FEDERAL TERMINATION AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE LAND, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY OF THE KLAMATH INDIAN TRIBE

By

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Every day they had to look at the land, from horizon to horizon, and every day the loss was with them; it was the dead unburied, and the mourning of the lost going on forever. So they tried to sink the loss in booze, and silence their grief with war stories about their courage, defending the land they had already lost.

--Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

It was done in the Philippines. It can be done with the Indians.

--Allen P. Jeffries, June 8, 1956
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Introduction

The Klamath Indians are not known in most American households. They have not been portrayed in movies, used as mascots for sports teams, or appeared in many, if any, history textbooks. Maybe that is for the better, for it is rare to find an accurate representation of indigenous North Americans in any of those mediums. However, the Klamath were selected to experience the most important federal Indian policy change enacted in the 20th century. The Klamath were not the only group selected to pilot this new policy, known as “termination,” but of the groups involved, they held the largest reservation and held claim to the greatest abundance of valuable natural resources. So, when an influential group of federal policymakers pushed termination through Congress, the Klamath were affected in a multitude of ways. Termination ended the traditional relationships held between federally recognized Indian tribes and the federal government. The lawmakers who championed the cause of termination foresaw rapid assimilation of tribal members and the release of tribes from federal wardship. All of those living on the Klamath reservation eventually lost their land. In exchange, they were awarded cash payments, which for many proved unmanageable.

Scholars have attempted to explain why members of the U.S. government would want to support such a detrimental policy. Legal scholars Charles F. Wilkinson and Eric R. Biggs have argued effectively that termination was just one law in a long series of federal legislation that sought to force the assimilation of indigenous Americans. Others, like Indian historian Donald Fixico, have made the assertion that termination was another federal land grab. Fixico certainly argued his case well and was quite right in realizing how much the U.S. government would stand to profit from a law like termination. Those scholars who have looked at termination generally
look at the law itself and how it affected all of those Indian tribes that were selected to have their federal wardship terminated. The research that exists has been tremendously helpful in establishing groundwork for looking at termination and its impact on individual tribes.

Nicholas Peroff compiled a wonderful book detailing the termination experience for the Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin, whose timber-rich reservation much resembled the Klamath ancestral homeland in Oregon. Peroff rightfully devoted his attention to a tribe who pitched a very public and very militant battle for tribal restoration through the 1960s and into the first half of the 1970s. Menominee restoration efforts included the use of tactics widely popularized by the burgeoning American Indian Movement and championed by young urban Indians who followed in the footsteps of the various protest groups of the 1960s.

Of course, termination made its mark on Klamath people in less quantifiable ways. Young people lost access to cultural and religious traditions that were deeply tied to their former land. Without access to traditional culture, Klamaths would have to find new ways to develop and understand their identities. This is not to say that Klamath culture was entirely lost, but rather, traditional paths of identity development shifted as termination forced people to alter their lifestyles. The breakdown of communal and familial networks, hunting and gathering practices, and the physical landscape of the reservation, all of which had been critical in cultural learning before termination, caused problems for many Klamath people. My aim is to explore the nature of the problems that came with termination, most importantly those that came as a direct result of the liquidation of the Klamath reservation.

To accomplish that goal, I will draw from a diverse array of primary and secondary sources. I conducted the bulk of my primary source research during a two week trip to Oregon in January 2009. I spent a week studying Klamath tribal council meeting minutes and other
indigenous documents in the University of Oregon Special Collections. I spent the next week on the former Klamath reservation meeting with current tribal members and representatives of the tribal government, including the current tribal chairman, Joe Kirk. I also had the pleasure of speaking with tribal elder Morrie Jimenez, a lifelong educator who recently participated in a Klamath Oral History project headed by Professor Linc Kesler at the University of British Columbia. The government publications and archives at Alexander Library at Rutgers University provided me with the records I needed to provide evidence of federal officials’ points of view during the termination era.

In order to paint a picture of everyday Klamath life before termination, I will present testimony from oral narratives and interview data. I will also supplement that with statistics that have been gathered by cultural anthropologists and researchers. I will use the same types of sources to describe life after termination. By doing that, we begin to understand what termination meant for different Klamath individuals. And although it is difficult and potentially dangerous to make generalizations based on the experiences of only a handful of people, the oral testimony can provide insight into the different ways that termination potentially affected different people.

Additionally, I hope to help readers understand why a small group of federal policymakers could pass a series of laws that would be so influential to American Indians with relative ease. Those policymakers were given clear warnings as to the very real potential for termination to be a disaster. For some reason, those warning signs were ignored. Several scholars have attempted to explain the benefits of termination for those who drafted it and for the federal government. I will attempt to add to that discussion with evidence from the laws themselves and transcripts from Congressional hearings on termination.
Lastly, I will discuss the ways in which the members of the Klamath Tribe recovered from termination. Although the road was long, the federal government restored its recognition of the Klamath as an Indian tribe again in the late 1980s. I would like to compare the Klamaths’ road to restoration with the struggle of another terminated tribe, the Menominee of Wisconsin, and their battle to have tribal recognition restored. Furthermore, I would like to end by discussing contemporary issues that face the Klamath community, members of which have been engaged in a legal battle for a return of their entire former reservation since restoration in 1986.

My thesis seeks to prove two major points. I argue that Klamath termination was directly responsible for deterioration of tribal culture, identity crises, and a breakdown of the former reservation land. I also provide proof of the fact that federal officials were given many examples of the disastrous potentials of termination, yet ignored nearly every one of them. I have done my best to interweave these two questions throughout the body of the text, but hopefully have not done so to the extent that my conclusions have become unclear.

Before understanding termination, or what the implications of that policy could be, one must understand federal Indian policy of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Similarly, one must understand Klamath life and culture before termination. Only then can one see how termination was in one way a continuation of federal Indian policy as it had been since the reservation system began, and in other ways, an aberration. Similarly, by understanding who the Klamath were before termination, one can comprehend the changes that came with the new federal solution for the “Indian problem.”

Since United States policymakers created the reservation system, Indian policy has been decidedly assimilation-oriented. In fact, the 1851 Indian Appropriations Act laid down
assimilation as the official government strategy for dealing with indigenous North Americans. By confining American Indians to reservations, government officials could slowly break down the traditional ethnic and community groups that were vitally important to the survival of strong Native American entities. Additionally, government-run boarding schools would target Indian youth, understanding them to be the most vulnerable to assimilationist efforts. Teachers in boarding schools forbade students from wearing traditional dress and speaking Indian languages. Life in boarding schools was harsh, with corporal punishment being a popular tactic to deter Indian youth from attempting to understand their traditional cultures.

Twenty years after the establishment of the reservation system, Congress halted Indian treaty making. In 1885, Congress passed a law that would push the federal government deeper into Indian Affairs. The Major Crimes Act came in response to the murder of one Lakota Sioux by another, Crow Dog, on a reservation in the Dakota Territory. The law extended non-Indian laws on tribes by allowing federal government jurisdiction over certain major crimes committed on reservations. The assimilation machine rolled on with passage of the General Land Allotment Act in 1877. This act, more popularly known as the Dawes Act, broke reservations into allotments, which were then distributed to individuals and families. Excess land was then scooped up by the federal government. When the allotment process was finally halted in 1934, only about thirty-five per cent of the initial one hundred forty acres of Indian land remained in federal trust. The act left roughly 90,000 Indians landless.

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The 20th Century saw a slight change in the direction of Indian policy. The last Native resisters had been pacified and the final bands of free Indians confined to reservations or killed. In 1924, Congress granted United States citizenship to the original inhabitants of North America. Ten years after, policymakers halted the devastating allotment process. The 1934 Indian Reorganization Act gave hope to hundreds of reservation-bound tribes across the continent. Many Indians saw the policy, which restored tribal government systems and a sense of independence, as a success. Not all Indians welcomed the passage of the I.R.A. however. The United States determined how Indian constitutions had to be formulated and limited the powers of tribal governments. Indians were not being granted actual independence, and many tribes, including the Klamath of Oregon, were happy with their existing methods for tribal management. They and many other tribes chose not to accept the terms of the new policy. Nonetheless, for many, the act brought a welcome end to the Dawes Act.

The next major federal Indian act came in 1946. President Truman signed the Indian Claims Commission Act into law with a lofty goal in mind. United States government officials saw the act as the means by which any outstanding Indian land claims would be settled; a symbolic end to the shady dealings that had occurred between Europeans and indigenous peoples since contact. Once those claims were settled, the federal government would no longer have to deal with Indians complaining of rights to stolen or illegally occupied land. As could have been expected, the Indian Claims Commission was forced to remain in existence much longer than anticipated as it quickly became backed up with more cases than initially expected.4

So, it is clear that federal Indian policy was not static through the first hundred years of the reservation system. Although the aim of most policies was ultimately to assimilate

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indigenous people into white society, the 1930s and 1940s showed some promise of government accountability for its past dealings with Native American peoples. The willingness of United States officials to hear Indian land claims in federal courts was a huge step for Indian people. However it was at the same time that the Indian Claims Commission was getting underway that officials in Washington began the push for termination. In their article, “The Evolution of the Termination Policy,” Eric Biggs and Charles Wilkinson stated that termination legislation began to be seriously considered in the mid-1940s “when reactions against I.R.A. reform efforts became intense.”

Some in the federal government opposed the reforms of the I.R.A. and their voices became more influential through the end of the 1940s and into the 1950s. The Klamath tribe quickly became a target for termination efforts.

It is important to have some understanding of who the Klamath people were. With at least a basic understanding of the Klamath, the reader will be able to understand what role termination played in creating the world that the Klamaths live in today. As I noted earlier, the Klamath are not one of the few Indian tribes that the average person can name. Even United States historians, unless they specialize in indigenous history, would not know the first thing about Klamath life and culture. Because the region in which people live largely determines their exposure to and understanding of Native American people, I would imagine that the small size of the Klamath population has limited knowledge about them to the Pacific Northwest, where their former reservation land was located.

Most of the background information that I gleaned regarding Klamath history came from Theodore Stern’s book, *The Klamath Tribe: A People and their Reservation*. The book,

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published in 1965 is an anthropological work, not a history book, but was the most comprehensive study of Klamath culture and life up until termination legislation was passed. Stern and a group of graduate students lived amongst and surveyed Klamath people throughout the course of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Additional information, coming from oral narratives, will be used later to create a day-to-day picture of Klamath life.

The Klamath originally resided in South Central Oregon and Northern California. They were one of a large group of indigenous tribes in Central Oregon that were loosely tied to each other through language. As semi-sedentary people, the Indians of Central Oregon attained most of their sustenance from fishing, hunting, and the gathering of roots, seeds, and wild berries. The Klamath would traditionally remain in one spot through the harsh Oregon winters and then break down their villages to move to fishing posts in the early spring, where they would stay through the summer. Alliances with other tribes in the region were forged through intermarriage and trade. As was the case across the continent, the Klamath warred often with their neighboring Indians, including the Modoc, Nez Perce, Paiute, and others. However, the wars fought by indigenous people did not produce the type of bloodshed that would come with the arrival of European weaponry and technology.

The Klamath Tribe itself broke down further into six tribelets based on the geographic residence of each group. Those tribelets consisted of the Sprague River People, Klamath Marsh People, Williamson River People, Pelican Butte People, Agency Lake People, and Klamath Falls People. Those bands did not adhere to a strict set of alliances, but rather joined together to face large common enemies and skirmished intermittently with each other. The Klamaths shared the region with the Modoc, who consisted of three tribelets and acted as both friends and enemies of the Klamaths for centuries. A final group, the Paiutes or Yahooskin Band of Snake Indians, also
resided in Southeastern Oregon. They, however, spoke a distinct language and embraced a markedly different culture from the Klamaths and Modoc.\(^6\)

Throughout the early and middle parts of the 19\(^{th}\) Century the Klamath largely did not resist the encroachment of white settlers. Although there was some skirmishing between whites and Indians, the Klamath remained peaceful. The discovery of gold in Jacksonville, Oregon, about 70 miles west of what became the Klamath reservation, brought the migration of western Europeans to the area in the first half of the 19\(^{th}\) Century.\(^7\) The presence of whites in Oregon led to a treaty that would confine the Klamath people to a reservation. The treaty went into effect on February 17, 1870 and established reservation boundaries that would only shrink as time went on. Additionally, the reservation was not established strictly for the Klamath people. Rather, the government brought together the above mentioned tribal groups, the Modocs, the Klamath, and the Yahooskin Band of Snake Indians, on the same land. The Modocs ultimately fought a war with the whites in protest of their being forced to live amongst the Klamath. The bloody conflict ended in 1873, lasting only a year, and forced the Modoc back onto the reservation with the Klamath and the Yahooskin Band of Snake Indians, all of whom would remain there until termination in the 1950s.\(^8\)

Judging by the actions of the area’s Indian agents, it seemed that from the moment the reservation’s boundaries were set, the United States government set about trying to “civilize” these newly controlled Indians. By force-feeding new generations of Klamath youth with Christianity in government-run boarding schools, and tempting adult Klamaths with new

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\(^6\) Testimony of Clayton Shultz, Restoration and Executive Committee Member, Klamath Indian Tribe in support of H.R. 3554 before the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, April 10, 1986, Klamath Indian Materials, Box 1, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403-1299

\(^7\) The Klamath Tribes Executive Committee, “Historical Timeline of Klamath Tribes,” Klamath News, December, 1999.

amenities and luxuries, Indian agents and missionaries were able to begin assimilating the Klamath into local white society. As most people would do in such a situation, Klamath men and women began to adapt to the new way of life that was being pressed upon them. Stern noted that by the end of the 19th century, most people of the Klamath reservation seemed to be transforming their ways in the ways of white men; Indians began asking that their blanket, clothing, and food rations be substituted with work mules, wagons, harnesses, and mowing machines; many were adjusting their way of life to include activities such as raising livestock, farming, and freighting in order to reap the benefits that could come with living in white society.\(^9\)

All of these behaviors were taken by Indian agents as a sign that the Klamath were happy to give up their traditional way of life and assimilate with their new white neighbors; however, I would argue that the Klamath were simply put in a situation in which they had to adhere to alternative routes to attain success or else see their standard of living decline dramatically; there was not a choice to conform or resist. Rather there was a choice to try to provide the best life possible for one’s family or to see them suffer. Regarding the new ways of life pushed upon the Klamath, Stern comments that:

> The new garment they had donned was another man’s suit, not cut to their proportions, and if it was loose in some places, it pinched unexpectedly in others. The system of roles they were asked to assume was in many ways incommensurate with that they had known. They found themselves subjected to constraints that often seemed harsh and uncompromising and that were circumscribed by obscure administrative rulings which seemed to have little bearing upon their advancement.\(^{10}\)

Stern makes a very valid point. The Klamath were not traditionally farmers or cattle raisers. They were not loggers or freighters. However, they did what they could to learn how to succeed in their changing environment.

