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A Shoshone tells the story
of his people during
the desperate years of their last stand.
You've never read
a more down-to-earth portrayal of the way
the American Indian felt
when "the bow and arrow was taken from his hand
and a shovel offered in its place."

Two Trails

By WILLIE GEORGE as told to JACK F. CONTOR



Above, a group of women with child in cradle, in typical Shoshone lodge. Below, two Bannock braves in native dress.

Photos Courtesy Smithsonian Institution



Author's Note: It is a great thrill to visit the sites of old Indian campgrounds and battlefields, to find an arrowhead or some other object fashioned ages ago. Such an experience immediately sets one to wondering, "Who were these people? What were they like as individuals? Who made this arrowhead? Was he an old man? A young man just setting out on his first war party? How long did he live? What was he like as a person? Was the woman who made this fragment of pottery or basketry happy? How many children did she have? Was she a warm mother?"

The questions are endless and usually they must remain unanswered because those who could have told the story have vanished from the earth.

The men and women who can remember what Shoshone life was like before it was heavily influenced by white culture are all gone, but the memories of some of their children are still fresh and available to anyone willing to listen and to appreciate these hardy people for what they were. Other writers have written of other tribes and some have even been fortunate enough to hear the stories from those who actually lived it.

The Shoshone and Bannock tribes of Idaho are not just "Indians" but a unique people who lived and worked in an environment much different from that of other tribes. For this reason, I feel that their story needs to be told as part of the history of the West.

The following story was related by Mr. Willie George. It is an account of the lives of his parents who lived during the most trying time for their people and their culture. They experienced the care-free life of their tribe when its members were free to roam and to live as they pleased, as well as the trying days on the early reservation when they were forcibly transformed from wandering hunters and gatherers into sedentary dirt farmers.

MY FATHER'S name was *Topuda* (Breechcloth). He was born about 1858. His father's name was *Nikky-zacca*

(Breaks-Belts). His real mother must have died when he was very young because he never mentioned her. He belonged to a band of Shoshones called, in our language, *Amazonige*, or Vest Wearers. The white men called them "Boise" Indians because they spent a lot of time in the Boise Valley. The other tribes knew that this part of the country belonged to the Boise band and stayed out of it.

My father's people were rich and happy. They had plenty of horses and could go anywhere they wanted. They traveled in search of buffalo and other game, for grass for their horses, for roots and berries. They sometimes went to war; when they did, it was usually against the Sioux, Cheyenne or Arapaho. They raided these tribes and these tribes raided them. Indians fought to get horses from each other and to earn war honors so that they would be respected men in their own camps. Fighting and hunting were the most important things in a man's life in those days.

The white men had big trappers' rendezvous at that time. The Indians attended them to trade furs and Indian things for buckets, knives, guns, axes, beads and other items made by the white men. Whiskey, too! My father saw his first white man at a trappers' camp and he always enjoyed telling us about it. My father was standing around camp looking at what was going on when a white man walked up to him and said, "Swap?" Now, in our language, *sa wope* means "your breath." Father thought that was what the man was saying.

Father just stood there trying to figure out what the fellow was driving at and the white man kept repeating, "Swap. Swap." Finally father laughed and went over to some of his friends and said, "Do you see that white man over there? He's crazy or something. He keeps saying 'Your breath. Your breath' to me!" When his friends told him what "Swap" meant, he laughed even harder because he thought it was a pretty funny joke on himself.

A young Indian boy had lots to do. Until he was about ten years old he didn't

have to work, spending his time riding, swimming, hunting small animals and playing games which taught him skills in fighting and hunting. Some of his male relatives, usually his mother's brothers, would teach him the more difficult things about being a hunter or a warrior but any man about camp would do all he could to teach any youngster.

In the evenings the children would gather in the lodge of some old man or woman who knew the stories and history of the Shoshones. There they learned how they were expected to act. They learned how to get along with one another; what to do on the war trail; and how to take care of themselves, their families and their horses. The old people had no books or writing but they had a way of telling things which made you remember.

BETWEEN the ages of ten and twelve, an Indian boy had to begin thinking about becoming a man. He was given the job of looking after his father's horse herd, which were run in with the camp-owned horses. Young boys who were learning to be warriors kept the horses together and acted as lookouts in case of enemy raids.

About this time, too, a boy would start thinking about getting some kind of power. When he felt that he was ready, he would go to some man who already had some strong power and ask him for help. This man might pray for the boy and teach him certain songs or a way to paint his body; then he would take him to a place far up into the hills and tell him to spend one or more nights there, alone.

Such places were usually spots where many spirit beings were supposed to be. If the boy was pitied by the spirits, they would come to him in a dream and offer their help. They usually gave the boy some instructions to follow—he might learn a song or a special way to paint himself. If a man forgot or ignored his spirit instructions, he had bad luck.

Sometimes, the spirits wouldn't come to a boy right away. He would try sleeping in some other place, or go to another man for advice. After a while, he usually got some kind of power. When he did, he was ready to start going to war.

Most men started going to war when they were about twelve or thirteen years old. At first they went along as cooks or horse-tenders but, as they felt braver, they started doing the more dangerous things, such as untying a horse from an enemy tepee at night. The more brave things a man did, the more his people respected him.

Any man who had raided an enemy was entitled to wear two eagle tail feathers with all but the top two inches stripped from the spine. The tips were painted yellow. Only a person who had killed an enemy was permitted to wear blue. Men who did especially daring things were given the right to wear one eagle tail feather for each deed. A man got eagle feathers for such things as stealing a horse that was tied to an enemy's lodge, striking an armed enemy with a short stick, taking a weapon away from an enemy or leading a successful raid.

When a man had enough eagle feathers to make a war bonnet, he had the right to wear one if he wanted to. A war bonnet was a badge of honor which announced to friend and enemy alike that the wearer wasn't afraid of anything. But such men were expected to be kind and generous to the poor and underprivileged.

