root Valley in 1855 to negotiate a treaty with the Flatheads, he found the Indians willing to talk. After arduous negotiations, the Flatheads, Kootenais, and Pend d'Oreilles agreed to terms similar in most respects to those that had been arranged with a number of other tribes between the Bitter Root Valley and the West Coast. Since the three Salish tribes were related only by proximity and language, however, they could not agree to live together on one reservation, and Stevens had to settle for a compromise: the Kootenais and Pend d' Oreilles would settle on the reservation delineated in the treaty, while the Flatheads would continue to live in the Bitter Root Valley until both areas were surveyed to determine which one would be best suited for them.

Immediate action by the government might have averted any misunderstanding on the part of the Flatheads. To fulfill the terms of the treaty, Stevens instructed Richard Lansdale to examine both areas; and Lansdale's report, which was thorough and certainly qualified as a "survey," favored moving the Flatheads to the reservation. Stevens forwarded such a recommendation to the Office of Indian Affairs. The treaty was not ratified until 1859, however, and in the intervening time the President was unable to act upon Stevens' recommendation. By the time he could, following ratification,

the survey was evidently forgotten. The Flatheads assumed that the government preferred to let them live on their own "reservation" in the valley, away from the other two tribes. Their initial assumption soon became conviction, and two government efforts--separated by nearly two decades--were required to dislodge them from their valley.

Prior to the first such effort, made by James A. Garfield in 1872, whites had been illegally settling in the area. The pressure of this growing white population finally resulted in a presidential proclamation declaring that the valley had been surveyed and ordering the Flatheads to move to the Flathead Reservation or take up land in severalty in the Bitter Root Valley. The order of removal was followed by a Removal Act of 5 June 1872 that provided for the surveying of tracts of Indian land and for a special commissioner to make arrangements for removal. Garfield was selected for the task; in his instructions he was given no option but to arrange for the removal of the Indians to the reservation; yet he saw the injustice of the situation. At the same time, he realized that the whites, in an attempt to secure a military post and the legalization of their presence in the valley, had been overzealous in their statement of the danger from the Flatheads. Garfield secured the signatures of two of three Flathead chiefs on a document arranging for removal; the third Chief, Charlot, would probably sign, said Garfield, who gave instructions that preparations for the Indians on the reservation should proceed on this assumption.

By 1873 a major change occurred in the relations between the Flatheads and the United States. Some Flatheads under Chief Arlee moved to the reservation in accordance with the Garfield Agreement, while most of the tribe, under Chief Charlot, remained in the valley contrary to the terms of the Agreement. These Bitter Root Indians refused not only to remove, but also to accept title to land to which they were entitled under the Removal Act of 1872. Henceforth they would receive scant attention from the agent on the Flathead Reservation, who was officially relieved of responsibility for them, and they would be forced from their land as white settlers quickly moved in.

After 1872 the Flathead Agency improved. Prior to that time it had been an example of neglect and ineffectiveness. Afterward, government and public attention forced the agents to improve the condition of the physical plant. Mills were more apt to be kept working; money shortages and the difficulty of securing supplies became less of a problem; agency buildings were gradually improved, as various inspectors noted. With the increasing stability of the agency, more attention was given to the Indians with whom the agent was meant to deal. Agent Peter Ronan took command in 1877 and proved to be a boon to the agency. With his administration the agency became self-sufficient agriculturally, and the services of the agency expanded to include most of those things required by the treaty. St. Ignatius Mission, which had often been at odds with the agency, blossomed into a

fine boarding and industrial school for boys and girls. Finally the reservation began to offer Charlot's people some reasons to move from the Bitter Root Valley.

Ignored, landless, and hungry, but proud, Charlot and his followers wandered aimlessly around the Bitter Root Valley until General Henry B. Carrington was assigned the task of effecting the removal of the last of the Flatheads to the reservation. Carrington reached the Bitter Root in 1889 and calmly and efficiently went about the task of securing the written permission of a majority of the remaining Flatheads to move them to the reservation. By acting independently of Charlot and yet placing upon him the moral burden of a decision, Carrington was successful in persuading most Indians--and ultimately Charlot himself--to move. Although the General telegraphed Washington in 1889 that his task was completed, the remaining Flatheads did not move until 1891.

When the relationship between the Flatheads and the whites is examined, it becomes clear that although the whites appear to have been alarmed and in fear of their lives on several occasions--most notably during the Nez Perce flight in 1877--the Flatheads always maintained a peaceful posture toward the whites. On several occasions they boasted that they never shed a drop of white blood, except once when it had been a matter of self-defense. During the Nez Perce incident Charlot announced that the Flatheads would not harbor them and would even join the whites in common defense.

In the face of provocation in the Bitter Root Valley, particularly in the desperate years after 1872, Flatheads never considered a unified resistance of white settlement.

There are four reasons why this attitude prevailed at a time when other tribes throughout the West were fighting the United States for land and rights. For one thing, the Flatheads were never a very strong tribe. Although their militaristic organization on the plains was similar to that of the war-like Blackfeet and Sioux, once the Flatheads returned to the Bitter Root Valley their organization disintegrated to the point that the tribe was relatively weak. The Flatheads were organizationally unable to resist encroaching whites.

Secondly, owing to their position at the eastern end of trade routes originating in the Northwest, they were soon dependent upon white supplies of arms and munitions and could ill-afford to turn these guns on the white men. The Blackfeet were supplied with arms from the east but were powerful enough to prevent this white trade from going past them to the Flatheads. Thus the Blackfeet nearly decimated the Flatheads before trade from the west reached the latter.