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\(^9\) Ibid., 70-71.

\(^{10}\) Ibid., 61.
Of those four primary routes to economic success, the timber industry proved to be the most lucrative for the Klamath. It was not until the Southern Pacific Railroad reached the Klamath reservation in 1909 that the timber industry began to boom. As the market for Klamath timber expanded, the mills in Klamath Falls and surrounding white communities began to rely upon a steady flow of timber from the bountiful forests in Klamath territory. Cutting on allotted tracts began in 1911 and the profits from logging grew through the first half of the 20th Century. By the time termination was being discussed in the late 1940s and early 1950s, each enrolled member of the Klamath Tribe was receiving an $800 per capita payment for their share of tribal timber. Under the management of federal experts, the tribal forests were managed on a sustained yield basis, ensuring the ability of the Klamath to count on long-term profits from their timber stands.

Naturally, the Klamath would need a way to manage all of their jointly held tribal assets. As early as 1869, the Indian agents of the U.S. government forced the Klamath to elect a leader who would rule over the entire reservation. Traditionally, bands of Klamaths, separated geographically, would report to individual chiefs. Needless to say, the leadership change was not welcomed by all of the Klamaths. Stern noted how the Indian agents were able to use boarding schools to prepare a new generation of cooperative tribal leaders when he wrote:

> Because boarding school spanned the time of life upon which the Klamath vision quest and the girls’ puberty rite fell, those native experiences were largely eliminated; and change of status was signaled instead by the final return from school. Education was designed for an altered future, but it increased intergenerational strife, as elders, their accumulated wisdom rendered obsolete in a changed setting, confronted youths skeptical in the superiority of their book-won knowledge.

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11 Ibid., 125, 152.
Through the curricula taught in boarding schools, government officials were able to mold new leaders who would work closely with Indian agents to promote goals promulgated by the Indian agency.14

In 1908 the Klamath Tribal Council formed as a twelve-man governing body. The group, reduced to eight men over the course of the next two decades, was challenged when a dissident group elected a second tribal council in 1927. The bureaucratic headache was solved for Indian agents when in 1929 a six man business committee was formed. The committee would oversee important tribal business matters and refer important issues to the General Council. The General Council would be made up of all adult members of the tribe. Tribal government was altered again in 1950 when a new constitution was enacted for the General Council. The constitution created an executive branch of the General Council that would be filled by a president and other elected officers. The president and secretary of the General Council would join the former members of the Business Committee to populate the new Executive Committee. Finally, the constitution made provisions for a Tribal Loan Board and Enrollment Committee.15 For the Klamath, the ability to gain a consensus of their members through their governing bodies would be a recurring problem.

Before beginning a discussion of termination, it will be necessary to take a closer look at day-to-day life on the Klamath Reservation. Although each individual’s life was different from the next, certain segments of society could be identified through oral testimonies of those who grew up on the reservation in the years just prior to the passage of termination legislation. By looking at the lives of individuals and small groups, one begins to understand deeper aspects of a people, such as how cultural and religious practices were carried out and what degree of

14 Ibid., 78, 94.
importance they held. For the Klamath, their culture and spirituality had originated in their reliance upon the natural world for survival. Years of contact with white settlers certainly changed the ways in which Klamaths could maintain cultural and religious activities, but those practices survived nonetheless.

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Growing up on the Reservation: Klamath Culture
To truly understand a group of people, one must understand their everyday life, their culture, and the elements held most important by them. It is difficult, if not impossible, to create a cultural history of a people from statistical data alone. That is even truer when the people whose history is being told, are alive and able to describe it themselves. It is also crucial for readers to see that a person’s ethnicity is not necessarily a determinant of their level of cultural involvement or appreciation. To highlight that, one could take religion as a perfect example. Many Klamaths practiced Christianity, as the Methodist Church was established on their reservation in 1878. Others however, practiced a mixture of traditional Klamath religion and Christianity.

My goal, however, is not to try and define every possible identity that a Klamath person could take. That would be impossible and of little value. Rather, I will seek to illustrate the ways in which traditional Klamath cultural practices were thriving in at least some segments of the reservation community up until the termination date. The Klamath were not, as government officials surmised, all completely assimilated into neighboring white communities. In fact, both statistical data that could be interpreted to evaluate Klamath readiness for termination and oral testimonies about attitudes toward termination show that termination was doomed to fail. By recreating the spectrum of the many ways of life that were embraced by Klamath people before termination, one can grasp the problems with the policy.

There were many different components to everyday life that aided in identity development on the reservation. Many of those components incorporated traditional practices into modern life to help strengthen individuals’ abilities to understand their heritage. In most cases, the simple existence of the reservation was key in fostering those situations and lifestyles.

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that contributed to identity formation. I would like to start by describing how familial and communal relationships developed in a unique and often positive way because of the nature of reservation life.

People’s upbringing and family life play an extremely large role in one’s eventual understanding of who they are. That was the case for Morrie Jimenez, a half-blood Klamath who saw the days before termination. Morrie grew up on the reservation in the 1930s and 1940s and has continued his involvement with the tribe until the present day. Regarding his upbringing on the reservation, he stated:

…the family relationships were something that occurred without mandate or dictate or anything else, it was every day living, every day stories, every day, every day explanations of why we should do what we do, and how we should do that, the reasons behind that, and it all had to do with, with the concern for each other and the need for, a need for an internal security, a community security amongst ourselves.17

In talking about his early years on the reservation, Morrie again and again referred to how much he felt he had gained from the strong familial networks that came with living on Klamath land.

Morrie went on to be one of a very small percentage of Klamath people to graduate from college. His career as an educator was one that brought him great personal fulfillment and allowed him to have a real impact on the quality of education received by Native American school children. Looking back at his personal and professional life, he again gave credit to his family for his success, recounting:

And, and I owe that all to not only my, my nuclear and extended family at home, but also to all those people on the reservation who took the time, whenever they saw me, to encourage me to stay with it and to follow through. And so that's what's been driving me all these, I realize that now, more than anything else, that's what's been driving me all these years.18

18 Morrie Jimenez, interview by Kesler, Session 18.
So, for those Klamaths like Morrie, who experienced a more traditional upbringing, family played a major role in day to day life. In Morrie’s case, and undoubtedly others, the access that one had to both nuclear and extended family networks provided support groups that would encourage positive growth. Further, those family groups managed to retain a close proximity because of familial land holdings that were an integral part of the reservation system.

Another Klamath man, Lynn Schonchin also recalled the closeness that was embodied in relationships on the reservation. He reminisced:

I guess that one of things that stands out in my mind is that when it came time to hay, it wasn't just one family haying; it was all the families haying together and helping each other. And those kinds of things, same thing with branding cattle, there were great big gatherings, people get together and brand and eat and help one another out and stuff. Those are probably the kind of experiences and that, at that point in time, they really impacted me, you know, the idea of helping out all the time: help who you could ever help.19

Lynn brought attention to another way that family and community development were linked to the land base. Since the reservation was comprised of such a diverse array of landscapes, there were many activities that needed to occur to manage the land. Often, in the case of haying, raising cattle, and farming, large jobs would need to be completed. It was because of the need to interact that community members remained in close contact and formed relationships with each other that would not occur in an urban setting where individual efforts held much more importance than group activities.

Cultural rituals embodied another reason for community networks to develop and grow. In the same way that the existence of extended family and community groups could be attributed to the reservation land, cultural practices would also maintain deep ties to the land. Four major cultural traditions could be identified as being directly tied to the ability of Klamath people to

19 Lynn Schonchin, interview by Kesler, Session 11.
access their reservation land. Hunting, fishing, gathering, and traditional Klamath spirituality were all able to exist because of the physical landscape and what it produced. Some of these cultural rituals were more popular than others, and practices like hunting and fishing were carried out by both those who could be seen as the most assimilated alongside with those who would be viewed as the most traditional. If nothing else, the diversity of Klamath people who took part in what many considered to be sacred traditional activities, illustrated the inappropriateness of a sweeping bill like termination.

As semi-sedentary people, the Klamath traditionally relied on hunting as a way to stay alive. Before contact with white settlers, life revolved around pursuing fish and game. Because of their past dependence on the availability of deer and other wild game, many Klamath people continued to hunt as a means to provide a sizeable portion of their diet. Despite the best efforts of government Indian agents to force farming and grazing upon a group of people who had already established a viable relationship with their natural environment, the Klamath would continue patterns of leaving their homes to hunt and gather in September into the 20th Century.\textsuperscript{20} Joseph Coburn, who would be a leader in the Restoration struggles of the 1970s and 1980s described Klamath hunting as, “a social institution, an institution that is vital to our lives.”\textsuperscript{21} He also tried to distinguish the difference between a sportsman’s and a Klamath’s view of hunting. Hunting was much more than a recreational activity or a way to gain status amongst members of the local community. It was a way of life tied to thousands of years of living as hunter-gatherers.

Fishing was even more deeply and intricately tied to the traditional Klamath way of life than hunting or any of the other cultural rituals listed. The reservation provided access to a vast number of rivers, creeks, marshlands, and other waterways. The abundance of fish rich in

\textsuperscript{20} Stern, \textit{TheKlamath Tribe}, pp. 66-68.
\textsuperscript{21} [Unpublished draft, 1976], Klamath Indian Materials, Box 1.
protein and nutrients had historically led dozens of tribes of the Pacific Northwest to fishing. Indian fishing rights are still hotly contested by many U.S. and Canadian tribes to this day, and the environmental changes that have occurred over the last century, mainly manmade, have dramatically altered fish populations. The Klamath Tribe was and remains one of those tribes that were drawn to the abundance of fish in the region.

Specifically, the Klamath harvested the sucker fish, or the chuam/c’wam, as it was traditionally known. As the primary source of sustenance for the Klamaths, the chuam was seen as more than just food. It literally decided whether or not the Klamath would flourish or starve in a given year. Unlike most non-Native people in the United States, the Klamaths were deeply familiar with their food sources and naturally developed a deep respect for the chuam. Because of that relationship to their food, harvesting the chuam took on a much more profound meaning.

Lynn Schonchin explained just what the chuam meant to many traditional Klamath people:

It's about the whole system, it's about life. You know it's kind of that fish, you talk about that fish, is kind of like life. Our first sucker ceremony up here on the river, you took the first one and they would cremate it, and throw its ashes back in. And by doing that it was releasing its spirit to the rest of those fish, so they could come up. In doing that, that brought us life. So see that fish is all about life. It isn't just about the lake and the water: it's about life. And, wish people could look at it in those terms and gain the respect for that, instead of a disrespect.22

Schonchin’s account illustrated the fact that even in the years before termination, people still held strong ties to traditional ceremonies. Even those who were economically successful and worked alongside whites in neighboring communities may have participated in ceremonies like the one described above. A failure to understand that was one of the many reasons that government policymakers fell short in drafting effective termination legislation.

22 Lynn Schonchin, interview by Kesler, Session 11.
Morrie Jimenez added his take on the importance of the sucker ceremony. He stated, “And families had set up camps during that season for harvesting those chuam, and that was, that was such an experience that affected all of us in terms of the communal attitude, the spirit of collaboration and partnership that we had as family, internal family members, and external family members.”

Again, we come back to the nature of relationships on the reservation. The harvesting of chuam was another reason for people to get together and to get to know each other. Of course, there would be no annual harvest of the sucker fish if Klamath people were not allowed to access communal fishing grounds. Further, if those fish ceased to exist in the form and abundance that people had experienced in the past, harvesting would cease as well. So again, the existence of the reservation or at least of easy and open access to parts of the landscape supported the continuance of strong identity development through cultural rituals and community interaction.