A Shoshone warrior was honored in other ways, too. At public ceremonies, only warriors could throw wood on the



Photo Courtesy Smithsonian Institution
Breechcloth and Weetowatsi about 1935, with grandchildren.



Photo Courtesy Jack Contor
Above, Willie and Cora George in Elko, Nevada, June, 1959. Below, left to right, Jim Ballard, born 1832, and Frank Randall, two of the Bannock's well-known chieftains.



fire. The man who lit the fire had the right to tell about some brave thing he did. Other men who added wood to the fire could also tell of their bravery, so that everyone would know that they had the right to put wood on the fire. If a man or boy had just returned from a successful horse-stealing raid, he would be asked to make a fire. With his arms full of firewood, he would stand in the middle of the people and do the horse-taker's dance. When the song ended, he would tell all about what he did while he was gone. Then he built the fire.

If a dance was being held and one of the dancers happened to drop something, he wasn't supposed to pick it up. Whoever was in charge of the dance would tell some man who had been to war to pick it up. Before the man would return the object to the dancer, he would tell the story of something he did.

By the time my father was eighteen, he had been on several raids against other Indian tribes, had attacked wagon trains with white settlers in them and had chased lone white men who were in bug-

the children were still very young). Sometimes the young folks were asked how they felt about their prospective mates, but if they weren't asked, they were supposed to do as their parents thought best out of respect.

When parents of newly-weds liked each other pretty well, they would exchange gifts. This might be where white people got the idea that the young man bought his wife. I guess you might say the husband paid for his wife by working for her folks but even then, it depended on how the people involved wanted to go about it.

In 1868, all of the bands of the Shoshone and Bannock tribes were called together by white government men to decide on a reservation. Each band wanted to pick its favorite place. Finally a man by the name of Grubs-It-Out suggested the Sagebrush Butte area, which is now the Fort Hall Reservation. It had been a favorite winter camping spot for the Bannocks for a long time. In picking the reservation, the old-timers thought about sheltered camping places, good water and good grass for their horses. I guess they



A fancy way of travel in the 1860s.

gies or on horseback. He told me that he and his friends often chased white men to scare them, "just for fun."

ABOUT THE time that my father was eighteen years old, the father of a young girl named *Weetowatsi* (Water Container) approached my grandfather, Breaks-Belts, and suggested that since Breechcloth was getting to be an important young man, he would like to have him for a son-in-law. Grandfather asked my father how he felt about it. Father had noticed mother around camp and thought that she was all right so he agreed.

At first they lived with her family but after they got their own tepee, they camped by his folks. The son-in-law was supposed to help his wife's parents with the hunting and other work for a while but by the time mother had her first baby, they were back with Breaks-Belts. Maybe Father couldn't get along with his mother-in-law, I don't know.

They got married differently in the old days. Before my people learned the white man's ways, the girl's folks picked a husband for her (they might do this when

thought they could go on living as they pleased.

Soon after the reservation was established, the U.S. Army set out to tell all the scattered bands that they were supposed to come in and settle on it. Many of the poorer bands, such as the Rock Chuck Eaters and the Seed Eaters, came in right away and began to live on government rations.

The Bannocks, the Boise band and Tendo's band, among others, were not ready to give up their free and happy life. They had plenty of horses and meat so they decided to stay out for a while. Mother was pregnant with her first child and didn't feel like moving around a lot, so the folks and some of their relatives, grandfather Breaks-Belts included, decided to camp on the reservation.

They saw many surprising things there. Members of the bands that had formerly lived in dirty little huts and who had had to work hard gathering seeds and roots and small animals for a living were housed in new log homes and were driving around with government-issued teams and wagons. Some of them were even trying to



Photos Courtesy Smithsonian Institution

Bannock women and children outside brush shelter.

farm. There was a lot of confusion among our people at that time. Relatives and families were split. Some wanted to make a new life on the reservation while others wanted to stay out on the deserts and prairies where they would have to work a little harder but would still be their own bosses.

It was getting harder all the time for the people to live in the old way. Some of their trails had been crossed by fences; ranches had been built near their water-holes and camping spots. White people weren't raising enough to eat for themselves so they hunted wild game too, making it harder for the Indians to find food. Our people were scared and couldn't make up their minds what to do from one day to the next.

ALONG IN the early fall of 1878 a lot of the bands were gathering *pa-sego* (camas) and yamp on the camas prairie. Most of the harvesting was finished and the people were staying around, resting and playing games before moving on. Chief Tendo's band was camped on one side of a river and some Bannocks were camped on the other side.

The two camps had been playing the hand game all day and the betting had gotten so big that the players were betting their horses. I guess the Shoshones were pretty good players because it wasn't long before a bunch of Bannock boys had lost all their horses. The boys felt pretty bad and when they went back to their own camp, they really got scolding.

I guess those Bannock boys started feeling sorry for themselves. If it had happened a few years earlier, they could have gone out and raided some other tribe and gotten plenty of horses. But now the other tribes were having their own troubles with the white men and most of them were getting poorer. Besides, it was getting harder for a war party to move with so many soldiers and settlers about.

Apparently they decided the next best thing would be to get some whiskey and get drunk. Off they went to a nearby trading post. I don't know what happened there; maybe the trader wouldn't give them anything to drink or he talked to them the wrong way when they were already mad. At any rate, they ended up



Photo Courtesy Smithsonian Institution

Above, a group of Bannocks at Ft. Hall. Below, a band of Shoshones in the southern foothills of the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming.

by killing the trader and helping themselves to whiskey. Then they rode around the country killing and burning out a few more settlers before they returned to camp.

When the young men returned and told what they had been doing, both camps went into an uproar. Tendoy's people didn't want trouble, so they packed up and moved away fast. The Bannocks, on the other hand, got wild and bloodthirsty. You know, that's what their name means. *Pa-naik-nia* is translated by us to mean "someone who doesn't care about anything"—they're just wild. Some of their wildness rubbed off on some of Tendoy's people because a few of them stayed to

fight alongside the Bannocks.