The introduction of Christianity to the Flatheads fairly early in their historic period was another ameliorating factor. It could well be argued that only the superficial elements of Christianity--particularly the trappings of Catholicism--were really accepted by the Flatheads, as the closing of St. Mary's Mission suggests. Nonetheless, as Nicolas Point

reported, the Flatheads valued the apparent "magic" of the priests, seemingly useful in warding off Blackfeet attacks. This magic went hand-in-hand with the presence of white men--indeed, Chief Victor went so far as to invite whites to settle in the valley. Again the Indians were reluctant to destroy the source of added power in their age-old struggle against a dangerous enemy.

Aware of the central role of Blackfeet threats, Isaac Stevens played on Flathead fears. He promised them a grand council in which the Blackfeet, Flatheads, and others would meet to arrange mutual and peaceful buffalo hunting grounds. (This council occurred in 1855 with the promise that the government would enforce the resulting treaty should the Blackfeet renege on their promises.) The Flatheads understood, of course, that in return for this help they would have to cooperate with Stevens, as he reminded them during the Hell Gate Treaty negotiations. So desirous of assistance of any kind against the Blackfeet were the Flatheads that they consented to the establishment of a reservation and the cession of millions of acres of land. As suggested, by 1859 the Flatheads assumed (wrongly) that the Bitter Root Valley was to be reserved for them. Thus when white settlers began moving into the valley between 1855 and 1872, their illegal presence was overlooked and hardly protested by the Flatheads. By the time the government demonstrated that it would not prevent white settlement in the valley, the number of farmers was too great to be resisted by the Indians.

The Flatheads' dissatisfaction with the white man's presence was not long in coming and surfaced first in their relationship with the Jesuits. Even though the Flatheads requested the return of the Jesuits within a year after St. Mary's was closed, the closing had been mutually agreeable at the time. The Indians resented the mission's intrusion into their lives and the constant friction between themselves and the Jesuits and between the priests and traders in the area. When St. Ignatius Mission opened its doors in 1854, it gradually took on the cloak of authority and became a symbol of what a reservation was; when the Flatheads finally moved to the reservation--some with Arlee and the remainder in 189 --they refused to settle near St. Ignatius for this reason.

The presence of white settlers in the valley quickly became a source of friction, disappointment, and trouble. An increase in the number of white settlers brought a proportionate groundswell of sentiment in favor of the expulsion of the Flatheads. Petitions called for the removal of the Indians and pointed to the danger of "imminent" Indian uprisings. At the same time, a quieter white faction urged the Flatheads to remain in the valley and fight for their rights--in the hope that the presence of Indians would cause a military post to be established in the valley and thus provide an additional market for valley farm products.

Whites continually caused problems, though sometimes unintentionally. They rented Indian land, to the exclusion

of the Indians; they sometimes overran Indian land that appeared to be unused. Some of the less scrupulous whites also sold whiskey to the Indians, heightening interracial tensions. Even on the reservation, white men managed to confound the Indians by running cattle on reservation land and complaining noisily--and sometimes violently--when Indians wandered off the reservation and committed depredations.

The points of friction between Flatheads and whites were many, and no ready solution short of removal seemed workable or was proposed. It is a wonder that the Indians remained peaceful, and it is at the same time no wonder that the Flatheads grew bitter toward the whites.

It could hardly be expected that white settlers--aggressive, energetic, and embued with a sense of manifest destiny and moral rightness--would have second thoughts about settling upon Indian land (the Bitter Root Valley was legally Indian land until 1871). Throughout the nineteenth century white men looked upon Indians as inferior people, and the demeanor and words of Indians in the presence of whites suggests that subconsciously at least the Red Men accepted this view. The tone of treaty and agreement negotiations was always one of white dominance. The Indians sensed that the whites with their assumed superiority, their secretaries and endless supply of goods, their demands, and their pens and paper, were in fact superior. Indians often felt humble and apologetic in the presence of white men. Whenever a conversation occurred, it was as if an Indian were talking to a

superior--asking permission, objecting to rulings made without Indian consent, protesting that the Great White Father should pay more attention to his children. It was not a ruthless thing, white settlement in the valley; it was natural in the context of contemporary attitudes.

The federal government, with the resources to fulfill its duties, was instead irresponsible in its dealings with the Flatheads. The root of this negligence lies in the fact that the government itself took the view that the Indians were an inferior race and had to be dealt with as children. The concept of the "Great White Father" overseeing his "children" was consciously cultivated by negotiators, superintendents, and agents; Indians were considered wards, not equals. Thus the government was less inclined to worry about the condition of the Indians and the degree to which treaties were fulfilled. Given these attitudes, it is not surprising that the federal government was dogged by bureaucratic ineptness and confusion, by incompetency and fraud, and by congressional irresponsibility. In virtually every phase of treaty fulfillment and Flathead Reservation management, the government shirked its duties and plunged the Indians into deep distrust of anything associated with that government. In the end the Flatheads refused to believe any emmisaries except Peter Ronan and Henry Carrington.

The government's relationship with the Flatheads began officially with the Stevens Treaty of 1855, in which the government erred by introducing concepts with which the Indians were unfamiliar. For example, the possibility of

dividing land into allotted tracts was written into the treaty, although the records of the treaty negotiations do not contain any discussion of this. Actually, the idea was disguised by an oblique reference to another treaty that contained the details. Writing into the treaty a clause that gave hopes that two reservations might be established--one for the Flatheads in the Bitter Root Valley and another for the Pend d'Oreilles and Kootenais--was another mistake. Stevens did not want two reservations, and he indicated that the Senate would not like the idea either; one senses that he knew that the findings of a survey to settle the matter would be in favor of one reservation. The Flatheads were given a hope that was not likely to be fulfilled. The stipulation that the government could designate a railroad right-of-way through the reservation was further cause for misunderstanding. Virtually no Indian of the Flathead tribe had seen a railroad; even later, when McCammon was negotiating for the railroad right-of-way in 1883, it was clear that some of the Indians had no notion of what a railroad was.