Gathering was probably the least popular and least practical cultural ritual that was still practiced into the 20th Century. Jimenez recounted the role that gathering had played for Klamath people through history:

We gathered, and we had an abundance of natural fruits, we had an abundance of other natural fruits like ground nuts, like root systems, that over the years, by the time we came along, the practice of gathering roots had pretty much disappeared, so we didn't see a lot of that, but one of the things that we were still practicing, that my family was still practicing, was the gathering of wocus, and we had profuse amounts of that resources along the lakeshores and in the Klamath marsh area.

Morrie brought to light the fact that gathering was not nearly as important or popular as it once had been. With access to food sources that required much less work than gathering, most Klamath people naturally phased out a former subsistence practice that undoubtedly required the

23 Morrie Jimenez, interview by Kesler, Session 2.
24 Ibid., Session 5.
highest input of effort and smallest nutritional gain when compared with hunting and fishing.

However, he followed up with an important point, saying, “Our first opening season would be March…and that was the starting of our gathering season. That was a real religious ceremony, to start our gathering seasons.”

Through Morrie’s testimony, it was clear that although gathering was not practiced as rigorously as it had been historically; it was still symbolic of an older, and for many, sacred, way of life.

And just as fishing and hunting were a means for families and friends to spend time together, gathering presented those opportunities as well. Morrie recalled:

So I was always around family members that were older than me that kind of taught me, guide me, as a child, all the way through fishing, gathering. Gathering came a little bit later when I got a little older. I was always on Huckleberry Mountain with my grandmother, getting chased off the hill with bees. Bees and I never got along when I was a kid. I always, as soon as I heard them I'd drop my bucket and run. But I was always there doing the huckleberries, fishing and hunting with my cousins by the dozen, uncles.

The experiences that came with gathering were instrumental for at least some in their upbringing and personal growth. For Morrie and his family, gathering was a chance to get outside and to work together toward a common goal. On a different level, it must have been a way to connect with a shared history and aid in understanding of where one came from. As we will see the mutual cooperation and collective effort that came with an activity like gathering wild berries or roots would become another casualty to termination.

A final cultural practice that was still maintained by many Klamaths was that of ceremonies associated with their traditional religion. Traditional religious ceremonies took place in a Shaker Church that had been established on the reservation in years past. Over the years, Klamaths had to make concessions to the federal government in order to be allowed to practice a

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25 Ibid., Session 17.
26 Ibid., Session 17.
form of their old religion. For example, they were required to keep a bible on the altar inside the church when they held their services. The way in which Klamath people retained the ability to practice traditional religion could be attributed to the constructionist model of ethnicity seen in many Indian communities. In her book, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal*, Joane Nagel has suggested that a constructionist model of ethnicity, “stresses the fluid, situational, volitional, and dynamic character of ethnic identification, organization, and action. According to this view, the construction of ethnicity is an ongoing process that combines the past and the present into building material for new or revitalized identities and groups.”\(^{27}\) The reservation community had faced strong Christian influences since being confined to their land base in 1870, but still adapted and held on to their culture.

When Morrie Jimenez was growing up on the reservation in the 1930s and 1940s, he remembered attending services at the Shaker Church that would often last entire weekends and stretch late into the night. In his opinion, “…what was taught in that old Shaker Church was very common in terms of what was being taught on a daily basis, while you were working in the fields and helping with harvesting, when you were hunting together, when you were gathering together.”\(^{28}\) He elaborated further on his point stating:

> It was just an extension of everyday lessons that were taught to us, but they had a great deal more meaning, and for me individually, I know other people as well, most of us who participated in that old traditional belief system remembered that, and how, what an influence it had, what an impact it had on us, in terms of what a close experience that was, in terms of communal, communal experience that was. And the fact that you were together, you were practicing a religion together, you were visiting, you were talking, you were sharing stories, and at the same time, you were learning lessons…\(^{29}\)

\(^{28}\) Morrie Jimenez, interview by Kesler, Session 14.
\(^{29}\) Ibid.
As seen in Jimenez’s memories, the Shaker Church was another focal point for community gatherings. Even if only a handful of older members were able to really understand the religion in the ways it had been understood in the past, the fact was that younger Klamath people could understand their heritage and identity by watching their history in action.

Separate from an established religion, the idea of spirituality and its connection to the land can also be viewed as important to certain Klamaths. Just as the beginning of the gathering and chuam seasons marked a spiritual event, the landscape itself embodied an access point for identifying one’s own spirituality. Morrie described how, “The land, the land base and all that the land supported, the people, which is as spiritual, much of it was so spiritual in context,” and, “the spiritual harmony that, I think inherently develops in people who are tied to the land, and all that it has to offer.”30 There was undoubtedly a certain spiritual connection with the land felt in varying degrees by different people. This is not to say that the Klamaths necessarily interacted with their environment in a mythical or magical way, but rather many interacted with their environment in a way that was much more intimate than other segments of society.

To avoid creating an inaccurate or romanticized picture of reservation life, it is important to acknowledge that the majority of Klamaths were not living strictly traditional lifestyles. An article printed in the August 20, 1953 edition of the Klamath Reservation News shed light upon that fact. The article, which was formatted more as a letter, was written by a Klamath woman named Birdie Tupper who had been attending the University of Oklahoma and had only begun to interact with Indians of other tribes. Part of the article read, “We, I am sorry to say; have lost our Indian culture (this, in comparison with the other tribes); I mean, we no longer hold tribal ceremonials, powwow, round dances, etc.”31 Indeed, most Klamath had adapted their lives to

30 Ibid., Session 3.
31 Klamath Reservation News, Klamath Tribal Council Records, Box 7.
some degree to the white communities around them. Unlike Indian tribes that had maintained much stronger ties to traditional spiritual and religious ceremonies like those listed by Tupper, the Klamaths’ long exposure to and intermingling with white settlers had brought about rapid assimilation for many. Still, it was clear that many Klamath people still held strong and valid connections to other facets of their old culture that were intricately weaved with the land they lived upon.

Perhaps one of the more unique aspects of the Klamath Reservation was that it was comprised of three distinct groups of Indian people. Those growing up on the reservation had a chance to be exposed to a variety of different cultures and thus had access to an upbringing in which an understanding of other cultures could develop. Morrie remembered:

So each one of the communities had something that was unique to their particular community. And because we shared on a regular basis, and we were such a close communities across the reservation, and we participated in a lot of those celebrations, there was a lot of uniqueness that was shared, so that we grew up learning about each other's cultures. We learned, and their traditions and belief systems, and even though it involved just three, three tribal units there was still a lot to be shared and a lot to be learned.32

And not only did the mixture of three cultures promote healthy development for young people, but it also should have emphasized to Congressmen that any type of termination policy would have to address the needs of different communities and individuals.

Despite all of the important connections between cultural aspects and the reservation, termination legislation was brought upon the Klamaths. The relatively comfortable lives of reservation members, which could almost be entirely attributable to per capita payments, were taken as a sign by policymakers that Klamath people were ready to assimilate into local communities; that they could take care of themselves without any assistance from the federal

32 Morrie Jiminez, interview by Kesler, Session 14.
government. Whether those policymakers actually believed that or simply used what they
could find to justify their actions has been a matter up for debate. Ultimately the road to
termination was long and wrought with difficulties and what Congressmen could only call
unforeseen events. I will argue that with only a little more thought and consideration, many of
those problems could easily have been anticipated and used to reevaluate the course that their
legislation was taking.

TWO

Termination in the Eyes of the Federal Government
Termination was the culmination of nearly a decade of legislation aimed at reducing federal spending and solving the “Indian Problem.” In an era that was dominated by Republican politics and fiscal conservatism, many legislators saw termination as a way to drastically reduce government spending. For some, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, whose employees held responsibility for managing Indian communities, was seen as a drain on federal monies that produced little positive results for American Indians.

Unfortunately, the “Indian Problem” played little or no part in the daily work of the majority of congress people. Only a handful of legislators manned the House and Senate subcommittees on Indian Affairs and were usually able to make policy changes with no contestation from Congress. The truth was that most policymakers felt there were far more important problems toward which their attention and efforts needed to be directed. As a result, the work of what amounted to one determined and driven man was enough to push the disaster that was termination into law.

That man was Arthur Watkins, a Republican senator from Utah. As head of the Senate subcommittee on Indian Affairs, he held a great amount of political power when it came to Indian policy. He combined that power with a clear moral imperative that seemed to suggest, in his mind, that terminating the Klamaths and other tribes was providing a great service to them. Watkins’ strengthened his cause with support from Representative E.Y. Berry of South Dakota, who chaired the House subcommittee on Indian Affairs. Watkins’ idea of scaling back federal obligations to tribes was not new; however, it was under his leadership that termination in its most extreme form finally took place.

Historically, termination of tribes had been happening at different levels for some time. Charles F. Wilkinson and Eric R. Biggs, both specialists in Indian law, discussed how
termination policy had evolved in their article, “The Evolution of the Termination Policy.” They noted that the Five Civilized Tribes (Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole) were subjected to a series of federal laws between 1893 and 1906 that abolished their tribal courts, drastically reduced the powers of their tribal legislature, turned educational and social programs over to federal managers and led to the sale of their public buildings.33

In 1947, acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, William Zimmerman drafted a report that called for the gradual withdrawal of federal obligations to hundreds of recognized American Indian tribes. He listed three categories of preparedness for termination and included the Klamath Tribe as one of the most prepared.34 Zimmerman also provided for four indications that the government could use when terminating individual tribes. The list cited the degree of acculturation, economic resources and condition of the tribe, willingness of the tribe to be relieved of federal control, and willingness of the state to assume jurisdiction as the four criteria to examine when terminating.35

Public Law 335, passed on August 4, 1947, terminated the Laguna Band of Mission Indians, making them the first in a series of tribes to be terminated. Only three months prior, a similar termination bill had been introduced to the Senate by Wayne Morse or Oregon. If passed, it would have allowed for individual withdrawal of members of the Klamath Tribe. Demand for this bill from certain tribal members would resurge a decade later when the Klamaths were terminated by a bill that would prove to do much more harm than good.

The Eighty-first Congress would go on to pass legislation that provided funds to the school board of Klamath County for the construction, extension, and improvement of public

33 Biggs and Wilkinson, “Evolution,” 144.  
34 Fixico, *Termination and Relocation*, 33.  
school facilities that would be available to all children. As a result, most of the Indian schools in Oregon closed soon after. In January of 1953, Senate Bill 132 became law. Administration of health services for Indians and operation of Indian hospitals was transferred from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the United States Public Health Service. In 1951, Montana Senator George Malone had actually introduced a bill that would abolish the B.I.A. entirely, but saw it voted down after receiving considerable attention.\textsuperscript{36} Needless to say, laws designed to pull back federal control over Native Americans were being passed.

House Concurrent Resolution 108 was the sweeping termination bill that was ultimately passed. It called for a number of Indian tribes to end their ward status with the United States Government. Prior to termination, the federal government had funded essential services such as education, healthcare, welfare, and other social services. This bill proposed that terminated tribe members assume the societal rolls of other U.S. citizens and garner those services from their respective state, county, and local governments. H.C.R. 108 passed in August of 1953 and led the way for a number of individual termination bills that would lay out specific criteria for terminating certain tribes and groups of tribes.

In the following year, legislators and B.I.A. officials worked to produce a plan for the termination of the Klamath Indian Tribe. Their proposed bill gave tribal members three options. One could choose to withdraw and take cash payment for their share of tribal assets. One could choose to remain in the tribe and aid in forming a tribal corporation whose members would assume a similar role to the one the federal government had played. Or, if those who chose to refuse cash payments remained in the tribe, but failed to organize an acceptable governing body,

\textsuperscript{36} Fixico, \textit{Termination and Relocation}, 53, 92, 59.
federal officials would appoint a trustee to manage the assets of the remaining members. All in all, termination was going to happen whether the Klamaths objected or not.

Data in the years during which various tribes were preparing to terminate made it evident that Klamath living on the reservation were extremely far from “ready” to be terminated. A 1958 survey of reservation residents revealed that only 18% were actively engaged in business or ranching. Further, the same survey, isolated to the town of Chiloquin, a harbor for traditional Klamath people, showed that only 7% had previously been engaged in business or ranching. These statistics of course could not simply be attributed to some inherent aversion to hard work, but rather to a more logical cause. Enrolled Klamaths received a per capita payment of $800 annually, which placed a family of four above the median family income for the county in 1950. This data was further magnified by the fact that when compared to whites, one saw that a majority of the white population residing on the reservation was employed. That illustrated that not only was there employment available, but also that it was very rarely awarded to people of Klamath blood. Stern commented that, “even on their own reservation, the Klamath stood beneath the shadow of economic structures dominated by whites.”

Compounded with the fact that few Klamath on the reservation were gainfully employed, there also existed the fact that many were still actively engaged in hunting, fishing, and gathering to supplement their diets. Even the influx of white sport hunters and fishermen did not significantly alter the fact that Klamath men hunted almost always for subsistence. The restricted access to land that would come with termination would have grave consequences on these traditional methods of food acquisition.