The Bannocks stayed at Camas Prairie for a while, waging war on the white people in that area. Word began to reach Fort Hall that the Bannocks were on the warpath and that Buffalo Horn was leading them. I guess father forgot about the good things he learned at Fort Hall and began to think that he might get his chance to live like an old-time Shoshone after all. And apparently my grandfather decided he would rather die as a free Shoshone than as a reservation farmer, so they and their wives and children started for Captain Jim's camp of Boise Indians camped near the site of the city of Boise. Captain Jim was my grandfather's

brother. By then, my oldest brother, Brave Bird, had been born, and he went along in a cradleboard on mother's back.

In the meantime, the Bannocks had decided to try to get as many of the other tribes as they could to join them. After roaming about for a while, they chose Captain Jim's camp as their most likely ally. They were moving toward this camp at the same time that my folks were coming from Fort Hall.

Somewhere southwest of Gooding, Idaho, Buffalo Horn and about fourteen other men spotted what seemed to be a wagontrain and they attacked it. Buffalo Horn usually put on a war bonnet and painted himself before he went into



Above, threshing scene at Snake River Agency, Ft. Hall, Idaho. Below left, Sergeant Jim, Fremont's scout from 1846 to 1847. Below right, Uriewici, a Shoshone Chieftain.

Photos Courtesy Smithsonian Institution



battle. His medicine had taught him to do these things; when he wore them, nothing seemed to be able to hurt him. On this day something must have been wrong with him, because he just charged right in without stopping to change clothes.

They killed most of the people in the train and set about taking what they wanted from the wagons. Four white men had pretended they were dead; while the Indians were busy at the wagons, these white men jumped on some horses and started to ride away. Buffalo Horn was the first to see them. He leaped on his horse, calling at the same time for some men to come with him.

Buffalo Horn's horse must have been tired because the other Indians got ahead of him and chased the white men into some thick willows. The white men dismounted and began shooting. The Indians just stopped and waited for someone to tell them what to do. Buffalo Horn dashed up and kept on going, yelling as he went by, "Keep after them. Don't let them get away!"

Like a wild man, Buffalo Horn rode right into the willows. One white man seeing Buffalo Horn almost on top of him, pointed his gun up and shot the chief in the right knee. The bullet traveled up his leg and came out in the lower part of his back. The rest of the party picked their leader up and took him back to camp. Everyone felt very sad. He lived for only

a short time, never regaining consciousness. If he had only stopped long enough to get himself ready, he wouldn't have been killed.

MY PARENTS and grandparents were already at Captain Jim's camp when the Bannocks, minus Buffalo Horn, got in. They sure felt bad when they heard what had happened to the one man they had thought could lead them. Father said, "We no longer felt brave." They all knew that the whites were calling in soldiers and getting up civilian posses. There was going to be trouble, no matter what they did now.

Some of the people wanted to keep on fighting and felt that they could wipe out the settlers despite the reinforcements. Captain Jim spoke against it and urged his followers not to join the Bannocks. A man named Bearskin stood up and said that he didn't want to keep on living if he had to be second best to a white man. He said that he would be happier to die with blood running out of many bullet holes in his body. (Later, he got his wish!)

Most of Captain Jim's people decided to keep out of it but, of course, some men and women wanted another taste of the old, warring life. Captain Jim tried to talk my folks out of it but they wanted to go so he said no more.

The addition of some of the Boise Indians and some people from Fort Hall gave the Bannocks courage so they decided to see how many they could get from the Paiutes. It was known that a band of Paiutes under Chief Paddy (*Paddicup*—Giant Eater) was unhappy with the whites. Paddy's band was camped near what is now Owyhee, Nevada. The Bannock war camp headed for Paiute country. They had no strong leader as they had had before but a group of older men had taken over the planning. I don't know what these new leaders' names were.

Father often spoke of one incident that happened on the way. They had attacked a ranch and killed or driven off the settlers. They rounded up the loose horses and put them all in a corral. Father saw a little iron-gray pony that he wanted so he threw his rope on him. Some old man sitting on the fence called out, "You boys wait. Let the chiefs pick your horses for you." Father called back, "They ain't the only brave men around here!" Father took the horse and nobody said anything about it, either.

My father never said anything about killing anybody. He joined the Presbyterian Church after the war and stopped talking about such things. However, I have heard from other men who were with him that he never stayed out of a fight, so I suppose he did his share.

Before they got to the Paiute camp they came upon a band of Gosiute Indians. We called them *Go-see-utah* which means "Dusty" or "Bushy" Indians because they seldom washed or combed their hair. These Bushy Indians were moving camp. Most of them were on foot, carrying their packs on their backs. The Bannocks surrounded them and told them what they were planning to do, then asked if any wanted to join them. Father always admired the Gosiute chief for the way he stood up to the tough Bannocks.

Mounted on a big, black horse, he rode between his people and the Bannocks, rifle held high, the muzzle pointed in the air. (This meant that he wasn't afraid of anybody or anything.) He told the Shoshones and Bannocks to go away and leave his poor band alone. Some of the Gosiutes had other ideas, though, and they tried to go over to the Bannocks. Fights broke out among them as some tried to leave and the others held them back. Finally their chief talked to them and calmed them down and none of the Gosiutes went along. When speaking about that chief, father said, "We met a brave man there!"

Paddy's Paiutes, however, were eager to join in the fighting—men and women both. Those who were sick or too old or young gave their guns, food, and extra clothes to those who could go to help

A Shoshone painted skin robe.

