

CUJ History, Tradition & Culture

Horse changed way of life

By the Cultural Resources Protection Program
of the CTUIR Department of Natural Resources

According to Cayuse tradition, sometime in the early 1700's, a war party of Cayuse and Umatillas were camped on the Malheur River, a tributary of the Snake River. Some scouts were on the bluffs that overlooked the river to watch for their enemy, the Snakes or Shoshone.

They saw something that caused great bafflement. The Shoshone appeared to be riding either elk or large deer. The scouts hurried back to tell their war chief of this strange sight. The chief sent other warriors to find out the reason for what he thought must surely be a trick. They, too, saw what appeared to be their enemies riding elk or large deer.

Puzzled, the group crept in for a closer look. Much to their amazement, they discovered that the hoof prints were not split but solid and round. Thoroughly disturbed by this discovery, they deserted the war plan for peace instead. They arranged a truce with the Shoshones and asked to trade for some of these amazing creatures.

The reply was a stern "no!" The Cayuse and Umatilla warriors laid down all they had to give. Finally, the Shoshones consented and gave a mare and a stallion. The party went back home with the pair of Spanish descent horses. The Indians treated these treasured gifts with great care, and the following year the mare gave birth to a colt.

The acquisition of this natural but significant animal changed the culture and lifeways of my Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla people forever.



A typical horse corral round up on the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The photo was taken by Moorhouse.

The Cayuse soon began sending out parties to steal more horses, which was a much easier way to increase their herd than breeding. With these stolen horses and those produced from their own herds, the Cayuses soon developed into extraordinary horsemen with herds of horses numbered in the thousands.

Varying in color from black to white, with roans, bays, and other combinations between, their horses stood 12 to 15 hands high. It was sure-footed and able to withstand hunger and rough treatment. Its speed and endurance were exceptional. In the early nineteenth century a Cayuse Indian owning 15 to 20 horses would hardly be considered affluent. Wealthier owners kept up to 2,000 for recreation, travel, and trading purposes.

The horse served to strengthen the Cayuses' hunting, warring, and raiding abilities. Under expert guidance, it quickly adapted to the encircling maneuver of elk and deer hunts, a task which the Cayuse had once tediously performed on foot.

Since the Cayuses were the first Indians north of the Shoshonean peoples to have horses in large numbers, they supplied them to the Nez Perce and to Salishan peoples farther north. From close economic relations between the two groups there emerged social ties, among them intermarriages

often ceremonialized with the exchange of horses.

The acquisition of the horse added power and wealth to their mobility, which allowed the Cayuse to break out of their homelands, driving northward to the Columbia River, southward to California, eastward to the Plains and westward to the Willamette Valley. The horse insulated the

CTUIR from abandoning their traditional practice of seasonal resource gathering that encompassed the Columbia River and stretched to the tops of the Blue Mountains, for an economy based on trapping fur-bearing animals.

The horse really began to change the travel and trade network amongst the Tribes because they were able to travel further distances in shorter periods of time. Horses were often times traded in exchange for salmon, skins, buffalo robes mats, silk and bear grass and roots.

For example, at the Grande Ronde Valley, Cayuses exchanged salmon and horses for Shoshone roots, tipis, and elk and buffalo meat. Much they retained for themselves, trading a part once more, along with their own products. In

traffic with such Plains tribes as the Crow they exchanged roots, horses and horn bows for Plains cloth-



This map shows historical wild horse corral locations across the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

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Horse changed way of life

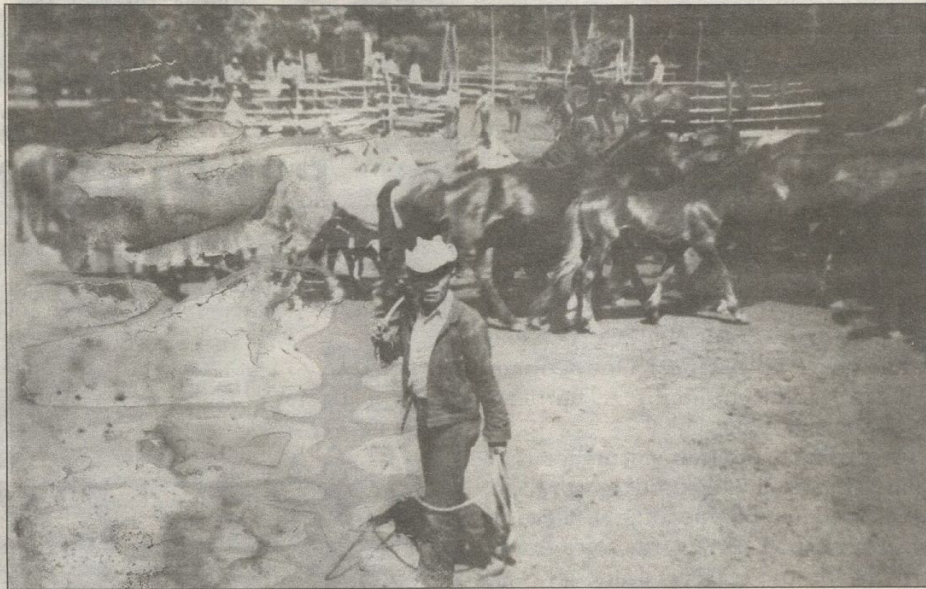
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ing, tipis, parfleches, woman's saddles and other possessions.