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There was more evidence from the pre-termination years that strengthened the argument that the Klamath were unprepared to handle the enormous monetary settlements that came with the policy. Stern noted that, “Few Klamath on the reservation had ever banked money, and the absence of a bank in Chiloquin since the depression, or in any other reservation town, made necessary the institution of a credit system.” Debts often went unpaid as it was not uncommon for the biannual payments from timber profits to be squandered quickly on luxury items and other means of temporary enjoyment. The trend for Klamath to waste their money on automobiles was noted as early as 1924 in the *Annual Narrative Report* by the superintendent of the reservation at the time, Fred A. Baker.

A little research would have shown policymakers that only ten Klamaths graduated from Klamath County high schools between 1934 and 1947. They could have discovered that during the 1953-54 school years, the work of nearly half of the 220 Klamaths enrolled in Klamath County schools was not sufficiently satisfactory to warrant promotion to the next grade.\textsuperscript{38} Statistics like that however, were not taken into consideration or even compiled to help make a decision regarding termination.

Even a cursory look at some of the most basic data of Klamath people on the reservation should have prompted policymakers to take a closer look at what results their policy could have led to. Although some Klamath had successfully moved off of the reservation and assimilated into local communities through intermarriage and other means, termination was a change that would affect reservation Indians more than anyone else. Their situation when termination was implemented was such that they were not in a position to assimilate, and certainly not prepared to properly invest and budget money in the quantities that they would receive.

Nevertheless, Watkins and other public officials were able to terminate the Klamaths and others, despite being presented with evidence of the many faults of their plan. To begin to understand what motivated Watkins, there are several factors that can be analyzed. One can start by looking at the language used in various termination bills and by supporters of termination when speaking about the policy. Additionally, by analyzing the information that had been made available to Watkins and others, readers will see that termination’s failure can not be entirely blamed on the assumed ignorance of its supporters. Finally, the behavior and demeanor expressed by Watkins and his colleagues during the termination hearings proves that they were going to support termination regardless of what evidence existed to refute their attitude toward the legislation.

One of the most apparent and misleading facets found within termination legislation and heard from its supporters was the language used to describe it. Watkins and other proponents of termination illustrated fervor for termination that at times appeared on the brink of delusion. They expressed their feelings about termination repeatedly during hearings on the proposed Klamath Termination Act, which were held in Washington in February of 1954 and in Klamath Falls, Oregon in April of the same year. Their language not only masked the realities embodied in the proposed plan for termination, but also served as a way for those policymakers to attempt to deify themselves in front of those they purported to be helping.

On Monday February 15, 1954, termination hearings began in Washington. Watkins wasted no time in asserting that termination was a bill designed to give the Klamath people, “…full liberty to handle their property as they would like to.”\textsuperscript{39} The notions of liberty and freedom were used over and over again by termination’s supporters. On one level, Watkins must have

\textsuperscript{39} Joint Subcommittees on Indian Affairs, \textit{Termination of Federal Supervision over Certain Tribes of Indians}, 83\textsuperscript{rd} Congr., 2\textsuperscript{nd} sess., 1954, 1.
wanted to convey termination as a positive law for Native Americans to his fellow senators, who would ultimately decide the fate of the policy he so strongly believed in. Viewed through another lens, language like that of Oregon representative, Sam Coon, who saw the hearings as, “a step toward bringing the freedom and dignity of full citizenship to a group of people who have been becoming rapidly ready for these things,” could be seen as giving a sense of personal justification to pro-termination forces.

Watkins certainly seemed to honestly believe in the notion that his work was doing good. One particularly heartfelt outcry for termination came from Senator Watkins at the hearing on Tuesday, February 23. He proclaimed:

It will be a new day if we can get this thing done and give you people a right to stand on your own feet and manage your own business and learn to do that by doing it. We do not want to take anything away from you. We want to take off the shackles and make you freemen, free to make a mistake or two if you want to, if that is the way it has to be done. That is the way most of us learned, by making a few mistakes. That is what we are trying to do for you, take the shackles off. We pay you a great compliment when we say we are sure you can do a good job. In fact, we think you will do a better job than we have for 135 years. (Author’s emphasis)

In retrospect, Watkins’ assertion that Klamaths should have felt complimented by their nomination to be terminated was far from truthful. Moments like the one above provided a look into a man who seemed to be trying to establish his legacy. He would be the one who would “free” the Indians from a century of bondage; he would be a modern day Lincoln. Tragically, that would be a fantasy that never materialized.

Watkins was driven by religious motivations as well. During dialogue with Wade Crawford, leader of a minority faction of Klamaths who wanted termination but wanted it done differently, Watkins suggested, “You are standing in the way of your own progress. That is the

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40 Ibid., 210.
41 Ibid., 274-275.
point I am trying to make...I think it is a God-given right that every man has, to make some of his own mistakes, because that is one way he learns.” By tying termination to Christianity, Watkins was able to present his case as one that was fulfilling the Christian ideals that meant so much to him. Termination would grant all of the opportunities blessed upon god-fearing Americans to the Klamaths.

From the testimonies of Watkins and his associates alone, one could attribute the passage of termination to the misguided ideals and moral agendas of a handful of powerful people. How could they have been familiar with the cultural and social intricacies of all of the groups that termination would affect? After all, they were not anthropologists or historians. They were lawmakers, trying to do something that they saw as positive. To write off their efforts so quickly would be a mistake however. For many people, from everyday citizens to bureau officials, who had worked with Indians for decades, came before the subcommittees with warnings. Their warnings were grounded in statistics and first-hand knowledge of the dangers that termination posed and held much more substance than the good intentions of the pro-terminationists.

The Assistant Secretary for Public Land Management, Orme Lewis, provided extremely pertinent advice very early in the hearings, pointing out that, “…there are the Indian attitudes. There you run into the situation of the conflicting interests of the young Indians and the older Indians, of the reservation Indians and the non-reservation Indians. There are a great many problems of that nature that necessarily have to be considered, and should be among the key things to be considered.” That may have been the best advice that Watkins was given. Ultimately there was no way to create legislation that met the interests of everyone, yet that is

42 Ibid., 275.
43 Ibid., 19.
what Watkins thought he was doing. On top of that, the termination law that Congress passed failed to satisfy even the Klamath faction that had originally been in favor of terminating.

In another exchange, Watkins questioned the Portland Area Director of the B.I.A., E. Morgan Pryse. The following is a short excerpt from their conversation:

Mr. Pryse: Most of them (the Klamath) would like to retain trust status as to their land, because they feel that once a patent is granted, it is just a question of time until it passes out of Indian ownership.

Representative Berry: What is your opinion on this? Do you think with a reasonably short time they will have disposed of their properties?

Mr. Pryse: If a bill was passed transferring fee simple title to them?

Representative Berry: Yes

Mr. Pryse: Well, I am afraid it would. I am afraid it would pass out of Indian ownership, a great portion of it, in a matter of a few years. That is just my personal opinion. I am not speaking for anyone else, or the Department, but since you asked me for my own personal opinion, that would be my opinion.

Senator Watkins: Is that because the Indian has not the ability to determine whether he ought to sell or not?

Mr. Pryse: Well, probably because they haven’t had the experience of making a living and providing for taxes and also withstanding the pressure of people to buy their property. (Author’s emphasis)

Pryse rightly predicted that after all was said and done the Klamath people would lose nearly their entire reservation land base. More importantly, he foretold some of the biggest problems that Klamaths would have: managing their money and adjusting to life under the jurisdiction of the state. Pryse had been working with the Klamath Tribe since the 1920s and his advice should have carried much more weight than it did.

During the same exchange, Pryse persisted in explaining that he felt the Klamath would not be able to sell their land with the same skill that the “average white man” in the area would.

44 Ibid., 217.
He attributed that to the fact that he did not think, “the Klamaths would have as much experience behind them as the average white man to deal in their property.” Watkins pushed Pryse to acknowledge that because there was an abundance of white men in the area who had expertise in dealing with the sales of property similar in make-up to the Klamath land, the Klamath would be able to find consultants from among the whites. Rather than face the very real issue at hand, which was the limited business experience of most Klamath, Watkins fantasized a best case scenario that failed to acknowledge any racial tension between white and Indian populations in Klamath County.45

Oregon state officials voiced their concerns as well. Mrs. Altha Urquhart, Administrator of the Klamath County Public Welfare Commission, spoke at the hearings to bring attention to the increased volume of welfare-recipients that the county would become responsible for under termination. Mrs. Urquhart tried to discuss the very real concern that county welfare agencies would expect to take on a larger financial burden as a result of termination. She suggested that federal funding be granted to Klamath County to conduct a study that would help to estimate and prepare for the growth in welfare recipients. She was greeted with hostility from Mr. Abbott, the Counselor for the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, who could only continue to suggest that new property tax revenue for Klamath County would surely cover the expected costs.46 Urquhart was supported by Francis Matthews, a juvenile probation officer for Klamath County, who expressed worry as to the volume of cases that would arise as the county began to take on the caseload formerly left for tribal officials.47

46 Ibid., 27.
When it came time for the Klamaths themselves to have their say, the committee members were subjected to some mixed messages. Although most of the testimony from Klamath Tribal members came in opposition to the proposed termination bill, including that from the official tribal representatives, some came to the hearings to voice their support of liquidating tribal assets. Watkins and other members of the subcommittee seemed to give credence to only those who favored termination.

Boyd Jackson came to Washington as the elected representative of the Klamath Tribe. He was well versed on the history of relations between the tribe and the federal government and well aware of the state that the Klamath reservation community was in. When Senator Watkins tried to convince Jackson of the supposed readiness of his own people, Jackson articulated the facts. In one case, Watkins tried to use his rhetoric to convince Boyd that termination was a gift:

Senator Watkins: We are not trying to take anything away from you. We are trying to give you something you did not have in the past.

Mr. Jackson: You did that before. You did that before in 1917, when we lost a hundred thousand acres of land. You pat us on the back and say, “Here, fellows, you are ready to go on your own,” and we fell flat.\(^{48}\)

Jackson was referring to a situation that occurred during which members of the tribe were issued fee patents for their land and subsequently turned most of it over to private buyers. The point here was that Jackson defied Watkins’ logic and tried to present him with legitimate concerns.

Shortly after that incident, Watkins again tried to assert that the Klamath people had the skills necessary to thrive after termination. Instead of presenting something factual, Watkins distorted testimony that he had heard earlier in the hearings. Jackson pointed out Watkins’ flaw, stating, “As to that, the superintendent, I thought, was quite clear when he said the planning of the budget was done by the officials of his staff and not by ourselves as members of the tribe.

\(^{48}\) Ibid., 261.
That is something that is fiction to us."\(^{49}\) Jackson tried to point out the obvious faults that the Klamath themselves had that Watkins consistently refused to acknowledge. Here, he made a very valid point; if the tribe were terminated and selected to remain as a corporate entity, they would have had no real experience in managing a budget as large as the tribe’s.

Perhaps the simplest, yet most jarring statement Jackson made was when he reminded the subcommittee that, “…to begin with we didn’t ask for this legislation.”\(^{50}\) The Klamath people had not requested that Congress draw up legislation to terminate their status as wards of the federal government. Rather, they were told that legislation was pending that would fundamentally change the system they had lived under for the previous ninety years. In the end, the only vote they got was whether to terminate or remain a tribal member under the trust status of a still undetermined corporate manager.

Person after person testified to the members of the subcommittee. Many Klamath people, both from Oregon and from other areas of the country, came to voice their opinion. Each had something different to say, but nearly all of them were unhappy with certain provisions of the termination bill. Some were opposed to it all together. One particularly important bit of dialogue came from Warren Wilder, a Klamath River Indian who lived in Humboldt County, California. He tried to convince the panel of the tension that existed between whites and Indians:

Watkins: You are not suggesting if you own clear title, without a lien or a mortgage, to a 1948 automobile you cannot borrow $100 on it?

Mr. Wilder: I could not borrow $100 (He went to 3 loan places in Klamath Falls who refused to give him a loan because he was Indian). That is how they feel toward Indians.

Watkins: When you say “toward Indians,” are you referring to the feeling toward Klamath Indians? Are you saying no Klamath Indians could borrow money on their automobiles in Klamath Falls?

\(^{49}\) Ibid., 262-263.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 267.
Mr. Wilder: One fellow told me: “If you bring in a 1953, in here, you could not get a loan.” That is why I tell you this; they don’t treat Indians like you think they do.  

The racial divide that existed in Klamath County and surrounding areas would prove disastrous once termination was passed. Watkins and his colleagues failed to acknowledge its existence.

As stated earlier though, not everyone came before Congress with bad things to say about termination. A faction whose members supported full termination also wanted their voices heard. They were led by Wade Crawford, whose appearance in Washington as a self-proclaimed representative of the Klamath Tribe, gave policymakers more reason to support termination. Crawford though, supported the proposed individual termination bill that had made its way to Congress in 1947. He saw many flaws of the termination legislation that was being discussed for the Klamaths, but gave his general support for termination. He was also there to attack Boyd Jackson. Crawford made claims that Jackson was not the true tribal representative because only a small percentage of eligible Klamath voters were involved in the election to send Jackson to Washington. Crawford chastised Jackson for not supporting a secret ballot referendum to hear opinions of termination in the General Council and for having his feet in the “tribal trough” and not wanting to get them out. Crawford continued by casting doubt upon the earlier testimony of Mr. Pryse that suggested tribal timber stands would bring in $2 million annually after 1960. Crawford rightly asserted that they would exhaust their high-grossing virgin stands and move to cutover lands, which would bring in less than half of what the virgin stands had been bringing in for the tribe. Crawford finished the day by presenting a petition, signed by 307 adult members of the Klamath Tribe, supporting Crawford as the tribal representative to Congress. The two signatures included in the Congressional record were from Klamath living off the reservation in

51 Ibid., 89.
52 The following paragraph summarizes testimony from Wade Crawford to the Joint Subcommittees: Ibid., 276-283.
California. Crawford’s support came largely from those living off of the reservation. They had no reason to defend their land and lacked the same cultural connection with the land that was held by members living on the reservation.