Photo Courtesy Smithsonian Institution

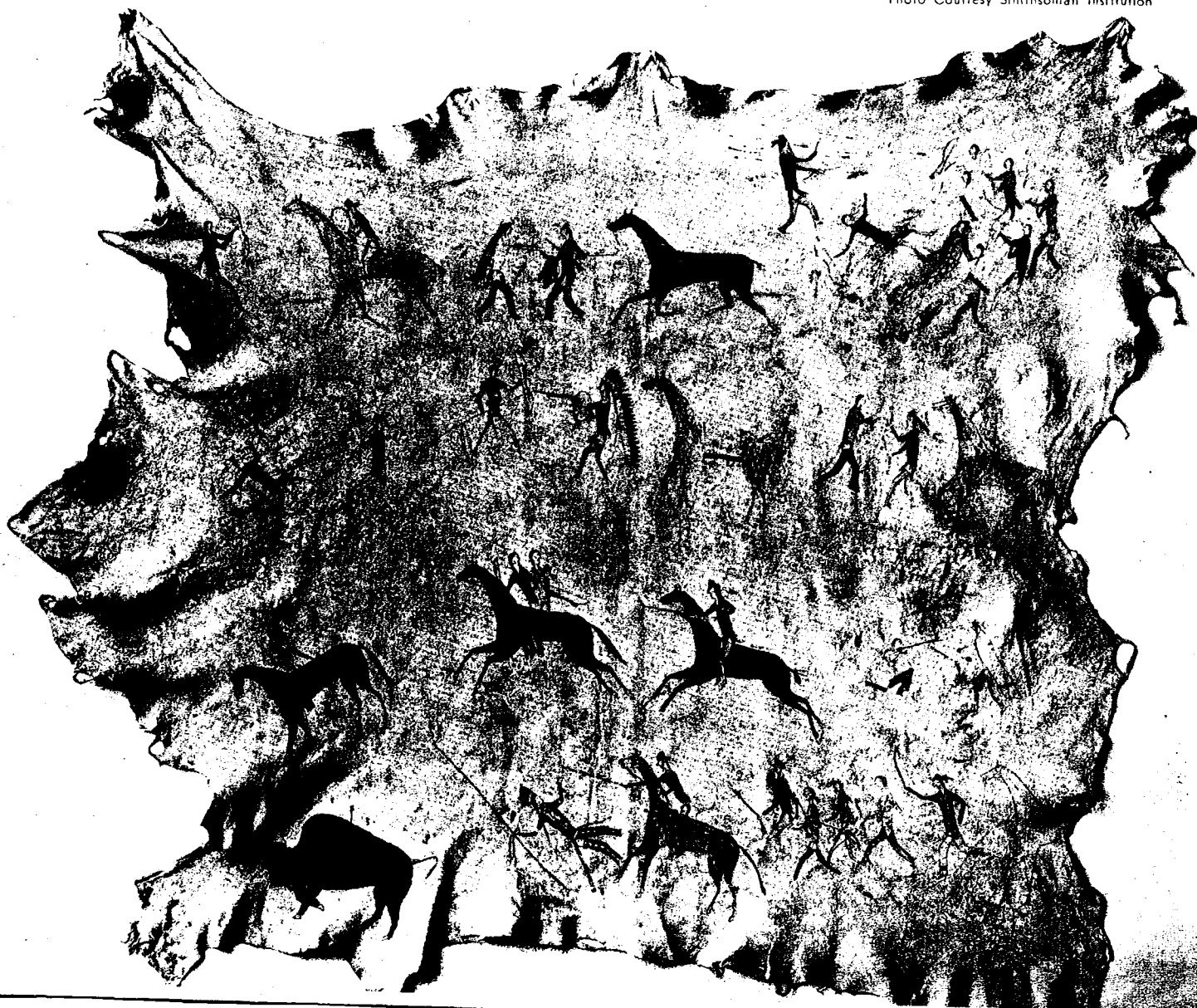




Photo courtesy Smithsonian Institution

Delegation of Shoshone Indians, tentatively identified as, left to right, Tyhee, J. A. Wright, Charley Ramsey; seated, Jack Tendoy, Captain Jim, Tendoy, Grouse Jack, Gibson Jack, Tsidemipe.

them out as best they could.

The Paiutes had very few horses so the Bannocks and Shoshones gave one or two to each. The Paiutes were willing fighters but they didn't know how to ride horses and slowed the march by falling off or by demanding to rest often. A few of the more determined tried to follow on foot, but they eventually dropped behind and returned home. Those who didn't fared badly for they were the first to fall when the fighting started.

The Bannocks' leaders realized they were going to need more help and extra horses and supplies. The Umatilla Indians, camped just a few days to the west, had lots of good horses. The Bannocks and Shoshones decided they would move to Pa-sego (now Baker, Oregon), where they would be safe from the white men, before going on to the Umatilla camp.

On the way, Father and some other advance scouts came to some slanting rocks and were crawling up them to see if the trail ahead was clear. Father was carrying a .45 pistol in his hand. The trigger caught on a point of rock and the gun went off. The bullet ripped along his hand, tearing much of the skin and flesh off. He carried a bad scar there the rest of his life. A man ahead of him was struck and killed by the bullet. Since it was an accident, none of the dead man's relatives said anything.

AT PA-SEGO, the tribes rested and planned what they were going to do.

They held war parades to show each other how brave and reckless they were. In these parades, the warriors would dress up in their battle costumes and ride around camp, singing war songs and shooting their guns. They were very fierce at those times and anyone or anything that got in their way would be trampled.

That was about the time that the Ghost Dance was going around among the various Indian tribes and the Bannocks held a Ghost Dance. This dance, if performed by all the Indian tribes, was supposed to make all the white men disappear from North America, bring back the buffalo and return to life all the Indians who had ever died. A Paiute by the name of Jack Wilson (*Woveka*), started it and it spread among most of the tribes in our area and on the Plains.

Some of the young men went into the hills to sleep in hope that a spirit would come to them and give them some extra war power. Men who already had what they thought was good power went alone into the hills to pray and meditate so that their power would be strong when they needed it.

On the way to the Umatilla camp, the warriors split into two groups. One group went straight down the valley, raiding and looting the farms and ranches along the way; the other group traveled through the foothills to hunt and preserve meat and be on the lookout for white men.