Having signed the treaty, the Flatheads were eager to receive the promised benefits such as schools, a physician, an agent, and shops, and they wanted to know whether a reservation would be created in their valley. Office of Indian Affairs officials were helpless to respond to the Flatheads until after the treaty was ratified, and the Senate delayed ratification for three years, following a one-year delay by the President. What little help was furnished was supplied

from territorial resources by Stevens. The Indians, as well as Stevens, frequently urged the Senate to act on the treaty and Congress to appropriate funds, but to no avail. It was this initial four-year period that first alerted the Flatheads to the inability or unwillingness of the government to fulfill its promises. Even after the treaty was ratified, money to run the agency--and particularly cash with which to pay employees--was not provided by Congress.

As a result of a lack of congressional, presidential, and bureaucratic concern that would certainly have been accorded a country that had signed a treaty with the United States, the agency's physical plant was slow in developing beyond a shadow of what was required by the treaty. Agents, frustrated by a shortage of funds, red tape, slow mails, and inadequate manual help, either quit soon after assuming the position or stayed on to milk the agency dry of whatever might turn a personal profit. At one time or another the records of the agency were destroyed, agency property was sold for personal profit, and the agency was without an agent. Annuity goods and money either never arrived or were insufficient and in arrears. Crops were not always planted, sometimes because the seed grains had been used to feed the Indians or the agency employees. Agency stock was usually unfit for service, as were the tools. There never was a school at the agency. Although many quarterly reports listed a full agency staff and complete operations in accordance with the 1855 treaty, most of the time this was mere padding

in order to gain more operating funds for the minimal services actually provided. Agency accounts were usually confused, and vouchers drawn for local merchants were sometimes not paid, pending charges that the agent who signed them was involved in overspending or dishonest doings; thus the credit of the agency was hurt, although this would have been more serious had the Bureau been willing to permit the flexibility of immediate, open-market purchases of supplies and equipment rather than slow, undependable purchases from Eastern firms.

Between 1859 and 1877 not one administration of the reservation or the Bitter Root Valley was satisfactory. The few capable agents--there were ten agents in thirteen years--were hampered by some of the problems mentioned above or were involved in feuds with their superiors or with the Jesuits at St. Ignatius. Every agent was hopelessly burdened in one way or another, compounding the distrust of the Flatheads for the United States and the agents who represented it.

The government erred in a series of events that caused the Flatheads to conclude that their residence in the valley had been approved. Stevens lived up to the treaty requirements when he asked Lansdale to examine both the valley and the Flathead Reservation and when he recommended that the Indians be moved to the latter. By delaying ratification for four years, the President and the Senate caused Stevens' recommendation to become lost in the tunnels of government.

The delay was enough to permit the Flatheads to come to the wrong conclusion.

When James Garfield arrived in Montana to arrange for removal, he found the Indians and whites pitted against each other. The fact that Garfield's trip was necessary is indicative of the government's prior irresponsibility. Until the presidential proclamation of 1871, the whites should never have been allowed into the Bitter Root Valley; but they were there in force. The proclamation was not really the result of a surveyor's honest findings about the merits of the valley versus those of the Flathead Reservation; rather, it was the result of concerted white pressure. More than seventeen years had passed before the government had given any consideration to the plight of the Flatheads.

Even the Garfield Agreement was not free from bungling. Apart from the fact that the agreement should not have been necessary, the appearance of a "forged" signature irrevocably set Charlot against the government. Garfield was probably not responsible for the insertion of Charlot's signature into the printed copy of the agreement, but its appearance suggested to settlers that the whole dilemma was resolved, and it suggested to Charlot that the government was not to be trusted. Charlot's reticence to move was further compounded by the naming of Arlee as head-chief of the Flatheads by the government; it was the ultimate insult to Charlot, who would not consider going to the reservation until after Arlee died.

Associated with the Garfield Agreement was the allotment of individual tracts of land to any Flatheads who elected to remain in the Bitter Root Valley. Fifty-four tracts were withheld from the public sale of lands in the valley in 1873. Three years later the patents were sent to the Flathead Agency for delivery to the Flatheads still in the valley. It was not until 1877, however, five years after the Flatheads had been given the option of removing or taking up allotted land in the valley, that any attempts were made to deliver the patents. By then it was too late; whites had settled on some tracts, some of the Indians named in the patents had left the valley, and others wanted nothing to do with the patents. Had there been no "forged" signature, and had the patents been drawn up and presented at once, the course of valley history might have been different.

Ultimately Charlot and his people did leave their homeland and go to the reservation, but not without encountering further government bungling. General Henry B. Carrington came to Montana in 1889 to investigate and evaluate the Indian patent lands in the valley and to arrange for their public sale and the removal of the Indians. He managed to convince even Charlot of the necessity of removal, and it was understood that the public auction of Indian land would occur in the spring of 1890. Inexplicably, no date was set, and by April, 1890, the Flatheads were wondering whether to move or plant crops. They did neither, and they nearly starved that year. In 1891 Carrington returned to

make additional arrangements and again persuade the Indians to move. At this point the Indians needed a good deal of persuading. When the auction did occur, it was held in Missoula instead of in the Bitter Root Valley where the settlers lived; the date was misadvertised and later corrected; and cash--a scarce commodity in Montana--was required for purchase. Only four tracts were sold, and the sale was postponed indefinitely; again the Flatheads hesitated to move, worried that they would never receive money for their land.