The travel and trade network changed further with the introduction of the non-Indian and their trade items. The fur trade began in the late 1700s with Oregon coastal tribes and quickly spread inland. With the non-Indian came the military in the early 1800s in Oregon territory.

With the introduction of non-Indian trade goods began the trade of horses for such items as blankets, beads, cloth, food provisions, kettles, spoons, and later the introduction of cattle and oxen to the area in the 1830s. The Cayuse had been the first Indians in the vicinity of Fort Nez Perce to trade beaver and horses for guns and ammunition. However, they showed more interest in caring for and trading horses than furs. Occasionally, horses were given to aid white men in their expedition to cross mountains.

Cayuse trade continued to be chiefly in horses, which never ceased to be an important measure of their wealth. Prestige and wealth were partially reflected by the number of horses that a person owned. Horses



Louie Dick Sr. takes part in a wild horse roundup at the Telephone Ridge corral. He helped out rounding up and branding the horses from the open range. The photograph, which was damaged by water spots, is in the collection of Tamastslitk Interpretive Institute.

were a reflection of status, not only wealth of horses but also evidence by those in high status, headsman, sometime being buried with their favorite horse.

While Indian people to the east of the Cayuse were trading animal pelts to non-Indians for goods, the Cayuse could obtain these same

goods by trading horses.

The Cayuse adopted the Great Plains philosophy of war as their own power grew and as others learned to respect it. Cold, taciturn, and high-tempered, they fought less for territory than for booty and glory. Young Cayuse males soon learned that by bringing home captured women, children and horses they could raise their status in the eyes of their people. Among the Cayuses, as among peoples of the coast and unlike those of the Great Plains, status and possession were rooted in individuals and family groups rather than bands or tribes.

In preparation for war, the Cayuses decorated themselves and their horses with paint, feathers, and other trappings. Young men who wished to prove themselves on their first raid trailed off to steal horses.

The Indians preferred white horses, with mottled black and white their second choice. The animals' necks were dappled with streams of red and yellow; tails were black and red, clubbed in a knot, and tied short. Head and tail were ornamented, the former with a feather cluster some twenty inches above the ears and the latter with two feather streamers and, as the trade increased, ribbons. In sum, the Indians augmented

nature's coloration by painting and otherwise decorating their mounts as they did themselves, creating an illusion of physical unity between man and beast to match what they considered the mystical union between them. At no time was this more apparent than when chiefs and warriors maneuvered their mounts before a battle.

In their migrations they depended upon their mounts, which were also excellent pack horses, carrying up to three hundred pounds of gear and supplies, such as lodge mats and robes. Children were tied on gentle animals. And when the Cayuses made camp, the pack horses were turned loose to graze nearby as their owners set up house-keeping.

Many of the Umatilla, Walla Walla, and Cayuse people became excellent horse breeders, maintaining large herds. The traditional homelands were rich with abundant grass covered hills for grazing.

In 1805 Lewis and Clark wrote about observing the large horse herds on their journey down the Columbia River. In 1811, the Astor party was astonished by "the sight of some four thousand horses grazing nearby" along the Columbia River. In 1812, the Hunt party arrived to the Umatilla River Basin near present day Pendleton stating they were especially grateful for the horse herds, as they had struggled down the Snake, across the Powder, Grand Ronde and the Blue with barely a living horse left.

The Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla had thousands and thousands of horses that they needed areas for them to graze. There wasn't enough grazing area so they had to spread the horses out. The Cayuse used to graze horses all through the Umatilla Basin, across the Columbia River on the Horse Heaven Hills, all the way to Hanford to the north, on the east side of the Blue Mountains from the Grande Ronde country all the way to Huntington, to the John Day River country in the south and all the way to the Cascades in the west.

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SUNDOWN GRILL & BAR-B-Q

February's Menu

- *Caramelized Apple & Onion Pork Tenderloin...16
- *Chicken Champignon.....16
(mushrooms, sour cream & sherry sauce)
- *Almond Chicken.....16
- *Alder Smoked Filet of Salmon...22
drizzled with sweet jalapeño sauce
- *Brandied Peppercorn Salmon....24
- *Slow Smoked Beef Brisket.....16
- *St. Louis Style Pork Ribs.....16
- *Smoked Beef Sausage Broiled...16
- *Choice NY Steak.....28
- *Grilled Filet of Halibut.....26
- *Sundown Burgers, Nachos, Fish & Chips

Happy Hour
4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

VALENTINE'S DAY ~ FEBRUARY 14TH

Make your reservations early!
Watch Facebook for Specials....