The Bannocks and their allies set up

camp apart from the Umatilla camp and the chiefs went to the Umatillas and told them what they wanted to do. The Umatilla chiefs said that they would talk it over with the rest of their people and let the Bannocks know the next day.

Several of our people, my father included, could understand Umatilla because the two tribes had often camped together years before when they had come to Pa-sego to gather roots. Father and some of the others were asked to wrap up in blankets so they wouldn't be recognized and attend the Umatilla council. In the event that the answer was "No," the Bannocks had picked out a good-sized grove of pine trees about a half-mile away where the women could hide while the men raided the Umatillas' horse herds. The tepees and other equipment were already packed.

At their council the Umatillas decided they couldn't trust the Bannocks and didn't want to get mixed up with them. Learning this, Father and one of his friends went straight to a pole corral where, a few days before, they had seen some fine horses. Father's hand was still very sore so he was going to pick out the horses he wanted and his friend was going to rope them for him. Into the milling herd they went! By that time, other Bannocks had gotten into the horses and there was shouting, shooting and people running everywhere. What a nightmare! Just as father's friend roped a horse, the Umatilla who owned it came riding up

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and knocked the rope off of the horse with his gun.

"Rope another one!" Father yelled.

Every time the friend roped a horse, the Umatilla knocked the rope off. I guess he was afraid to shoot either of them, knowing the other would get him. Or maybe he felt sorry for them and just wanted to protect his property without starting any bad trouble. Pretty soon some other Bannocks got into the corral and the Umatilla had his hands full. Finally father's partner roped a small white horse that had a red rag tied to his tail. (This told everyone who saw it that the horse was a good war horse.) Dad jumped on its back and got out of there as fast as he could. I guess the friend got a horse, too, but I can't say for sure.

WHILE Father was getting the horses, mother was with the women and children who were trying to get to safety in the pine thicket. The horse-takers had started too soon and the Umatillas began chasing the camp-movers right after they



Photo courtesy Idaho Historical Society
Chief Joseph of the Nez Percé.

had started to move. Mother said many women and children were shot off or fell off their horses.

Loose animals were running around and many persons were trampled by them. The Paiutes couldn't handle their horses or stay on them and many of them were killed. Mother was riding a horse and driving another one ahead of her. A large Paiute woman galloping near her was hit; the bullet passed through her body, spewing blood out in a stream in front of her. Mother, with Brave Bird on her back, rode all the harder toward safety.

The Bannocks and their allies disappeared into the thicket where the Umatillas didn't dare follow. When things quieted down, some of the Bannock men moved into an open spot on the other side of the pines, where they could see what the Umatillas were going to do, but keeping the pines between them and the enemy.

Pretty soon, Umapai, the head Umatilla chief, rode near them, walking his horse back and forth, talking all the time. He held his gun muzzle-up, to show them that he wasn't afraid of them. He said

that he was sorry that some of the Bannocks and their friends had been killed and that the tribes had had a misunderstanding. He wanted to keep on being friends. If the hostiles would just give back the horses they had taken, the Umatillas would forget the whole thing. Many of our people were crying and were pretty bitter because some of their loved ones had been killed.

A man by the name of *Tu-mu-nu-mon* had had his only horse shot from under him and was plenty angry. He grabbed a gun from someone and was going to shoot Umapai. The Bannocks, feeling sorry for what they had done to the Umatillas, took the gun away from *Tu-mu-nu-mon* before he hurt anyone. Still, they wouldn't give back the horses and the Umatillas finally gave up and went away.

Now, besides having the settlers and the Army after them, the Bannocks had the Umatillas mad at them. They were in trouble and they knew it. They had all heard about Chief Joseph's successful battle with the Army and, thinking the Nez Percé might be willing to help them, began a fast march toward the northeast, hoping to find Joseph near Fort Lapwai. Scouts were put out all around the camp column; with so many enemies, an attack could come from any direction.

Moving toward Lewiston the band had to go through a very high narrow pass. I don't know the name of it, but Mother said it was at least a mile to the bottom, and the trail was narrow. It took them all night to get through the pass. They were afraid to wait until daylight because they feared that someone would catch up with them. Mother had Brave Bird on her back and was leading four pack horses. One of them slipped and fell over the edge. She said that she heard it scream on the way down but she never heard it hit bottom.

A group of fighting men had been left in the rear to protect them from attack. All night long, "announcers" called ever so often to the front and rear guards and to the main column so that everyone would know what was happening. As each household emerged from the pass, it set up a little camp to rest and prepare a meal. Some of the people even put up their tepees because they thought that they were safe.

THE ADVANCE scouts had noticed three low ridges lay to the south of them but they felt that no one could come from that direction without being seen. Just as everyone got relaxed, a troop of soldiers, accompanied by some vengeful Umatillas, came over these ridges, shooting as they rode. (These soldiers had come from Fort Pendleton after they had heard what had happened at the Umatilla camp.)

Caught by surprise, about all our people could do was to fight a delaying action while the women got away with the camp goods. Mother had left Brave Bird propped up against a tree while she and some women went to the edge of the camp to pick berries. In the meantime, the soldiers had attacked and bullets were so thick she couldn't reach the baby. A brave man rode through the stream of lead and brought Brave Bird out to her unharmed.

The warriors held out as long as they could. When a man ran out of bullets, he would leave the fight and join the fleeing camp, which was moving east. I guess the soldiers couldn't keep up with them so our people got away again. Each fight left them with fewer tepees, food, weapons, horses and other things they needed,

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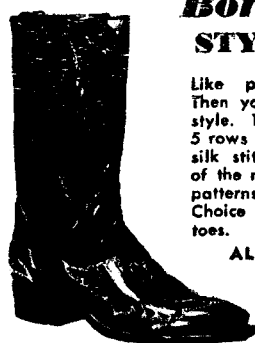
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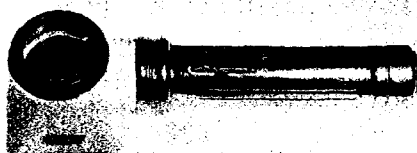


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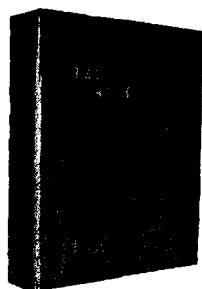


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not to mention the loss of the persons killed. The Bannocks had to keep moving and raiding farms and ranches to replace what they lost.