Based on the information and opinions presented during the hearings for the Klamath Termination Act, legislators should have seriously reconsidered the validity of the bill that was being discussed. As chairman of the Senate subcommittee on Indian Affairs, Arthur Watkins could have used his power to end the push for Klamath Termination. If nothing else, he could have worked to create a bill that would adhere to more of the wishes of tribal members. Instead, on August 13, 1954, Public Law 587 laid out a questionable plan to terminate the Klamath Tribe. Over the next seven years, Klamaths would have to scramble to prepare for a termination bill that they never had the opportunity to vote on. Minutes from meetings of the Klamath General Council and Executive Committee would illustrate the many problems that would follow passage of P.L. 587.
Termination did not come as a total surprise to members of the Klamath Tribe. Those who attended the General Council meetings and members of the Executive Committee had been discussing the possibility of termination for years before the law was actually passed. Unfortunately, out of the roughly 2,200 enrolled members of the tribe, only a small fraction regularly attended General Council meetings. Low attendance at General Council meetings led to a large percentage of the reservation population being admittedly confused when it came time for them to vote on whether to accept payment or remain in the tribe. The law was complicated and the intricate details would be hard to understand even for those who had an adequate education.

It was at meetings of these Klamath governing bodies that many of the shortfalls of termination came to light. Many members of the tribe were quickly able to see that termination was not going to happen smoothly and presented ideas for how to amend the existing legislation. For many, the only solution was to throw the law out altogether. The tribal members were not alone in expressing their discontent and alarm about the bill. As a provision in the bill, the tribe was forced to hire a team of three management specialists whose job would be to assist in carrying out termination. They, along with the tribes’ lawyers and state officials, openly discussed the problems that came with the bill. It is crucial to understand just how serious those problems were in order to realize the injustice that was embodied in the inaction of those policymakers who had claimed to care so much about American Indians.

Even more alarming was the misinformation that members of the tribal governing bodies were constantly subjected to. The mixed messages sent by government officials to tribal
delegates were suggestive of the generally unsympathetic stance of the government toward tribal needs and demands. One example came in a letter sent from Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Glenn Emmons, to the Portland Area Director for the B.I.A., E. Morgan Pryse. The letter, dated September 25, 1953, was made a part of the record of the September 29th meeting of the Klamath Executive Committee. One paragraph read:

We stress again the importance of having complete and thorough discussions with the Indians, local community officials, State officials and other interested parties concerning the requirement, purpose and development of the proposed legislation to be recommended to the Congress by the Secretary in response to House Concurrent Resolution 108. It should be clearly explained to the Indians and others that it is incumbent upon the Secretary to submit appropriate recommendations for the legislation; that the draft here transmitted is in fact a preliminary one offered for the purpose of initiating discussions with them in order to obtain their views, ideas, and suggestions in the undertaking.”

That information would suggest to tribal representatives that they were to have a strong hand in molding the termination legislation to fit their specific needs. Even further, if they were unhappy with what was presented, they would be able to ensure the well-being and livelihoods of their tribal members by opposing termination.

Most importantly, tribal members rightfully took issue with the lack of transparency concerning how exactly federal official decided that the Klamath Tribe would undergo termination. The Secretary of the Executive Committee discussed that very issue at a December 21st, 1954 meeting stating, “For clarification, I would like to say that the Klamath Tribe did not vote upon, nor ask for Public Law 587. Certain phases were requested by the tribe. But the complete bill was not considered by the Tribe as a whole.” A few weeks earlier at a Conference on Indian Affairs at the Portland Area Office of the B.I.A., the president of the Oregon governor’s Inter-State Council had acknowledged a similar problem:

53 Minutes of Executive Committee, September 29, 1953, p. 11, Klamath Tribal Council Records, Box 1.
54 Minutes of Executive Committee, December 21, 1954, p. 12, Klamath Tribal Council Records, Box 1.
Under Joint Resolution 108 the present Commissioner has been directed to prepare terminal legislation for designated groups. The reservation was chosen and then they went out to get the information that would prove that “x” reservation should be terminated. Consultation and planning with states, local governments, and the Indian people was practically non-existent.  

One more plea came during a May 24, 1956 General Council meeting from Executive Committee member Dorothea McAnulty: “I do not blame anyone for not understanding Public Law 587 or anything anybody is trying to do to carry it out because the people who passed the law in Congress don’t even know what to do about the law after they passed it. We are here helpless…”  

Many agreed that the opinions and desires of tribal members were not given their deserved attention by federal policymakers. On those grounds alone, the members of the Congressional subcommittees on Indian Affairs should have attempted to give the tribe more of a voice during the years in which termination was actually happening. Instead, they sat and watched as certain issues were identified but left unresolved. 

The most glaring issue was simply that many Klamath people living on the reservation did not comprehend what termination meant. Some thought that the term meant an end to the tribe’s relationship with the B.I.A., which would have been a welcome change for many. Many more failed to realize that termination marked the end of federal recognition of the Klamath tribe. The three appointed management specialists acknowledged the above problems in a letter to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Glenn Emmons dated January 20, 1956:

A great deal of work will have to be done to explain to the Klamath people these and other matters covered in Public Law 587. They are greatly confused at the present time, and unless a stepped-up information and education program is inaugurated, they will not know what they are voting for when called upon to decide whether or not to remain in the tribe.

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55 Transcript of Conference on Indian Affairs, December 1-3, 1954, p. 6, Klamath Tribal Council Records, Box 5.
56 Minutes of General Council Meeting, May 24, 1956, p. 20, Klamath Tribal Council Records, Box 5.
A great many of the members seem to believe, for example, that they can elect to receive their pro rata shares and at the same time be able to remain in the Tribe and participate in the Management plan.\textsuperscript{57}

The two-year anniversary of the passage of the Klamath Termination Act was approaching at the time the above letter was written. That report from the management specialists should have indicated to federal officials that termination for the Klamaths had been a mistake, yet nothing was done to stop the process.

Nine months after the above letter was received by the commissioner, a conference was held at the Multnomah Hotel in Portland, Oregon. Among the attendees were the commissioner and representatives of the Klamath Tribe. The same problem of tribal confusion was still being discussed. A government Indian agent brought up the fact that, “The folks…are thoroughly confused with all of these rumors and reports and statements – the rather adamant position that some people are taking. Of course, on the other hand, you have one group who are taking the position that there will be no amendments and the law will be carried through as it is. You have this situation – then you have this other – net result is you have confusion.”\textsuperscript{58} The above testimony indicated that important government officials were aware of the serious problems that were occurring on the Klamath Reservation. Although the law had been passed, the collective influence of those who saw that termination was not being carried out smoothly could have been used to stop or amend the law before it was too late.

As a result of a significant number of Klamaths not having a firm understanding of termination, there came about a problem of reservation residents not adequately preparing themselves for life after termination. Interestingly enough, the termination law required that an

\textsuperscript{57} Letter from Management Specialists to Glenn Emmons, January 20, 1956, Klamath Tribal Council Records, Box 2.

\textsuperscript{58} Transcript from Conference with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 17-18, 1956, p. 16, Klamath Tribal Council Records, Box 2.
educational assistance program be set up for tribal members; an indication that Watkins and the other subcommittees members may in fact have foreseen the realities of their bill. The program was intended to provide opportunities for vocational training to Klamaths who would need to integrate into surrounding economies. The endeavor was headed by Allan P. Jeffries who would praise the achievements of the small percentage of the tribe that chose to utilize the service. As late as January 1956 he had reported the program as a success. Whether his reported successes came from his own optimism in the program or a desire to please his superiors, Jeffries’ enthusiasm for the educational program would not last. He submitted his resignation as director of the programs in May of 1956 citing the tribal members’ lack of interest in and knowledge of the program.

It is troubling, to say the least, that on one hand, the Klamath Tribe was selected to undergo termination because of their status as one of the most advanced tribes in the nation, but on the other hand, the writers of the termination bill felt that tribal members would need a special training program to prepare them to take care of themselves without government aid. The educational provision of the bill was a clear indicator that government officials had looked at questionable measurement for tribal success when they tried to make their case for Klamath termination.

Allen Galbraith succeeded Jeffries as director of the Klamath education program. At the same September 1956 Portland conference where the Klamath peoples’ confusion was discussed, Galbraith gave his impressions of the education program, “Here is what the educational program is running into. The average Klamath is not interested. He is not interested in learning. Many of them maintain the bill will never be carried through – the termination will not be done – the bill

will be repealed or amended. With all that confusion, they are at a standstill.” Mr. Galbraith’s testimony brought up two key points. The first being that the Klamath people were not interested in the necessary lifestyle changes that had to come with a liquidation of the reservation. The second was the hope of many that termination would be repealed. Both of these notions brought the federal government’s position that termination would be carried out with the blessing of the tribe into question.

A third problem that was magnified by the passage of termination was the task of managing the reservation’s vast multitude of natural resources. As suggested earlier, maintenance of these resources was to be crucial in protecting access to tribal culture and traditions for future generations. Tribal hunting, fishing, and gathering relied on the continued existence of wildlife populations. The reservation’s boundaries housed delicate ecosystems that ranged from pristine marshland to one of the most valuable tracts of ponderosa forest in North America. Any mismanagement of those natural environments would have an effect on the entire Klamath Basin, the economy of which relied upon the controlled cutting of tribal timber and a stable timber market. Sale of timber allotments to private lumber interests would undoubtedly end in a boom-and-bust style destruction of those resources, and in turn, a disintegration of the region’s economic stability.

On June 4, 1956, the Executive Committee met with the tribal management specialists to discuss a letter that had notified Wyoming Senator Joseph O’Mahoney of the environmental concerns of the tribe. As a former chairman of both the subcommittee of Indian Affairs and the Committee of Interior and Insular Affairs, O’Mahoney was one of a minority of U.S. Senators who devoted any of his time to Indian affairs. The letter, mailed by the tribe’s legal team in Washington quoted tribal management specialist T.B. Watters, stating, “if this bill (P.L. 587) is
carried out as written and strictly followed, one of the finest stands of timber in the United States will be destroyed’; and ‘we will no longer have any timber there if it is sold as the bill (P.L. 587) requires…”60 The only plausible solution deduced by the tribal government and its specialists to the problem of timber management was purchase of the entire reservation forest by the federal government. That scenario would provide an ideal situation for sustained-yield management and ensure the continued existence of the tribal forests.

Further, the potential impact that clear-cutting could have on the entire Klamath Basin had been recognized as well. A letter from Secretary of the Interior Fred Seaton to Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn sent during the years that the tribe was preparing for termination stated, “The tremendously disruptive influence that rapid cutting of the Klamath forest would have on the economy of the area is not difficult to contemplate when it is realized that 40 per cent of the area’s economy is based on timber production, and that the Indian timber includes about 26 per cent of the total commercial forest area and 26 per cent of the sawtimber volume in Klamath County.”61 Government officials were aware of the potential for liquidation of Klamath timber assets to seriously disrupt the economic foundation of the entire region, yet this went on to happen.

Timber’s importance within the ecosystems of the reservation was recognized early on as well. The same letter noted above also pointed out that, “The influence which the Klamath Reservation forest has in reducing flood crests and stabilizing the flow of streams throughout the year is a contributing reason for preventing the timber from being cut to the minimum specifications of the state law.” Not only were water levels vital for the many farmers in the

60 Letter from Law Offices of Wilkinson, Cragun, Barker, & Hawkins to Senator Joseph O’Mahoney, June 1, 1956, Klamath Tribal Council Records, Box 2.
61 Letter from Fred Seaton to Sam Rayburn, Klamath Indian Tribes Materials, Box 1.
basin who relied on irrigation, but they were also depended upon by the fish that many Klamath people saw as an important cultural resource.

This chapter should make it clear that members of the Klamath Tribe and those who were working with the tribe to prepare for the final termination date brought many problems to light. Some of the problems noted should undoubtedly have put the whole idea of termination into question. Although the law had been passed there must have been steps that could have been taken to repeal the law, delay it inevitably, or prepare more for the very real dangers that termination brought for the people of the former Klamath reservation.