Lunch: Tuesday - Friday 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Dinner: Tuesday - Sunday 4:30 p.m. - Close

Sunday Brunch: 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

233 S.E. 4th Street, Pendleton, OR

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Nixyaawii Celebration Committee Invites you to the
4th Annual

Valentines Gathering

AT MISSION LONGHOUSE

February 14, 2015

4:00-5:00

Dinner Buffet

Community Please Bring Rolls, Salads, Deserts or Cake

7:00

Grand Entry - Gifts for Prizes | All Categories 1st - 3rd Place

Tiny Tots (5 and Under)

Traditional Boys & Girls (12 and Under & 13 and Older)

Grass & Fancy Boys (12 and Under & 13 and Older)

Jingle & Fancy Girls (12 and Under & 13 and Older)

Owl Dance (1st - 3rd Places)

Rabbit Dance (1st - 3rd Places)

Hand Drum Contest 2 Person Teams (1st - 3rd Places)

Round Dance (Cake Contest)

For More Information Contact Babette Cowapoo at (541) 969-3303.

Horse changed way of life

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Traditional lifeways gradually evolved into an inclusion of horse culture, which can be seen in trade practices from pre-Treaty to Treaty and post-Treaty times. When the Tribes entered the Treaty, the event of the Oregon Trail had already made Native people interested in securing enough land for their horse and cattle herds (which were part of this new economy as well). Young Chief's desire for the Grande Ronde Valley at the Treaty was a testament to this fact. In the post-Treaty era, allotment acts, divided and diminished lands, limited access to seasonal migration routes, and struggles to secure hunting and fishing rights define the historical context.

This wealth in horses helped support the gradually evolving Indian economy at the time of the settlement of the Oregon Country and the later establishment of the reservation.

Trade in horses and or grazing rights often figured into "friendly" early negotiations of land use and access to traditional resources. It is evident that horses were more than simple trade objects. They were embedded socially within the culture, creating friendly negotiating tools in contact times, something over which to establish a good relationship by, and perhaps create obligations of a reciprocal relationship into the future.

By 1890, the Umatilla Indian Reservation was the leading livestock producing reservation in the United States. In a few short years, however, the rapidly changing landscape saw the demise of our once great horse herds.

Maintaining our horse herds was difficult because the range lands were all allotted and closed. Our dependence upon the horse was reduced once the railroad was constructed in 1881. In essence, we were forced to give up our most precious resources. Our annual expeditions, round ups, and horse races, and horse breeding were all but a memory in the few Cayuses and Appaloosas that remained.

The loss of the horses was devastating. Our life as a free and mobile people had now succumbed to the inevitable changes that were taking place. At the turn of the century, it seemed as if our great horse herds were disappearing before our eyes. Even though a few herds remained, many were later rounded up, sold, and used as dog food, glue, and fertilizer.

In the 1940s, wild horse round ups on the Umatilla Indian Reservation took place at Thornhollow, Telephone Ridge, Cayuse, Gibbon, above St. Andrew's Mission, Meachum, Boiling Point, Big Johnson, north side of McKay Creek, mouth of Rail Creek, Red Spring, Coyote Canyon, Starkey, and Kamela. Horse corrals were

located throughout the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

In the Spring, the Indian people would go into the mountains and round up the herds. Once they were rounded up into a corral the horses would mil and mill until they mothered up, like cows, the colts would go with their mothers and then the people could see their brand. The herd was communal, all ran together as tribal horses. Tribal members who found and caught a slick, an unbranded colt two years or older, could keep it as their own.

To participate in the wild horse round ups you had to be male, at least fifteen years old, and know how to rope and handle horses. There were usually 20-25 horse wranglers rounding up 200-300 head of horses.

Wild horses caught were either claimed and branded or sold. The claimed and branded horses were usually turned loose until the next round up. The ones they wanted to sell were sold to non-Indians for \$25-30. Demost Birdsman used to buy a lot of horses for the Army.

In the 1950s, a Hollywood company filmed the Great Sioux Uprising movie on the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Some of the wild horses were used in this movie. However, after filming was completed, the tribal superintendent at the time rounded up all the wild horses and had them shipped off to a canner in Portland. The non-Indian ranchers had been complaining about the wild horses getting into their wheat crops. Tribal elders say this was one of the last wild horse rounds held on the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Wild horse round ups came to an end in the 1950s.

NINETY PERCENT OF SMOKERS START BEFORE THEY ARE EIGHTEEN



It's a vicious cycle. For every person who dies from tobacco related disease, at least 2 kids, teens or young adults become regular smokers. In fact last year, thousands of kids in Oregon started smoking—more than graduated from all the public high schools in Eugene, Medford, Salem, Bend and Pendleton combined. What's for sale in your community?

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