When the Flatheads finally arrived at the reservation, arrangements to receive them had not been completed. The houses promised the Indians had not been built--even the type of house had not been chosen. And although Charlot had been promised Arlee's property, the government felt unable to fulfill its promise without causing undue hardship to Arlee's relatives. Charlot had to settle for other property.

No one individual can be held responsible for the treatment of the Flatheads between 1855 to 1892, since the effect of federal irresponsibility was cumulative and divided among several offices and departments. The attitudes of Congress, dominated by figures from the East who were removed from the plight of Indians and whose imaginations were fueled by tales of Sioux warriors and exaggerated accounts of "Indian Trouble," the failure of Washington bureaucrats to understand the needs of a young frontier, the attitudes

of settlers in Montana toward Indians, and a lack of firm Bureau control of its agents, superintendents, and suppliers all contributed to a tragic series of governmental failures which, when added to the other disappointments faced by the Flatheads, created a story filled with woe.

Despite the pleas of the Flatheads, many of their agents, and prominent men such as Garfield and Dawes, the Flatheads were treated in an extremely shabby and irresponsible manner by the government of the United States and by the white population of the Bitter Root Valley. Probable fraud on the part of several early Flathead agents and at least one superintendent, and inattention and incompetency, as well as western growing pains combined to reduce a proud, friendly people to a forlorn group of Indians on whom all whites insensitively imposed the final burden: the abandonment of their traditional way of life and the adoption of farming in the white man's manner.

APPENDIX I

TREATY WITH THE FLATHEADS, ETC., 1855

Articles of agreement and convention made and concluded at the treaty-ground at Hell Gate, in the Bitter Root Valley, this sixteenth day of July, in the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty-five, by and between Isaac I. Stevens, governor and superintendent of Indian affairs for the Territory of Washington, on the part of the United States, and the undersigned chiefs, head-men, and delegates of the confederated tribes of the Flathead, Kootenay, and Upper Pend d'Oreilles Indians, on behalf of and acting for said confederated tribes, and being duly authorized thereto by them. It being understood and agreed that the said confederated tribes do hereby constitute a nation, under the name of the Flathead Nation, with Victor, the head chief of the Fleathead / sic / tribe, as the head chief of the said nation,and that the several chiefs, head-men, and delegates, whose mames / sic / are signed to this treaty, do hereby, in behalf of their respective tribes, recognise / sic / Victor as said head chief.

ARTICLE I. The said confederated tribe of Indians hereby cede, relinquish, and convey to the United States all their right, title, and interest in and to the country occupied or claimed by them, bounded and described as follows, to wit:

Commencing on the main ridge of the Rocky Mountains at the forty-ninth (49th) parallel of latitude, thence westwardly on that parallel to the divide between the Flat-bow or Kootenay River and Clarke's Fork, thence southerly and southeasterly along said divide to the one hundred and fifteenth degree of longitude, (115°,) thence in a southwesterly direction to the divide between the sources of the St. Regis Borgia and the Coeur d'Alene Rivers, thence southeasterly and southerly along the main ridge of the Bitter Root Mountains to the divide between the head-waters of the Koos-koos-kee River and of the southwestern fork of the Bitter Root River, thence easterly along the divide separating the waters of the several tributaries of the Bitter Root River from the waters flowing into the Salmon and Snake Rivers to the main ridge of the Rocky Mountains, and thence northerly along said main ridge to the place of beginning.

ARTICLE 2. There is, however, reserved from the lands above ceded, for the use and occupation of the said confederated tribes, and as a general Indian reservation, upon which may be placed other friendly tribes and bands of Indians of the Territory of Washington who may agree to be consolidated with the tribes parties to this treaty, under the common designation of the Flathead Nation, with Victor, head chief of the Flathead tribe, as the head chief of the nation, the tract of land included within the following boundaries, to wit:

Commencing at the source of the main branch of the Jocko River; thence along the divide separating the waters flowing into the Bitter Root River from those flowing into the Jocko to a point on Clarke's Fork between the Camash and Horse Prairies; thence northerly to, and along the divide bounding on the west the Flathead River, to a point due west from the point half way in latitude between the northern and southern extremities of the Flathead Lake; thence on a due east course to the divide whence the Crow, the Prune, the So-ni-el-em and the Jocko Rivers take their rise, and thence southerly along said divide to the place of beginning.

All which tract shall be set apart, and, so far as necessary, surveyed and marked out for the exclusive use and benefit of said confederated tribes as an Indian reservation. Nor shall any white man, excepting those in the employment of the Indian department, be permitted to reside upon the said reservation without permission of the confederated tribes, and the superintendent and agent. And the said confederated tribes agree to remove to and settle upon the same within one year after the ratification of this treaty. In the meantime it shall be lawful for them to reside upon any ground not in the actual claim and occupation of citizens of the United States, and upon any ground claimed or occupied, if with the permission of the owner or claimant.

Guaranteeing however the right to all citizens of the United States to enter upon and occupy as settlers any lands not actually occupied and cultivated by said Indians at this time, and not included in the reservation above named. And provided, That any substantial improvements heretofore made by any Indian, such as fields enclosed and cultivated and houses erected upon the lands hereby ceded, and which he may be compelled to abandon in consequence of this treaty, shall be valued under the direction of the President of the United States, and payment made therefor in money, or improvements of an equal value be made for said Indian upon the reservation; and no Indian will be required to abandon the improvements aforesaid, now occupied by him, until their value in money or improvements of an equal value shall be furnished him as aforesaid.

ARTICLE 3. And provided, That if necessary for the public convenience roads may be run through the said reservation; and, on the other hand, the right of way with free access from the same to the nearest public highway is secured to them, as also the right in common with citizens of the United States to travel upon all public highways.