Instead, termination was carried out in a form that was extremely similar to the original draft of the bill. Although the final date of termination was pushed back until August of 1961, the bill still provided insufficient time for the tribe and its management specialists to ensure the smooth transition of tribal members into their new lives without federal assistance. Additionally, termination would inflict grave wounds upon Klamath culture and create issues of identity confusion for many members of the tribe. Many of the physical changes to the former reservation would be irreparable and ultimately put the tribe in a position that has left members trying to recover ever since.
FOUR

Identity Formation and Cultural Sustainability Post-Termination

When the final termination date came to pass, the realities of termination began to set in for all of those affected. The many Klamath people who had not understood the implications of the legislation would quickly discover that their old ways of life had been pulled out from under them. There were many quantifiable results of termination, such as a disproportionate level of Indian unemployment, family poverty, and self-reported survey data suggesting that Indians in Klamath County lacked both proper training and education for the jobs they competed for. Indian respondents also perceived racist attitudes from employers with many attributing those attitudes to be the reason for their difficulty in finding employment.

Alcoholism rates soared as the average life span of a Klamath person in Klamath County began to look more like a number to expect in data from the Third World. Data showed an alarmingly low percentage of the Klamath population living passed the age of forty. Alcohol-related deaths were the most common causes of lives being cut tragically short. For those Klamaths who turned to alcohol to dull the pain of their existence, identity confusion, hopelessness, and a loss of positive cultural traditions could help to explain increased levels of substance abuse.62

I would argue that termination was a direct harbinger of the cultural deconstruction that would motivate former Klamath tribal members to face identity crises that led to alcoholism and death for at least some of the population. It is extremely crucial that readers understand that many of the Klamaths living off of the reservation did benefit from the checks that came with termination. They were able to invest their money in their businesses, homes and other assets as

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they had done their entire lives. The majority of Klamaths who benefited from termination had been fully assimilated for much of their lives. This is not to say that they had never encountered racism or alienation because of their ethnicity, but that they were well-versed in the ways of the white world and knew how to survive in a world that praised cutthroat competition. Even some Klamaths who had spent their entire lives on the reservation were also able to wisely invest their newfound monies and use them to establish a comfortable life for themselves and their families.

Again though, the focus of this paper is on those who suffered from termination in ways that can not necessarily be measured; those who faced issues related to identity and culture. Identity formation has always been a process that individuals go through in their own individualized ways. Identity development has strong ties to familial and community relationships, cultural practices, and the very make-up of the society in which one comes of age. Termination changed all of those factors and hindered healthy identity formation on a number of different levels. In one respect, those who had been traditionally-oriented members of the tribe found themselves thrust into a world that was unlike the one they had grown up in. They had to learn to cope with a nearly complete loss of their traditional way of life. On another level, young people born after 1954 had to come into adulthood as unrecognized members of an Indian tribe that no longer legally existed. Their parents and grandparents, who in many cases would have been the strongest aides in identity formation, were going through identity crises of their own, leaving a generation to formulate who they were for themselves. Furthermore, Klamath Indians had to deal with factionalizing among their own people; those who remained in the tribe versus those who withdrew. Some Klamath people even suffered alienation from outside in how they were perceived by others in Indian Country.
Social scientists have developed terminology that seeks to aid in studies of human identity development. This research has aided in the effort to operationalize certain terms related to identity that are very difficult to measure. I will attempt to incorporate the findings and theories developed out of sociological research done by various researchers including James E. Côté, Margaret Mead, and David Riesman to give my assertions a solid foundation. When coupled with sociological theories about identity development, the testimony of tribal members will illustrate that termination did uproot traditional lives enough to affect tribal identity formation.

In an article published in the *Journal of Adolescence*, James E. Côté outlined a framework for what he described as the “culture – identity link.” Based on the social structural periods listed in the article, the Klamath Reservation in the first half of the 20th Century would have fallen somewhere between a pre-modern and early-modern societal classification. The basic distinction between the two was that the former would be an agrarian society and the latter would be an industrial society. Because of the extremely rural nature of the reservation, it would be inaccurate to describe the Klamath homeland as a late-modern society, as it was lacking defining features such as “technology supplanting labor,” and “production decline in relative importance to consumption.” The labor intensive nature of reservation work and the relationship that many traditional Klamath people still participated in with the land also discounted a late-modern classification.

Many Klamaths who did identify strongly as Indians through their participation in cultural rituals, traditional religions, and familial and communal relationships developed those identities through a combination of postfigurative and cofigurative learning. The first

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emphasized a more traditional type of development in which children learned directly and predominantly from their parents. The second described a system in which children and adults learned from their peers.\(^64\) Indeed, the large communal networks that were so popular amongst traditionally-oriented Klamath populations would have been critical in identity development. Adults would continue to develop their personal identities through relations with other Klamaths and children would come of age with a strong understanding of their own heritages.

Termination brought with it the breaking up of what had been an intact bloc of reservation land. As over three-quarters of the tribe withdrew their membership, they lost access to their familial land holdings and the activities that had formerly brought the tribe together. As described in an earlier chapter, many of the events that brought large networks of people together were directly reliant upon open access to the land. Morrie Jimenez described his impression of the results of termination that he witnessed as a specialist in Indian education working in Oregon for the decades after termination:

There for a long while it was very difficult to find that kind of information, that kind of material, so we had to rely upon what we could remember for younger people who didn't grow up with that, who were unable to take advantage of that. Those are the youngsters that have created a lot of concern for me, because in my business I run into a lot of Native American youngsters who have no idea, have not had the pleasure of growing up in that traditional kind of existence, and it's sad when you run into them, because they're all searching.\(^65\)

As a man who was in his twenties for most of the 1950s, Morrie had been lucky enough to grow up and establish a strong understanding of who he was and what traditional Klamath life was like. The generation after Morrie had to come into adulthood during a time so tumultuous that it looked nothing like the world in which Morrie had established his identity.

\(^{64}\) Ibid., 418.
\(^{65}\) Morrie Jimenez, interview by Kesler, Session 5.
Findings by sociologist David Riesman supported the idea that losing the very lifestyle enjoyed by those who came from traditionally-oriented families had its affects on identity-development. Riesman suggested that in pre-modern societies, “important relationships of life [are]…controlled by careful and rigid etiquette, learned by the young during the years of intensive socialization that end with initiation into full adult membership.”\textsuperscript{66} Although Klamath children were subjected to other forces in their identity development, such as peers, teachers, and relatives that may not have been of Klamath descent, those who lived on the reservation with families who did remain in touch with their Klamath ancestry would have lost much of the traditional Klamath influence in their periods of “intensive socialization.” As stated earlier, individual Klamaths reported learning the most about themselves and their cultural backgrounds as a result of interactions with large communities of Klamath people who retained their ties to traditional cultural rituals. When those large communities no longer had the reservation as a setting to gather, the very nature of Klamath life naturally changed, leaving many young people to establish their identities without that cultural reinforcement.

Some of those living on the reservation reflected about the breakdown of the social networks that were fundamental in identity development. Modesto Jimenez remembered that “our family used to all get together, thirty five, forty, for holidays, Christmas, Thanksgiving. Seems like, just to get together it was, always. Bring back the memories of when I was a child, going to the situation, I think Termination really took that away from us for a long time.”\textsuperscript{67} When per capita payments stopped coming in for Klamath families, it became harder to maintain a household in the small, rural, communities on the reservation. Reservation resident Lynn

\textsuperscript{67} Modesto Jimenez, interview by Kesler, Session 8.
Schonchin opined that, “…it was much easier to move to Klamath Falls and live than to live that far out.” Those small communities that Indians began to move out of were harbors for traditional people. As families moved into larger and more diverse towns, they lost access to different socializing groups. For young people, those socializing groups were their means to understanding Klamath culture, traditions, and identity.

Since over half of the enrolled Klamaths were minors at the time of termination, it is fair to say that a large group faced a jarring lifestyle change during the formative years of their development. When those young people were forced to move out of traditionally-oriented communities and into places like Klamath Falls, they would have been subjected to a barrage of different influences. Although it could be argued that those Indians who relocated to larger population centers would have access to more opportunities, those who argue that would have to remember that notable hostilities existed between white and Indian communities throughout the 20th Century. Additionally, that argument poses a problem in that it suggests that the lives of those who did not maintain close ties to their cultural backgrounds had lives that were somehow better than those of Klamaths who did live traditionally. Because of that, I would argue that Klamath people, especially minors who were still developing an understanding of who they were, and moved to cities as a result of termination, faced largely negative influences on their development of a Klamath identity.

Morrie Jimenez took that idea even further when he suggested that, “Termination interfered with a lot of our people's perception of who they were and where they needed to go, and that traditional belief system, because it, it implied that we were no longer people.”

68 Lynn Schonchin, interview by Kesler, Session 11.
69 Meeting with Commissioner of Indian Affairs and old and new members of Klamath Tribe Executive Committee, October 29, 1956, Klamath Tribal Council Records, Box 2.
70 Morrie Jimenez, interview by Kesler, Session 4.
is much validity to his argument. When family and community networks broke down after termination, Klamath people saw dramatically less of their culture being practiced. Many adults suffered tremendously as they saw the culture that they had grown up with begin to disintegrate; at least they had been able to experience it. For young people who had never established a strong cultural understanding to begin with, the implications of termination would be even worse. Klamath youth would miss those experiences all together. Lynn Schonchin suggested that as a result of termination, “we lost a whole generation. And that generation's my mother's generation. And that was the grandparents to be handing down to this generation, and so that's had an effect on us too. We were lucky we got to grow up with grandparents.” He continued by pointing out that, “…when we look at demographics of the tribe today, our elder population is like 3%, where it probably should be like 14, 16, 18% somewhere in there. And so, we've, you know, that's one thing that hurt the tribe.”71 Termination created a generational gap that would reduce the power of tribal elders, both parents and grandparents, to effectively aid younger people in forming their identities.

Termination forced the people on the Klamath reservation to be exposed and integrated much more deeply into the late-modern societies of Klamath Falls and other large towns and cities. Sociologists assert that late-modern societies embrace a prefigurative culture in which, “there is less conception of what the future holds for offspring, and the life-experiences of parents are of less use to offspring,” and “their guidance is less highly regarded.”72 Indeed, the future for Klamaths after termination was extremely uncertain and for many indiscernible. The influence of the primary sources of guidance for young people in identity development diminished as their experiences and lessons became more detached from the world that Klamath

71 Lynn Schonchin, interview by Kesler, Session 11.
youth had been pushed into by termination. Added to that was the rapidly decreasing life expectancy that brought about the disappearing of a segment of elders in the Klamath population. All of those factors created an environment that made identity development extremely confusing and even painful for Klamath people.

At the same time that former reservation Klamaths faced an internal struggle to establish strong identities, they saw a shift in how they were perceived by outside groups. Morrie Jimenez described the attitudes he was subjected to by other Native peoples when he traveled to Indian communities in Oregon to help assess the educational needs of Native schoolchildren. From his extensive interaction with other indigenous peoples in the years after termination he perceived, “a situation where we were being identified by others and eventually ourselves as non-entities.” He went on to describe the anger that came when he, “met other Native American people who questioned our integrity, who questioned, based upon, and our existence as a native people, primarily because we allowed the government to do that to us.”

Because of the ways that the government advertised termination to Native groups, as a transformation that a tribe could choose to embark upon, it was only natural that some Indians who were able to remain federally recognized understood termination as something that the Klamath and other terminated tribes requested. As a result of misinformation distributed by U.S. federal officials who supported termination, many Klamath people who had identified strongly as Indians were left in an unwelcome position in a time during which, historians Troy Johnson, Duane Champagne, and Joane Nagel have suggested, “Indian resistance to U.S. policies was galvanized by the common threat of termination of reservation and tribal status.”

73 Morrie Jimenez, interview by Kesler, Session 4.
Indeed, at the same time that the Klamath Indians were undergoing termination, a growing sense of pan-tribal identity was bringing together Indian activists across the United States. There was a burgeoning sense of pride resurging amongst Indian people that had been largely repressed by the dismal state of affairs for Indian over the preceding decades. Termination left Klamath people, no longer legally Indians, in a place that made attempts at integration into other indigenous communities and indigenous movements difficult. Current Klamath tribal chairman Joe Kirk described his experience moving to the Navajo reservation shortly after termination. He recounted, “You have the greater Indian community rejecting you socially; when I moved to the Navajo reservation and I told them I was a Klamath, immediate rejection, I mean, hard…”\textsuperscript{75} Still, some Klamaths had found places for themselves in pan-tribal organizations. We will discuss the ways in which Klamaths identified with, integrated into, and utilized the growing Indian movements that were developing concurrently with termination later. For now, we must look deeper at how termination altered the land and affected cultural sustainability.

\textbf{FIVE}

\textbf{Land, Culture, and Identity}

I spent much of the first half of this paper establishing connections that existed between Klamath culture and the land that the Klamath Tribe traditionally inhabited. Some of those

\textsuperscript{75} Joe Kirk, interview by author, January 15, 2009.
cultural rituals like hunting, fishing, and gathering were obviously dependent upon the careful management of the environment enclosed by the reservation borders. Subsistence hunting was only possible if populations of deer, bear, elk, and other game were not over-hunted or forced to permanently migrate off of the reservation. Similarly, various fish species thrived because of the clean and abundant waters that flowed through Klamath County. The continuance of the ability for people to hunt and fish meant not only that Klamath people would need to enjoy unrestricted access to their ancestral land, but also that their land would be carefully taken care of.