Near Fort Lapwai, a detachment of soldiers chased them, but the Indians escaped by leaving a rear guard to fight while the rest ran away. They didn't stay long at the Nez Percé camp. Joseph's people were just getting over their long fight with the soldiers and told them that nothing good would come of what they were doing. But the Bannocks were too stubborn to quit; there was always Sitting Bull up in Canada who might help them and turn the tide.

The Bannock war camp, heading south-east, moved over the rough mountain trails of the Bitterroots and through Lolo Pass, another high, narrow trail that frightened my mother. They wanted to go down into Jackson Hole to hunt and rest for a while before going up into Canada to see if Sitting Bull's Sioux would help.

Mother said they had gone through some bad times before, but the trip down through Montana was the worst yet. Many of their people were sick; wounds received in earlier battles began to fester and turn black because they didn't have time to take proper care of them. The sick and wounded had to be carried and were slowing the progress of the camp. They asked to be left behind.

Their friends and relatives placed them among rocks or willows and gave them a little food and water. If they got well before their food ran out, they could try to rejoin the camp. Most of them died; the old people said they supposed enemy Indians found some and killed them. Mother, when telling about this, would shake her head sadly and say, "We had to leave so many!"

IN MONTANA somewhere they had more bad trouble. They had been on the move for days, trying to avoid soldiers, civilian armies and enemy Indians. When they came to a thick wood, the scouts reported no signs of an enemy anywhere. The warriors thought they would be safe for a while so they made a concealed camp and settled down to rest.

Just as things got quiet, a party of soldiers (I don't know where they came from) charged the camp. Our people didn't have a chance. Many of them were killed. The others fled with whatever possessions they could carry.

They ran day and night until they got to the Jackson Hole country, the winter camping ground for many of them in years gone by. One night soon after they arrived, they held what we call a Fear Dance. Maybe ten or twelve fires were built in a large circle around the camp, and the men all dressed and painted for war, traveled from fire to fire dancing and singing war songs. Our people used to do this when things looked pretty bad for them. It helped to give them courage and by doing this, they let each other know they were prepared for a last-ditch stand against whatever might come.

It was while the Fear Dance was going on that two Indians from Fort Hall rode in with a message from the officer in charge there. The dancing stopped and the people listened anxiously to the two scouts. The scouts said the Bannock war camp was to stop fighting and return to the reservation at Fort Hall. The Army wouldn't promise anything. The choice was up to our people: they could either come back and take their punishment or stay out and be hunted by everyone until they were all dead. When the scouts finished speaking they sat quietly on their

horses waiting for the Bannocks to make up their minds.

After thinking it over, my father made his first speech to his people. I remember most of it. Here is how it went:

"You all know me. I haven't done anything for you; I have just gone along. I am tired and worn out. I like what has been said. I am tired of running. Tomorrow morning, I am going back. Here's my gun. I give it to whoever wants it. I'm going back!"

"You are like a woman! You want to give up!" someone called out to him.

"I'm no woman," Father replied, "but we're all like women, sitting around, afraid to fight!"

The next day, he and mother began to pack what they had left. Many people gathered around to watch them. As Father would come to something that might be useful to one who was staying, he would hand it to him, saying, "Take this blanket," or, "Take this horse," until he and mother had only a small pack and two horses left.

The folks thought that they would be going back alone, but to their surprise nearly half of the people in the camp packed and were ready to go back with them! Even Grandfather Breaks-Belts, who had stayed through it all, was going back. No one said anything then, but I think that at that time my father began to be looked upon as a leader of his people. As I told you, the people followed the man whose judgment they thought was best.

Of course, some hard-headed Bannocks stayed at Jackson Hole, still thinking that there was a way out. Our people heard very little about them after returning to Fort Hall. Some of the Bannocks made it to the Sioux camp but there were so few of them—and the Sioux were so poor—that we think the Sioux either killed them or drove them away. We gathered, from stories told by other tribes, that many Bannocks were killed before they got to Canada.

THE JOURNEY back to Fort Hall was very slow. Some of the people had to walk and a few were wounded or crippled. The column crossed the Blackfoot River about where the highway crosses it on the south side of the city of Blackfoot. They still had their guns and thought they might need them again, so they wrapped them in blankets and hid them in the willows along the river. When they went back a year later to get them, they were all there.

As the column got close to the Fort, which was on Ross Fork Creek, many of the reservation Indians swarmed out to meet them. The fighters were a pretty sorry looking sight, with their bandages, ragged clothing and skinny horses, but they held their heads high. Once in a while someone among the onlookers would let out a glad cry and rush to throw his arms about a relative. They were all glad to be together once again.

Just as the former hostiles were beginning to feel a little bit at ease, along came a bunch of soldiers with several large wagons. Many of those who had just come from Jackson Hole broke and ran, trying to hide among the reservation Indians. About 200 of the hostiles stood their ground, too proud to run. My parents and grandparents were among these.

Without any ceremony, the soldiers herded them into the wagons. They were packed so tightly that they all had to stand up with no room to move at all. It hurt their pride to have the reservation

Indians standing around watching them being treated like horses or cattle. Father felt like letting them know how he felt about it.

"You are all looking at us," he said. "We don't care what they do to us! Let them hang us, if they want to!"

All of them, men, women and children, were sentenced to a year in "jail." The jail was a large, open stockade and they were given tents to live in. The folks never had much to say about that year, but I guess it wasn't too bad because they could live as families and they didn't have to work too hard. It was just being penned up and not being able to go about as they pleased that hurt them worst. They let the men out during the day to work and in that way my father's people learned how to use the white man's tools and machinery.