The exclusive right of taking fish in all the streams running through or bordering said reservation is further secured to said Indians; as also the right of taking fish at all usual and accustomed places, in common with citizens of the Territory, and of erecting temporary buildings for curing; together with the privilege of hunting, gathering roots and berries, and pasturing their horses and cattle upon open and unclaimed land.

ARTICLE 4. In consideration of the above cession, the United States agree to pay to the said confederated tribes of Indians, in addition to the goods and provisions distributed to them at the time of signing this treaty the sum of one hundred and twenty thousand dollars, in the following manner--that is to say: For the first year after the ratification hereof, thirty-six thousand dollars, to be expended under the direction of the President, in providing for their removal to the reservation, breaking up and fencing farms, building houses for them, and for such other objects as he may deem necessary. For the next four years, six thousand dollars each year; for the next five years, five thousand dollars each year; for the next five years, four thousand dollars each year; and for the next five years, three thousand dollars each year.

All which said sums of money shall be applied to the use and benefit of the said Indians, under the direction of the President of the United States, who may from time to time determine, at his discretion, upon what beneficial objects to expend the same for them, and the superintendent of Indian affairs, or other proper officer, shall each year inform the President of the wishes of the Indians in relation thereto.

ARTICLE 5. The United States further agree to establish at suitable points within said reservation, within one year after the ratification hereof, an agricultural and industrial school, erecting the necessary buildings, keeping the same in repair, and providing it with furniture, books, and stationery, to be located at the agency, and to be free to the children of the said tribes, and to employ a suitable instructor or instructors. To furnish one blacksmith shop, to which shall be attached a tin and gun shop; one carpenter's shop; one wagon and plough-maker's shop; and to keep the same in repair, and furnished with the necessary tools. To employ two farmers,

one blacksmith, one tinner, one gunsmith, one carpenter, one wagon and plough maker, for the instruction of the Indians in trades, and to assist them in the same. To erect one saw-mill and one flouring-mill, keeping the same in repair and furnished with the necessary tools and fixtures, and to employ two millers. To erect a hospital, keeping the same in repair, and provided with the necessary medicines and furniture, and to employ a physician; and to erect, keep in repair, and provide the necessary furniture the buildings required for the accommodation of said employees. The said buildings and establishments to be maintained and kept in repair as aforesaid, and the employees to be kept in service for the period of twenty years.

And in view of the fact that the head chiefs of the said confederated tribes of Indians are expected and will be called upon to perform many services of a public character, occupying much of their time, the United States further agree to pay to each of the Flathead, Kootenay, and Upper Pend d' Oreilles tribes five hundred dollars per year, for the term of twenty years after the ratification hereof, as a salary for such persons as the said confederated tribes may select to be their head chiefs, and to build for them at suitable points on the reservation a comfortable house, and properly furnish the same, and to plough and fence for each of them ten acres of land. The salary to be paid to, and the said houses to be occupied by, such head chiefs so long as they may be elected to that position by their tribes, and no longer.

And all the expenditures and expenses contemplated in this article of this treaty shall be defrayed by the United States, and shall not be deducted from the annuities agreed to be paid to said tribes. Nor shall the cost of transporting the goods for the annuity payments be a charge upon the annuities, but shall be defrayed by the United States.

ARTICLE 6. The President may from time to time, at his discretion, cause the whole, or such portion of such reservation as he may think proper, to be surveyed into lots, and assign the same to such individuals or families of the said confederated tribes as are willing to avail themselves of the privilege, and will locate on the same as a permanent home, on the same terms and subject to the same regulations as are provided in the sixth article of the treaty with the Omahas, so far as the same may be applicable.

ARTICLE 7. The annuities of the aforesaid confederated tribes of Indians shall not be taken to pay the debts of individuals.

ARTICLE 8. The aforesaid confederated tribes of Indians acknowledge their dependence upon the Government of the United States, and promise to be friendly with all citizens thereof, and pledge themselves to commit no depredations upon the property of such citizens. And should any one or more of them violate this pledge, and the fact be satisfactorily proved before the agent, the property taken shall be returned, or, in default thereof, or if injured or destroyed, compensation may be made by the Government out of the annuities. Nor will they make war on any other tribe except in self-defence, but will submit all matters of difference between them and other Indians to the Government of the United States, or its agent, for decision, and abide thereby. And if any of the said Indians commit any depredations on any other Indians within the jurisdiction of the United States, the same rule shall prevail as that prescribed in this article, in case of depredations against citizens. And the said tribes agree not to shelter or conceal offenders against the laws of the United States, but to deliver them up to the authorities for trial.

ARTICLE 9. The said confederated tribes desire to exclude from their reservation the use of ardent spirits, and to prevent their people from drinking the same; and therefore it is provided that any Indian belonging to said confederated tribes of Indians who is guilty of bringing liquor into said reservation, or who drinks liquor, may have his or her proportion of the annuities withheld from him or her for such time as the President may determine.

ARTICLE 10. The United States further agree to guaranty the exclusive use of the reservation provided for in this treaty, as against any claims which may be urged by the Hudson Bay Company under the provisions of the treaty between the United States and Great Britain of the fifteenth of June, eighteen hundred and forty-six, in consequence of the occupation of a trading-post on the Pru-in River by the servants of that company.

ARTICLE 11. It is, moreover, provided that the Bitter Root Valley, above the Loo-lo Fork, shall be carefully surveyed and examined, and if it shall prove, in the judgment of the President, to be better adapted to the wants of the Flathead tribe than the general reservation provided for in this treaty, then such portions of it as may be necessary shall be set apart as a separate reservation for the said tribe. No portion of the Bitter Root Valley, above the Loo-lo Fork, shall be opened to settlement until such examination is had and the decision of the President made known.

ARTICLE 12. This treaty shall be obligatory upon the contracting parties as soon as the same shall be ratified by the President and Senate of the United States.