Gathering relied upon the same principles. Although an activity no longer relied upon for survival, it had been one way in which Klamath people had maintained ties to their history. The ability to gather hinged upon Klamath people being able to move freely about the reservation in pursuit of abundant gathering sites. If the land was parceled off into private allotments or offered only restricted access, gathering would no longer be possible. More importantly, the interactions and lessons that could be extracted from a day gathering with close friends and relatives were lost when termination made the activity itself unrealistic to carry out. Further, gathering lost its importance as an aid in identity development as its practice dwindled.

In the same ways that certain Klamath rituals were directly made possible by the land through easily observable connections, for some, Klamath spirituality was also tied to life on the tribe’s ancestral homeland. Testimony by Klamath tribal members in both congressional hearings and interviews suggested that there was a fundamental psychological attachment to the very land within the reservation’s boundaries. The Klamath tribe had inhabited the same region for thousands of years. Their ancestors were buried in the forests and marshes that were part of everyday life. Their stories and traditions came out of the tribe’s close relationship to the land. Similar to many other Native American tribes, Klamath people had historically undertook an
event most popularly coined as a vision quest. Young people used the land as a way to gain access to adulthood and needed their land to fulfill that rite of passage. Although the vision quest had lost its literal importance as the tribe moved through the 20th Century, the idea of an intimate relationship between a Klamath person and the land remained for many.

When termination finally came to pass, the cohesion that existed on the former reservation disappeared. Tracts of land once held communally became privately owned. Additionally, many bought new homes and property nearer to larger city centers or in other parts of the state. The majority of the reservation land mass went into the ownership of the federal government. Klamath people would now have to deal with the U.S. Forest Service and their regulations when attempting to access land. The Klamath Marsh fell into the hands of the United States government as well. Although, treaty rights still gave Klamath people full legal access to the land, complications arose as land that had been previously owned communally came under private ownership.

Morrie Jimenez saw termination as a further impetus for the breakdown in relationships between tribal members. Before termination, there had been diverse viewpoints and political stances coming from different tribal members. The reservation had brought together peoples from three different tribal entities and forced them to live and govern together. Although factionalizing had occurred on many lines and was further enflamed by termination proceedings, the reservation had fostered an environment in which compromise was necessary for progress. Jimenez suggested:

We have, real diverse political viewpoint, political perspectives as to what's best for the Klamath people. And I think, a lot of it has to do with the fact that we don't remember how important negotiating with each other was. We don't, we don't remember that, there's
always been a place for respect in how we deal with people and how we treat each other.”

Termination forcibly separated members of the tribe. The factions that formed in response to federal termination seemed to present the most virulent rivalries amongst tribal members for decades. Bitterness within the tribe would interrupt the pattern of mutual cooperation and cross-generational education that had been a crucial factor in cultural vitality and identity development.

Tribal member Morrie Jimenez did not fail to recognize that despite the break in tribal communication brought by termination, the loss of the land was still the most devastating consequence, suggesting that:

…it the most critical impact, that we had with the Termination process, was the loss of the land base, and all that went with the land base: the water resources, the hunting, the fishing, the gathering resources, the cultural experiences that were afforded to us as a result of having a land base. That's been the most difficult hurdle for us as a, one tribal unit in dealing with, because without those, without that natural resource, without an, that former environment that we had, right now, it's very difficult to continue to sustain our cultural belief systems, our cultural traditions and customs.

Taking hunting as an example, one can detect several ways that termination of the reservation would affect hunting as a Klamath cultural institution. Primarily, the federal government became the owner of the forests and marshes in which Klamath people hunted. Treaty rights guaranteed Klamath people the right to hunt, fish, and gather on their ancestral homeland even after termination, but the average Klamath County park ranger or U.S. Forest Service officer was not an expert in Indian law. Termination created confusion between the law and those who were left to enforce it. Tribal rights to hunt and fish were only reaffirmed in two Supreme Court decisions that came in the early 1970s.

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76 Morrie Jimenez, interview Kesler, Session 3.
77 Morrie Jimenez, interview by Kesler, Session 14.
On top of dealing with local law enforcement officials, Klamaths would also have to negotiate with new owners of what had formerly been Indian property. If fishing meant accessing water that was fenced-in by a new non-Indian property owner, fishing would not be the same activity it had been when the reservation existed. As a result, fishing would not be as heavily practiced as it could not carry the same cultural value that it did when it was occurring on Indian land. Morrie Jimenez commented on this problem when he stated, “those of us who remained in the Klamath County area continue to, can have continued to sustain as much of the traditional belief system, but it's difficult. It's been difficult over the years without, without a support, governmental support system to assist us in our efforts to sustain what it was that we thought and we think is most important in life.” Jimenez was correct in noticing that the federal government had gone from a protector of Klamath cultural rights to an obstacle in carrying out those same traditions.

Losing the reservation brought with it psychological consequences as well. It was easy to see how hunting and fishing would be difficult when the reservation ceased to exist, but it is also important to understand how termination affected Klamath people’s feeling of connectedness to the land. Tribal member Delphine Jackson explained how termination affected her when she recalled, “I got to know what area was our land, and it was sad for me to think that the land would no longer be ours in a few years, and I knew for me, that it was definitely a loss that I don't think our people would ever regain.” A December 5, 1974 New York Times article, “Klamath Indians Collect $49-Million for Tribal Lands,” brought similar tribal views to light. Donald Schonchin, a Klamath man who had selected to remain in the tribe in the termination election eventually received payment for his land along with the other remaining members in the

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78 Delphine Jackson, interview by Kesler, Session 16.
early 1970s. Schonchin recounted sadly, “I know what we had to give up to get the money.” If there was any one indicator of government ignorance toward the cultural needs of Klamath people, it came in the form of termination payments. The very idea that a people’s identity could not be bought from them was something that policymakers either failed to understand or simply refused to acknowledge.

The idea of the Klamath reservation as a permanent and eternal home for tribal members was extremely popular as well. Tribal member and leader Dorothea McAnulty commented, “…I had always felt from the time I was a child that this Reservation – our people I have talked to have always felt that the Reservation was a permanent home for all time…” during a 1956 meeting between tribal representatives and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and other government officials.79 Tribal representative Boyd Jackson expressed similar sentiments in a 1954 meeting of the Klamath Executive Committee: “This is a home to us and we want to keep it.”80 For a people whose entire culture, religion, and history developed around a particular piece of land, termination had grave implications.

Hunting was not necessarily just about hunting. It was about hunting particular tracts of forests, areas of the reservation that had been hunted by a certain family or community for generations. Fishing was more than a way to gather food. Fishing meant a deep, and for some, spiritual interaction with particular species of fish that had provided tribal sustenance for thousands of years. Gathering was not an activity that a Klamath family could continue to carry out in another region of the state or country. The ability to gather came from an intimate knowledge of the land and the plants that it supported. Information regarding gathering sites and

79 Meeting with Commissioner of Indian Affairs and old and new members of Klamath Tribe Executive Committee - Interior Building, Portland, OR, October 29, 1956, Klamath Tribal Council Records, Box 2.
80 Meeting of Klamath Executive Committee, December 21, 1954, Klamath Tribal Council Records, Box 1.
what to gather was knowledge that was passed down through family lines. Termination created a schism between those generations that had learned all of those cultural lessons and those whose access to that culture had been severed.

Thus, the reservation had also provided a teaching tool that enabled elders to pass on cultural traditions to younger members of the tribe. Messages could be communicated with the land providing visual reinforcement of those messages. Losing the land meant that a Klamath person could not easily access areas of the former reservation that may have been important for certain lessons. For example, Morrie Jimenez described, “our cathedral included the view, vista of the Cascade Mountains, and its individual peaks, each with their individual unboundless stories of creation, mysticism, ethics and values, applications and humor.”\(^{81}\) When people moved out of rural areas of the reservation and attempted to assimilate, those views would naturally take on a secondary role for people. As life changed for Klamath citizens, especially the young Indians who had not had a chance to see Klamath culture carried out, life lessons from parents and other elders would not hold as much weight.

Of course, termination did not completely eliminate all traces of Klamath culture. As can be seen from the Klamath restoration effort that began immediately after the date of final termination in August of 1961, tribal members would fight for decades to reinstate a foundation for perpetuating Klamath traditions and culture. However, termination did change the ways in which cultural activities would look for later generations of Klamath people. Because of the physical changes in the reservation landscape, the cultural rituals listed throughout this chapter would be put in grave danger. With that said, let us now look at how the transfer of ownership of

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81 Morrie Jimenez, interview by Kesler, Session 3.
the reservation led to some irreparable alterations of the physical landscapes of the Klamath ancestral homeland.

SIX

Environmental Destruction and Land Mismanagement
In his book, *Termination and Relocation*, Donald Fixico puts together a very convincing argument supporting the idea that termination was primarily motivated by the greed of the federal government. Fixico declared the lumber interests to be the true beneficiaries of termination, with non-Indian conservationists fighting more to retain the land than the livelihood of the Klamath people.\(^{82}\) His theory certainly holds sway when analyzed in the scheme of federal relations with indigenous people since contact. In the case of the Klamath, the federal government paid significantly less for tribal land than tribal officials would have liked. Failing to take into consideration sub-surface mineral deposits, water rights, and the fact that timber from the former reservation would eventually generate hundreds of millions of dollars for the federal government; the United States practically stole the reservation from the Klamath people.

Legal scholars Charles F. Wilkinson and Eric R. Biggs have gone further pointing out that, “The check did not compensate for the loss of federal benefits or the new tax burdens. It could not pay for the loss of tribal governmental authority, or compensate for the discrimination that followed in the state agencies and courts. Perhaps most tragic of all, the check could not possibly pay for the psychological costs of ‘not being Indian any more’”\(^{83}\) Although it can not be proven that greed was a factor in the push for federal termination, the hypothesis is far from ungrounded. What can be shown however is that the reservation changed immensely as its management was no longer controlled by the governing bodies of the Klamath Tribe.

The large number of withdrawing tribal members presented a problem to state and federal officials as well as members of the tribe who hoped to remain on the former reservation and continue practicing their culture. Offering the allotments of withdrawing members to private

\(^{82}\) Fixico, *Termination and Relocation*, 185.

lumber companies would probably generate more money for the tribe, but would ensure the clear cutting of some of the most valuable timber stands in North America. Sustained-yield management, as had been practiced while the reservation was under the leadership of the Klamath Tribe, required access to large blocs of timber. Small lots could not produce significant profits under sustained-yield provisions. With a Stanford Research Institute Report predicting that a majority of tribal members would select to withdraw, the federal government would need to come up with a substantial sum of money while still attempting to preserve the reservation’s resources.

To solve the problem at hand, Oregon Senator Richard Neuberger introduced S. 2047 into the Senate in 1957.\textsuperscript{84} The bill proposed federal acquisition of the Reservation timberlands and management of the former tribal assets by the United States Forest Service. He also suggested that the marshlands be acquired by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for proper management. Interior Secretary Fred Seaton also introduced a bill, S. 3051, requiring that the part of the forest to be sold for payments to withdrawing members would first be offered to private purchasers at no less than the appraised land value and subject to sustained-yield requirements. Seaton’s bill would then have the Secretary of Agriculture purchase the remaining forest tracts for incorporation into the U.S. National Forest system. S. 3051 passed on August 23, 1958 with an amendment calling for the complete reappraisal of tribal lands which ultimately resulted in a significantly lesser appraisal value being determined.

In the end, the Secretary of Agriculture would be forced to purchase 525,680 acres of forest for $68,716,691 million in 1959. The land would become Winema National Forest. The 474 tribal members who elected to have their assets managed by a private trustee and to

\textsuperscript{84} The following paragraph summarizes Hood, “Termination of the Klamath Indian Tribe of Oregon,” 385-386.
“remain” in the tribe saw their 135,000 acres of forest come under the control of the United States National Bank of Portland. After over ten years of a very troubled relationship between the National Bank and the remaining members, the final 474 sold their land back to the federal government and formally withdrew.85

Throughout the years that Klamath people no longer had a say in the management of their land, mismanagement led to severe problems for the tribe and residents of the greater Klamath Basin. Clear cutting altered landscapes that had provided spiritual fulfillment to tribal members. It also affected the flow of the snow melt which in turn altered water levels that supported various fish populations. Certain cutting practices would also lead to a change in the composition of bodies of water that ensured the survival of fish. Water rights became an issue that has plagued the tribe into the present day. Hunting was severely affected as non-Klamath people could enjoy full access to the former reservation for the first time ever. Sport and subsistence hunting alike from outsiders would dramatically reduce populations of game and in turn hurt Klamath chances at cultural sustainability.

The tribal forests had played many roles in the lives of Klamath people and the residents of the Klamath Basin. Mills that processed annual cuts of reservation timber provided jobs for tribal members and non-Indians alike. If there was to be a chance for Klamath people to rapidly assimilate into local communities, lumber mills would have been a primary source of employment for those who had worked infrequently during the pre-termination days when per capita payments came regularly. Unfortunately, the Klamath tribe lost control of its timber assets with the onset of termination. Morrie Jimenez brought up one of the problems that came with said loss of ownership:

85 Ibid., 387.
I learned that the majority of all the timber that was being cut in the Klamath basin was going to Coos Bay for processing and eventually sail (sic) overseas, and that was also happening at Coos Bay. They were shipping a lot of that timber resource overseas. Eventually the Klamath basin still today suffers from a lack of a lumber economy, and it just didn't make sense to me, at that particular time, why they were allowing that to happen.”