When the folks got out of jail, they looked up the rest of the Boise Indians. These Indians had been smart and had their allotments in the choice farming area along Ross Fork Creek. Father could see that was the only way he could take care of himself and his wife and children, so he took an allotment near his relatives from Captain Jim's band.

He used to say that he had learned to get his living with a bow and arrow, but now he was going to get it with a shovel! I think that this shows pretty well the change that had taken place in his thinking. He often told how they hated to go get their government food allotment of flour, sugar and slab bacon. At first the old-timers wouldn't eat bacon. They said it looked like "elephant meat." Don't ask me how they know what elephant meat looked like!

At certain times of the year, they were bothered by not being able to hunt buffalo or harvest roots. The habits of years were hard to break. For a while, you know, the government wouldn't allow them to put on any of their old dances, but they

These plain undecorated combination leggings and moccasins were used by the Shoshone Indians. A mink belt is also shown.

Photo courtesy Smithsonian Institution



used to sneak away from the agency and put on good, old-fashioned war dances just for fun. At least on the surface they had to do what the agent told them to do, and to take the various orders handed down from Washington, but inside they kept their pride and got a kick out of getting away with doing something they weren't supposed to do.

Both of my parents worked hard to make a success out of their new life. They built a nice two-room log cabin on their allotment and planted trees around it. (Those trees are still standing, although the cabin is gone.) Dad raised grain and built a large granary to store it in.

Father didn't like to sell his farm products; he wanted to keep them for himself and his people, but if the agent asked him to sell some, he would. Those old-timers from off of the prairies worked harder at being good farmers than a lot of us second and third generation Indians on the reservation today.

ABOUT A YEAR after the folks got out of jail, the agent called in the chiefs of all the bands and told them that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs wanted representatives of each to meet with him in Washington, D.C., to talk over future plans for the development of the reservation. It was suggested that each chief pick some of his most promising young men to go to Washington. A meeting of the Boise band was held at the Johnny Ballard ranch on Ross Fork Creek and Captain Jim picked his nephew, my father, as one of the delegates.

When father returned from the meeting with the Commissioner, he was more sure than ever that the way of the Indian was going to have to be much like that of the white man if he hoped to survive as an individual and his people as a distinct group. He told about the large and prosperous farms he had seen along the way. He told of the busy cities and the buildings as high as the mountains.

The delegates called a meeting of all the people on the reservation to tell them what the plans for the future were. They said the Indians were going to have to learn to farm and to raise cattle. They were all going to have to build houses on their farms and live in them, rather than in camps. Canals would be built at various places to provide irrigation water.

Many of the people didn't like the sound of Father's words and accused him of telling them things that he wanted for himself, not what the tribe as a whole wanted. The Bannocks still didn't want to settle down. They thought the reservation should just be a place for them to come and stay for a while to draw government rations. They still wanted to roam about. Some said that the white men had no right to dig canals in the earth—to cut into the earth hurt them just as if the white men were cutting furrows in their feet!

Father was now a leading man among his people and the agency officials talked to him a lot and told him what they were planning and what they wanted the Indians to do. When he learned that the government was going to build a canal along the foothills to take water from the Blackfoot River, he gave his farm and all that he had done on it to someone else and took up a new, undeveloped allotment in what is now the Gibson district of the reservation, just south of the city of Blackfoot.

By this time many of his people were watching him to see what he would do because they respected his judgment. When he took his new allotment, many of his band (the Amazon-ige) asked for

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Picture of Breechcloth and Weetowatsi at the time of their baptism into the Presbyterian Church about 1882.

allotments there too. Today most of the people living in that district are descendants of these Indians.

The government gave the Indians a few cattle so they could make use of land too hilly to farm. Father believed that the cattle owners should run their cattle together, giving control to a few men and permitting them to sell for all when the price was best. The Fort Hall Cattlemen's Association still functions and many of the descendants of the early members have become the wealthiest Indians on the reservation due, partly, to the foresight of their fathers.

I was born after the folks moved to Gibson. I was the fifth child born to them after their release from prison. About that time, an important change came into the lives of my parents. All Indians are very religious. They don't have church meetings every Sunday, in their own religion, but they are always thinking of God and the spirits. Every time they do something, they pray, usually silently, that the Father or some of his spirit creatures will help them succeed. We believe that God is in everything, not just in a church on Sunday.

Miss Amelia J. Frost, a missionary for the Presbyterian Church, came to the reservation and began telling the people about Christ. Father and Mother heard her words and believed that Christianity was good. They entered with all their hearts into church affairs and influenced many of their band to join with them. Father and Miss Frost were close friends and he helped her a lot. He picked out sites for the Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Indian cemetery.

My folks put away their old thoughts of war and seldom spoke of the old days. I learned about their experiences in the Bannock War when Indians from other tribes came to visit and my parents talked over old times with them because that was what the visitors wanted to do. Mother did most of the talking. Dad didn't say very much. One thing, though, he always tried to impress on us children was, "Never interfere in other people's affairs. That is one thing I learned from what happened to us in the Bannock War!"

Old Captain Jim, who had been chief of the Boise band for so many years, finally got so feeble that he wasn't much

good as a leader. At his suggestion, his band had a meeting and selected my father to be their chief. He later served as a judge in the Tribal Court, a legal system adopted from the white men after reservation days. In this way, Indians could judge and punish their own people for minor infractions of the white man's law.

After I became a young man, I got a job as an actor in cowboy and Indian movies in the early days of the movie industry. My family would often come and camp when we were on location and I think they got a big kick out of the white man's idea of what an Indian war was like.