In testimony whereof, the said Isaac I. Stevens, governor and superintendent of Indian affairs for the Territory of Washington, and the undersigned head chiefs, chiefs and principal men of the Flathead, Kootenay, and Upper Pend d'Oreilles tribes of Indians, have hereunto set their hands and seals, at the place and on the day and year hereinbefore written.

Isaac I. Stevens
Governor and Superintendent Indian Affairs W. T.

Victor, head chief of the Flat head Nation, his x mark.
Alexander, chief of the Upper Pend d'Oreilles, his x mark.
Michelle, chief of the Kootenays, his x mark.
Ambrose, his x mark.
Pah-soh, his x mark.
Bear Track, his x mark.
Adolphe, his x mark.
Thunder, his x mark.

Big Canoe, his x mark.
Kootel Chah, his x mark.
Paul, his x mark.
Andrew, his x mark.
Michelle, his x mark.
Battiste, his x mark.
Kootenays.
Gun Flint, his x mark.
Little Michelle, his x mark.
Paul See, his x mark.
Moses, his x mark.

James Doty, secretary.
R. H. Lansdale, Indian Agent
W. H. Tappan, sub Indian Agent

Henry R. Crosire,
Gustavus Sohon, Flathead Interpreter.
A. J. Hoecken, sp. mis.
William Craig.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

MANUSCRIPTS

Without question the most valuable sources for this dissertation are those in Record Group 75 of the United States National Archives. In particular, the "Letters Received" file of the Office of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, has been indispensible, for included is correspondence from agents, superintendents, Flatheads Indians, Jesuits, and citizens who had dealings or encounters with government officials or Indians. Included also are fiscal reports, reports on employees and the needs of Indians, quarterly estimates, and monthly and annual reports filed by superintendents and agents. Also to be found here are medical reports, sanitary reports, and school reports, as well as reports on employees. This group of records provides a continuing look at the details of virtually all matters relating to the operation of the Flathead Agency and Reservation from the time of the Stevens Treaty. Letters written prior to 1881 are part of Microfilm Publication 234 and are available from Federal Records Centers throughout the United States. A filing change in 1881 precluded the ready filming of letters after that date; the originals in the

National Archives must be examined for those years after 1880. Western Montana was part of Washington Territory until 1863, and thus letters received from the Washington Superintendency between 1853 and 1863 are pertinent. Although Montana was part of Idaho Territory in 1863, virtually no useful material is found in Idaho records. The bulk of the information for this dissertation is contained in the grouping "Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Montana Superintendency, 1864-1880."

Similar useful material can be found in "Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Letters from Employees assigned to the Eastern District, 1853-1863." Included are letters from Richard Lansdale, John Owen, Charles Hutchins, and Quincy Brooks--all especially useful for the period of activity between 1855 and 1859.

There are several sources of information pertaining to Isaac Stevens' surveys of Flathead country and the Stevens Treaty of 1855. Most important are the Isaac Ingalls Stevens Papers (1831-1862) located in the University of Washington Library in Seattle. These are on four reels of microfilm and are especially helpful because they contain, among other things, the "Letter Copy Book Regarding the Pacific Railroad Survey, 1853." Of slight help is the "Correspondence of the Office of Explorations and Surveys Concerning Isaac Stevens' Survey of a Northern Route for the Pacific Railway, 1853-1861," Microfilm Publication 126. Reproduced as part of Microfilm Publication Five is Isaac Stevens' Journal; this

pertains to his treaty negotiations and is of some help in filling in details.

The James A. Garfield Papers in the Library of Congress are an important source of information concerning Garfield's opinions regarding matters surrounding the 1872 removal attempt and his agreement with the Flatheads. Some of his reports, as well as copies of petitions from Bitter Root Valley citizens and copies of his instructions are available here, as well as elsewhere.

Other Office of Indian Affairs sources of minor and not vital importance include the following: Special File 213, which contains correspondence from W. Hall, surveyor in the work of Flathead removal, and letters from Agent Peter Whaley; "Documents relating to the Negotiation of Ratified and Unratified Treaties with Various Indian Tribes, 1801-1869;" and Special Case Fifty-five, which relates to the allotment of Bitter Root Valley Flathead land. All of these sources are on microfilm.

MISCELLANEOUS PRIMARY SOURCES

The Montana Historical Society's Collections contain several items that are not found elsewhere. Letters regarding a biographical sketch of Agent Peter Ronan help to fill out a character sketch of the man. An envelope contains letters from Charles Hutchins, annuity receipts for 1868, signed by M. M. McCauley, and invoices of government property.

There is a statement by Chief Michel of the Flathead Nation, dated 2 May 1874, regarding the ill treatment of his people by Agent Shanahan. The Collections also contain an application for the admission of John Owen to the Hospital for the Insane, dated 21 April 1874; accompanying this is a paper pertaining to Owen's claim near Stevensville. There are also several drawers of clippings about the Jocko Reservation and St. Ignatius Mission. The Society has a large number of photographs of the Flatheads, the Bitter Root Valley, and St. Ignatius Mission.

PRINTED GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

The Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs are extremely helpful. They contain compiled statistics on the numbers of Indians and a summary of important events during the preceding year, information concerning employees, buildings, and annuity goods distribution, medical reports, and other matters. Although the information is only as reliable as the agents who supplied it, and although the Flathead Indians in the Bitter Root Valley are frequently not mentioned, the Annual Reports are nonetheless one of the first sources to which one must turn.

A major source of specific information that has proved invaluable is the Serial Set, especially those volumes containing the House of Representatives and Senate "Executive Documents." Reports of the most significant special investigations and explorations, including Stevens' "Reports of

Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, 1853-1855," and the report of Senator Vest's subcommittee, provide information not duplicated elsewhere. General Henry B. Carrington's report, annual reports of the superintendents of Indian affairs, and various petitions and memorials from people in Montana are also contained in the Serial Set. Information on the sale of Indian land, and on the agreement for a railroad route negotiated by Joseph McCammon are also to be found in this series.

The Ninth Census of the United States: 1870 helped to resolve the confusion surrounding the population of the Bitter Root Valley, but the census did not include Indians living tribally.

Statutes at Large of the United States provides the texts of Removal Acts and Trade and Intercourse Acts; it is thus a necessary source.

OTHER PRINTED PRIMARY SOURCES

The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen, Pioneer of the Northwest, 1850-1871, edited by Seymour Dunbar and Paul Phillips, 2 vols. (Helena: 1927), is of great value. Owen figured prominently in the history of the Flatheads between 1850 and 1870, and to find an almost daily account and the unrestricted personal opinions of someone so influential during the most critical time of Flathead-white

relations is a marvelous stroke of good fortune, particularly since so few sources exist for the Bitter Root Valley between 1850 and 1860.

Another important source of information is the writings of Father Pierre de Smet; his works are among the few regarding the Flatheads in the 1840's. Letters and Sketches, vol. 27 of Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites, 32 vols. (N.Y.: 1966), and Hiram Chittenden and Alfred Talbot, Life, Letters, and Travels of Father de Smet, 4 vols. (N.Y.: 1969) combine to provide a detailed account of the first five years of the St. Mary's Mission and of de Smet's experiences among the Flatheads. Nicolas Point's Wilderness Kingdom, edited and translated by Joseph Donnelly, S.J. (Chicago: 1967), includes Point's sketches and stunning if primitive water colors of Flathead life, as well as detailed information about his experiences as a missionary to the Indians. (The two de Smet works also contain some letters by Point.)

Indispensible--chiefly because it is one of the few sources of information concerning first white contact with the Flatheads--is Reuben Thwaites' eight-volume edition of the Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806, 8 vols. (N.Y.: 1959). A Journal of the Voyages and Travels of a Corps of Discovery, by Patrick Gass (Minneapolis: 1958), a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition, is of less value but substantiates what the major journals say. Careful reading is required of both of these.

A number of other journals or personal accounts of trips into Flathead country at various times prior to 1850 are also available; although none alone is critical to this study of the Flatheads, taken as a group they add depth to the consideration of early white contact with the Indians. They include: Adventures on the Columbia River, by Ross Cox (Norman: 1957); The Adventures of Zenas Leonard, Fur Trader, by Zenas Leonard (Norman: 1959); The Journal of John Work (Glendale, 1923); Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America in the Years 1811, 1812, 1813, and 1814, by Gabriel Franchere (Vol. VI, part 2 of Early Western Travels); The Journal of Francois Antoine Larocque, vol. 20 of Sources of Northwest History, 20 vols. (Missoula: 1935); Forty Years a Fur Trader on the Upper Missouri, by Charles Larpenteur (Minneapolis: 1958); and A Trip From the Dalles of the Columbia, Oregon, to Fort Owen, Bitter Root Valley, Montana, in the Spring of 1858, in Vol. II of Montana Historical Society's Collections (Helena: 1896).

Peter Ronan's Historical Sketch of the Flathead Indians (Minneapolis: originally published in 1890), assembles a good deal of material about the Flatheads and provides much information about the years of Ronan's administration. Most of what Ronan presents, however, is taken directly from published government sources.

The Diary of James A. Garfield, edited by Harry James Brown and Frederick D. Williams (3 vols.; E. Lansing: 1967-73), together with information from the Garfield Papers, furnish a very complete account of Garfield's trip to Montana in 1872. The Diary is especially helpful because of the personal comments that Garfield could not include in his official correspondence; the notes are also useful as a guide to other materials.

Charles Joseph Kappler's Indian Treaties, 1778-1883 (N.Y.: 1972) is a kind of primary source that was indispensible for treaty texts.

Lawrence B. Palladino, a Jesuit whose first-hand experiences at St. Ignatius Mission in the latter part of the nineteenth century qualifies his Indian and White in the Northwest as a primary source, (Lancaster, Pa.: 1922, originally published in 1894) also includes much secondary information in his book. Most of it is reliable, but his treatment of the Indian delegations to St. Louis that sought to obtain Jesuit missionaries is questionable.

PERIODICALS

The only Montana newspaper that contains much information about the Flatheads is the Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer, variously known as the Missoula Pioneer, The Pioneer, and the Montana Pioneer, all superceded by the Weekly Missoulian. Published first in October, 1870, this source has

occasional references to the problems of the reservation and the Flatheads. It contains far less about Flathead matters than one might expect and is of limited help. Many of the articles refer to "Indian trouble," the need for Flathead removal, and the condition of the Bitter Root Flatheads after 1872. The paper also reported on the growth of white settlement and farming in the area. Six other Missoula papers are of almost no help, some being published only occasionally and others being published late in the nineteenth century.

The Helena Herald (also known as the Helena Weekly Herald) contains information about the removal of the Flatheads in 1872 and about farming and general territorial development. The Great Falls Rocky Mountain Husbandman and the New North West are also a minor source of farming information.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Periodicals

Albert J. Partoll's "The Flathead Indian Treaty Council," in Pacific Northwest Quarterly (July, 1938), is exceptionally useful; it contains the full transcript of the Hell Gate Treaty council minutes and good explanatory notes.