In later years, Father became deaf and blind. He just lost interest in everything. He didn't enjoy church anymore, so he quit going. When he dropped out, most of the other people did too and the church ceased to exist. He had never given up his Indian religious beliefs because he believed that both the old beliefs and Christianity were good. As he grew older, though, we could tell that his thoughts were turning back to the old days and I think he got more comfort from the ancient Shoshone religion.

MY MOTHER and father led full and useful lives. They had known the roaming life of our people before the settlers came and they knew what it was like to have to learn an entirely different way of life. It wasn't easy, but they were proud, sensible people and did the best they could. They fought, as any men and women would, to keep their home as they wanted it but they fought just as hard to make a new life for their children and their children's children.

Dad died January 6, 1945. We dressed him in his best buckskin suit, which he loved so well, and buried him in the cemetery he himself had chosen when he was a young and vigorous man. Many people, both Indian and white, came to say goodbye. His war bonnet was left to me, and I am wearing it in the picture I have given you to put with the story.

Mother died two years before my father. I am very proud to have had such a woman for a mother. She was gentle and kind but she also possessed the strength and courage to fight alongside

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her husband for a cause in which they both believed.

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Bedbugs, Bicycles and a Haunted House

(Continued from page 47)

mattress and immediately fell asleep for three hours, awakening with the family cat on my face. I got up, thanked the good people and took off without waiting to be invited to breakfast.

Toward noon I found I was very tired, hungry and lost! To get on the right road I had to go out of my way to a ranch house to ask for proper directions. I had missed my breakfast and dinner but I felt I would throw up any food except honey. I had a craving for it and asked for some but they did not have any. So I had to keep going.

I took advantage of every downhill slope to coast, even though it was unknown country and the bicycle had no brakes. One hill I will never forget. I started sailing down the grade, enjoying the rest. By the time I got to the bottom I was going so fast I could not stop. But what I thought was the bottom was only a curve to the right and the real hill was only just starting.

All I could do was hold on and pray. No one knew where I was. If I got hurt going down that hill I would probably lie for days before anybody found me or my body. Probably the buzzards would have my bones stripped. I thought of this as I flew down the hill. Several times I bounced a foot or two off the seat but managed to keep upright and finally made it.

I coasted halfway up the hill on the other side, then got off and pushed the bike up to the top. Here I sat down to rest but a couple hundred wild cattle began collecting around me. They were coming from every direction, all headed my way. A boy on a bicycle was something they had never seen before. Two immense bulls led the attack, bellowing and pawing up the dirt.

Something told me to ring the jingling bell on the handle bars. I did this vigorously, and presto!—as if by magic those wild animals threw their tails in the air, whirled around and disappeared into the brush! That bell had scared the daylight out of them. I did not wait to see how far they would run; in just a very few minutes I was a long way from there!

During the afternoon I stopped at two or three more ranch houses and asked for honey but nobody had any. Just as the sun was going down I made it into a small town called Johnson City. I was so tired I was sick. I was hungry but could not eat anything. I found a hotel and collapsed. The landlady was very kind and said she knew just what to do for me. She said one of her sons had overworked himself branding calves just a few days before and was in the same shape I was. She put me to bed and gave me an egg nog and said to take a sip every few minutes until it was all gone and then go to sleep. I did this and next morning was able to get up, eat a good breakfast and take off for home.

I had to spend one more night in a farm house beside the road before I got to Fredericksburg. Traveling was slow because there was deep sand and I had to walk through it pushing the bike. When I got to Fredericksburg I bought a stick

of graphite and greased the chain. It was dry and the bike was pulling hard. It pedaled much easier and I made the remaining eleven miles in good shape. I really surprised my folks.

AFTER three days at home I started back to San Marcos, taking the direct route this time. My mother and grandmother Anderson accompanied me for the first twelve miles in our buggy. I had learned to stick the toe of my shoe in the front fork and press down on the tire; it made a good brake. At one river crossing, I exerted too much pressure and locked the front wheel. The bike and I turned a complete somersault in the air, right in front of my folks. I came out with a few minor bruises and the bicycle had to have a few bent parts straightened out.

After a lunch with my mother and grandmother I made it to Blanco City all right. I stayed the night at a hotel and next morning dismantled my bike and loaded it on a mail hack, a two-seated, two-horse affair, and rode the rest of the way to San Marcos in style. I was told there were some very bad hills between the two towns and it would be very dangerous to try it on a bicycle without brakes.

When I got to San Marcos, I sublet a room from a couple who were renting a house. About three weeks after I came back, I returned to my room one afternoon and found the house empty. My few belongings were still in my room but the man and wife I was renting from were gone. This was funny business so I inquired around to see what the trouble was. I was told that the house was supposed to be haunted; as soon as these two people found it out, they took off like a shot.

Well, there I was, having to sleep all by myself in a haunted house. This I did for the next three nights. The third night, it was close to twelve o'clock when I got back to the house. Oh, boy! The third night and midnight, too! That's the worst possible combination for a haunted house. I tried to assure myself that no such thing as a ghost existed, but I did not go in the front door. I made a flanking attack and came up to the house from the rear. I picked up four or five rocks about the size of my fist and crawled up some lattice work onto the back porch. From there I tiptoed into the kitchen and then, very quietly, into the dining room. My heart was pounding but otherwise I was not making a sound. In the hall I stood still for a few minutes. BANG! One of the loudest noises I have ever heard rang out. For a second my hair actually stood on end! Then I realized I had dropped one of my rocks I had been carrying. I waited a few minutes trying to calm myself, deciding that if the good Lord would let me live until morning I would move.

I made it to the top of the stairs, opened the door to my room, locked it, looked under the bed, crawled in, pulled the cover up around my head and went to sleep. The next morning I moved—all the way back home. I had had all of San Marcos I could take. Just trying to live there was too hazardous.

I had not finished the business college course, but I had the rudiments of what they taught—double-entry bookkeeping, etc., and my association while there with Professor McGee, who was a very fine man, had made my stay more than worthwhile.

I should add that San Marcos has grown and improved a great deal during the past fifty years and is now one of the finest cities in Texas.