A number of articles in Montana, the Magazine of Western History are useful, though at times they repeat information found in government sources. Among the articles are those dealing with James Garfield's agreement (VI:4, IX:2, XIV:4),

the history of St. Mary's Mission (I:4, III:2), some of John Owen's activities (scattered throughout many articles), and Charlot's position on removal (V:1, VI:4, X:4, XIII:4, XVI:1, XVII:1, XIX:1). Other historical articles include Henderson's "The Flathead Indians. A Visit to Their Reservation," in North West Magazine (1890), and F. Haine's "The Nez Perce Delegates to St. Louis in 1831," in Pacific Historical Review (1937). The former article is of very little help, and the latter article adhered to the interpretation that was modified by Alvin Josephy.

I found the anthropological periodicals most helpful. Two articles by James Teit, "The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaus," in the Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology (1927-1928), and "The Flathead Group," in the same report, are among the most important. Equally important is Harry Holbert Turney-High's "The Flathead Indians of Montana," in Memoirs of the American Anthropological Society (1937). Although not recent, these works are very sound and provide a wealth of information about the Flatheads in prehistoric times.

Other important anthropological works include Turney-High's "The Diffusion of the Horse to the Flatheads" and "Cooking Camas and Bitter Root," in Man (1935) and Scientific Monthly (1933) respectively. Verne F. Ray's "Culture Element Distributives" in Anthropological Records (1942) and W. J. Hoffman's "Selish Myths," in the Bulletin of the Essex

Institute (1883) are of minor importance but provided some general information about the anthropology of the Flatheads.

A number of other articles concerning the Flatheads should be mentioned. "The Flathead Indians," American Antiquarian (1907), is of little value; "Religion among the Flatheads," by T. C. Elliot, in The Oregon Historical Quarterly (1936), is poorly done and without value; "Myths of the Flathead Indians," by Louisa McDermott in Journal of American Folklore (1901) has an interesting story about the Legend of Shining Shirt but is of little significance as far as this dissertation is concerned; George F. Weisel's "Ten Animal Myths of the Flathead Indians," in Montana State University's Anthropological and Society Papers Number 18 (1959), draws heavily on the better anthropological studies mentioned above; and the same writer's "The Rams Horn Tree and Other Medicine Trees of the Flathead Indians," in Montana, the Magazine of Western History (1951), is short, interesting, but of little substance.

Alan P. Merriam wrote several articles and a book about the Flatheads, but little of relevance to this paper. His contributions include "Flathead Indian Musical Instruments and Their Music," in Musical Quarterly (1951), and "The Hand Game of the Flathead Indian," in Journal of American Folklore (1955).

Books

One of the most helpful sources of information about early white contact with the Flatheads is Olga Johnson's Flathead and Kootenay (Glendale: 1969). Johnson relies heavily on the work of early ethnologists; she has done some original research on the fur traders, but she has not utilized material from the National Archives. Any information about the Flatheads after 1855 is inadequate.

There were a few books that provided general information. Merrill G. Burlingame and K. Ross Toole's A History of Montana, 3 vols. (N.Y.: 1957) is one such book. Another, of more help because of its more limited scope is James M. Hamilton's From Wilderness to Statehood (Portland, Oregon: 1957), which covers Montana history from 1805 to 1900. Hiram Chittenden's classic American Fur Trade in the Far West, 3 vols. (N.Y.: 1902) and Ray Allen Billington's Westward Expansion (N.Y.: 1960) were useful.

Several books provide reliable, specific information about portions of Flathead history. William Goetzmann's Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863 (New Haven: 1959) contains some information about Isaac Stevens and his 1853 survey. Gilbert Garraghan, in The Jesuits in the Middle United States, 3 vols. (N.Y.: 1938) discusses the missionary efforts of de Smet and Point. John C. Ewer's Indian Life on the Upper Missouri (Norman: 1968) is an excellent ethnological study of the Flatheads and other Indians of the area.

Washington Irving's Astoria (Norman: 1964) provides virtually first-hand information about early trader contacts with the Flatheads and neighboring tribes. Another of Irving's works, The Adventures of Captain Bonneville (Norman: 1961), is equally useful for the same reason. The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest, by Alvin Josephy (New Haven: 1965) is invaluable because of its recent and well-researched account of the famous "Flathead Mission" to St. Louis to ask for Jesuit missionaries. For a good account of Isaac Stevens' life one may turn to The Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens, 2 vols. (Boston: 1901), by his son, Hazard Stevens; this is an important source because of the impact of Stevens on the Northwest.

The Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1880, by Edward E. Hill (N.Y.: 1874), lists the dates of appointment of the agents and superintendents of each superintendency in the United States and provides a short history of each superintendency. The dates of appointment listed by Hill are not to be confused with the dates on which active duty by agents and superintendents began.

Michael Malone and Richard B. Roeder's The Montana Past (Missoula: 1969), an anthology, includes a very helpful article about state politics by Stanley R. Davison and Dale Tash entitled "Confederate Backwash in Montana Territory."

Theses and Dissertations

A number of theses proved to be of only incidental value, partly because the information that they contained was often better gained by referring to the primary sources. An M.A. thesis that is especially interesting, but in the end of minor value, is "Memoirs of a Frontier Woman," the memoirs of Mary Catherine Ronan (Peter Ronan's wife), as told to her daughter, Margaret Theresa Ronan (Montana State University: 1932). This is a colorful work that has fresh stories about life on the Flathead Reservation. Gerald Kelly's M.A. thesis, "The Political Development of Montana, 1862-1889" (University of California, Berkley: 1923) focuses on Flathead, Crow, Blackfeet, and Sioux Indians as they related to the development of Montana. Available only on microfilm, it is of little help. Gerald Kelly's "The History of St. Ignatius Mission, Montana" (Montana State University: 1954), a master's thesis, contains considerable material on the mission and the Flathead Nation Indians, but this information is better gained elsewhere and is for the most part available in the "Letters Received" files of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.