Indeed, many of the towns that existed in and around the former reservation were centered on the lumber economy that was sustained by careful management of Klamath timber.

When mills that had relied on Klamath Reservation timber began to close as a result of the shipment of area timber overseas, tensions between white and Klamath residents of Klamath County must have increased. The confusion that came with termination most often seemed to come out in the form of people believing that termination was a policy brought upon the Klamath people by request. As the mills had employed large numbers of non-Klamath people, any perception that the mills closing could be blamed on the Klamath Tribe would naturally decrease levels of acceptance of Klamath people by surrounding white community members.

Culturally speaking, the virgin timber stands protected by the boundaries of the reservation had provided a spiritual sanctuary for tribal members that retained their connection to tribal religion. Federal alterations of the land got in the way of tribal members’ access to those environments. For example, Morrie Jimenez described how, “There was so much of that land that had become federal government and so there were many parts there that we couldn't get to because of fences or because of signs that prevented us from getting back in those areas again.” He continued by pointing out that when people did manage to access those former parts of the reservation, they would often find that, “…so much of that area had been clear cut. Many of the actual stands of timber that made up our cultural heritage were gone.”

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87 For a discussion of the importance of timber to the economy of the Klamath Basin, see Theodore Stern, The Klamath Tribe, Chapter 10.
88 Morrie Jimenez, interview by Kesler, Session 6.
Jimenez also perceived much of the reservation’s resources as being poorly handled by logging companies and the federal government. Modesto commented, “…we can go up and show you land up, further up, where there's a lot of clear cutting…” Clear cutting posed numerous problems environmentally and economically for the region. Specifically, clear cutting dramatically changed the layout of the landscape. For those tribal members who did describe a sense of spiritual or cultural connectivity to the land itself, clear cutting would damage that relationship.

Delphine Jackson described her feelings of shock when she returned to the reservation after termination. She remembered:

> When years ago, when I used to drive down 97, it was like a corridor, it was dark, timber, heavy timber on both sides, and now, when I looked through the trees, I could see the hills and the mountains, you know, that I'd never seen before, and it really began to get me. I thought, "wow, you know what's happening here?" And as I got closer to Chiloquin, I could see where many roads had changed and timber was being cut in different areas, and I knew that this was going to be different, but it was shocking, because I don't think I was really prepared to see what I saw.¹⁰

Again, the psychological implications of termination and the transfer of land ownership were immense. The idea that tribal members no longer had a say in the management of the land that they had regarded as theirs since time immemorial did not sit well with many Klamath people. Additionally, the cutting practices described above affected all of the cultural rituals that have been discussed so far.

Another way in which the former reservation was modified was through the building of roads. New roads affected cultural development and continuity in two ways. The first way was pointed out by Delphine Jackson who stated, “they put a big highway across the marsh, and again the land changed even for the birds, because a lot of that marsh area was taken out, was

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¹⁰ Delphine Jackson, interview by Kesler, Session 16.
drained out, because of the, what they were building, and so, I feel for the animals as well as for our own people, because I know that the environment changed.”

Road construction directly affected the ecosystems of the former reservation. Those ecosystems were linked to Klamath people’s ability to hunt, gather and fish.

Roads also affected the tribe in more symbolic ways. The reservation had belonged to the Klamath, Modoc, and Yahooskin people. Tribal members who chose to live on the reservation were often deeply familiar with navigating the land. That knowledge of the environment allowed for elders to pass on certain cultural traditions to younger generations.

Jackson recounted her personal experience with encountering new roadways on the reservation and how that affected her feeling of attachment to the land base:

“…the old roads that I used to know were not, they were no longer there, and I actually got lost. I’d never gotten lost before, in the dark you know. It was really upsetting because it was something that I knew almost like the back of my hand, and then they go in and then wonder where I was, and I think perhaps, this is how the Termination affected our people. One time we knew where were, we had a land, we had a lifestyle, we had families and once the termination came, it, it was different, and I feel that a lot of people, lot of our people got lost, and I think their children are lost right now, because they didn't have what we had.”

When officials from the U.S. Forest Service and other government agencies altered the road systems on the former reservation, they impeded tribal members from being able to travel through their homeland in the same ways they had in the past. When faced with that impediment, older tribal members would find it difficult and sometimes impossible to convey the importance of the land to younger people who never knew the reservation as it had been before termination.

Environmental degradation had some of its worst effects on the fish population that had once been heavily relied on for survival and later acted as a tremendously important cultural
resource. The downfall of the population of sucker fish on the former reservation was one topic that most of those interviewed seemed to be concerned with. Tribal members brought up a few ways in which the fish in the waters of Klamath County were harmed by poor land management.

For one, the quality of the water found on the reservation changed as a result of adjustments in grazing and logging practices. Modesto Jimenez commented, “Well, the biggest issue, I see is, up the basin, up the water basin, they have a lot of cattle up there, and we figure there's about a hundred thousand head of cattle, that, the waste material and everything else, pesticides and everything it goes into our streams and it comes into the lake.”92 Fish species suffered as changes in water composition combined with new patterns in water levels. Lynn Schonchin gave his impassioned opinion in regards to one of the many factors that negatively affected Klamath water. He remarked:

“But the Forest Service cut off the top of the mountain. There's no trees to shade the snow pack to hold it. And so you got a quick melt, and not that slow melt through the whole spring. And so, and that's another equation that's never been brought into this, is look what we've done to the forest, and removal of brush and everything that holds moisture: we've removed it all.”93

Just as salmon populations in the Pacific Northwest were decimated by over-fishing, damming, and other changes to the land, the sucker fish, a vital resource for many Klamath people, was slowly decimated as well.

Morrie Jimenez contributed additional observations as to what caused the downfall of the once abundant sucker fish:

When they started selling the land around the lake, and then farmers came in and started draining big portions of that, and then that created a problem with the food habitat for the fish and then when they started leasing more reservation land upriver, along the banks of

92 Modesto Jimenez, interview by Kesler, Session 8.
93 Lynn Schonchin, interview by Kesler, Session 11.
the river, and they started bringing in, developing, cattle ranches and then the deposits that the cattle left along the banks of the river created a problem for us also and when they started clear cutting those big areas and the water, the water was impacted also by the clear cut, all the runoff that went in the river, and the silt…٩٤

Morrie’s input seemed like something that anyone could foresee, yet no precautions were taken to avoid the ecological disaster that ensued.

A spring 1985 issue of the Klamath Tribune reported on the desperate situation for fish in the Klamath Basin. The article, entitled “Mullet Study Continues for Third Year,” covered a mullet study headed by biologist Craig Bienz that had been undertaken to figure out what had happened to the once abundant fish and. The article read, “The Sucker is a subsistence food of the Klamath and in recent years the numbers of this fish have reduced dramatically.” And not only had the sucker fish nearly disappeared from the area, but the fish itself had changed over the years. Morrie Jimenez commented that, “The suckers then, today, when you talk about suckers today, or white fish today, you're talking about small scavenger fish; back in those, in that period of time on the reservation, that lake was so profuse with food for the fish and the birds and the geese and everything else and the wildlife, those suckers were as big as salmon…”٩٥

As a result of the tremendous changes to the sucker fish, Klamath people could no longer continue to maintain the cultural rituals that came with harvesting the fish. They had no choice. If there were to be sucker fish in the future, they could not put any more stress on the already endangered population. The loss of this aspect of Klamath culture would further impair young people’s ability to identify as Klamath or to forge strong ties to their history. On top of that, the necessary decrease in fishing widened the gap that existed between older and younger

٩٥ Morrie Jimenez, interview by Kesler, Session 2.
Klamath people. The older people lost another means to connect with a younger generation that in the past would have expected to learn valuable lessons from their elders.

Of course, not everyone was affected by these physical changes in the landscape. Those Klamath who had never lived on the reservation could continue their lives as they always had. Even some who did live on the reservation did not maintain strong ties to traditional culture. However, the fact was that a large segment of Klamath people did feel the greatly negative impact that poor land management had on their everyday lives and culture. These people did not concede defeat though. Instead, from the moment that the reservation was terminated, a battle for federal restoration of tribal rights was begun. The Klamath Tribe and many other terminated tribes did not simply lie down and accept the fate that U.S. officials had decided for them. They fought back.
Battles for tribal restoration flared up across the country in response to federal termination. The most heavily publicized was the fight of the Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin. Their former reservation was extremely similar to the former Klamath Reservation. It was home to tremendously valuable timber resources and stood to make significant profits for its owners. The Menominee people formed a tribal corporation to manage their assets upon termination of their tribe. The tribal corporation saw its share of problems and ultimately proved to represent everything but the interests of the tribe. In fact, the tribe lost control over the corporation’s board of directors and was soon seeing decisions made that were not best for the tribe.

At the same time that Menominee Enterprises Incorporated (MEI) was failing in its role as protector of the tribe, the American Indian Civil Rights Movement was beginning to take off nationally. The National Indian Youth Council helped in staging fish-ins in the Pacific-Northwest to fight for fishing rights that were being threatened by non-Indian commercial and sport fishing interests. In 1969 a pan-tribal organization, Indians of All Tribes, besieged the abandoned government outpost at Alcatraz Island, symbolically claiming it for Indian people. It was around the same time that Indians in Minneapolis were beginning to implement strategies borrowed from the Black Panther Party to reach out to the poor Indian communities in their neighborhoods. It was a sad reality that urban relocation programs had led to the formation of poor Indian ghettos in many major cities largely located in the mid-western and western states.

Those Indian leaders in Minneapolis went on to form the American Indian Movement (AIM), which would become the most visible form of Indian resistance to government oppression through the 1970s and into the 1980s. Although mired in controversy, AIM certainly

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96 *American Indian Activism: Alcatraz to the Longest Walk*, ed. Duane Champagne, Troy Johnson, and Joane Nagel (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997). There are a number of works available, which document the Red Power Movement. Additional sources referenced for this chapter include Dennis Banks’s *Ojibwa Warrior*, Ward Churchill’s *Acts of Rebellion*, Mary Crow Dog’s *Lakota Woman*, Vine Deloria, Jr.’s *Trail of Broken Treaties*, and Peter Matthiessen’s *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*. 
provided a voice and a militant option for young Indians who were ready to fight for “Red Power”. Because of AIM’s importance as a product of the mid-West and largely mid-Western tribes, the Menominee Tribe naturally borrowed tactics from the movement’s arsenal. AIM members did not seem to play a significant role in the Menominee Restoration struggle however.

The organization that led the charge for Menominee Restoration named itself DRUMS. Formed in 1970, Determination of Rights and Unity for Menominee Stockholders was led by Jim White and Ada Deer. Jim White headed up an aggressive public campaign that sought to disrupt Menominee Enterprises Incorporated (MEI) and generate negative publicity for corporate leaders. Members of DRUMS employed a variety of tactics to see to it that their tribe was restored. Their strategies included picketing at the MEI land sales office and promotional dinners for sales of former tribal land to non-Indians. DRUMS members even participated in a 220-mile March for Justice from Menominee County to Madison in October of 1971. While DRUMS was raising a ruckus for the media, Ada Deer lobbied private groups and spoke with government leaders to ensure that the tribe would be granted its federal recognition once again. After three years in existence, DRUMS had won back federal recognition. The Menominee Restoration Act was signed into law on December 22, 1973.

DRUMS looked a lot like one of the many new pan-tribal organizations that were springing up in the early 1970s. Its members came from Milwaukee and Chicago where they had mobilized. The group then entered the former reservation and fought alongside other tribal members who believed in their cause. The movement’s members utilized militant tactics and demonstrated a youthful spirit of resistance and optimism that came through in their actions. Indeed, American Indian activism from the 1970s has been characterized largely as pan-tribal

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and as embodying a new sense of “Indian” identity. Whereas indigenous activism of the first half of the 20th century usually took place at the tribal level, new Indian activists put tribal identity in the background and concentrated on creating a sense of Indian solidarity. When looking at organizations like the American Indian Movement, those observations are largely true. Further evidence of the increasing popularity of Indian ethnic identification has come with the increasing number of Indian respondents on the U.S. census since 1950.\textsuperscript{98}

However, I think it is wrong to characterize all modern Indian rights movements as adhering to the AIM model. In fact, the Klamath Restoration struggle was markedly different from the Menominee Restoration effort. Tactically speaking, it was certainly much tamer than the fight that took place in Wisconsin. Also, Klamath people did not have their tribal rights restored until 1986, long after AIM had lost power as a movement. I want to investigate the extent to which members of the Klamath Tribe saw themselves as identifying with the large pan-tribal movements that rose to popularity during the years that the Klamath Tribe was terminated. I would also like to tell the story of how the Klamath Tribe Restoration Committee went about winning its battle and why they might have taken such a different route than had DRUMS.

I would also suggest that the tribe’s efforts at restoration proved that there was a significant segment of the tribal population that had strongly valued their access to Klamath culture and realized that federal support was necessary for that. The arguments used to make a case for restoration included recognition of the impediment that termination was to cultural sustainability and to a healthy path of identity development for young people. The tribe also saw a number of strong and determined leaders put forth all of their personal efforts into achieving

\textsuperscript{98} Joane Nagel, \textit{American Indian Ethnic Renewal} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 93. The Red Power movements of the 1960s and 1970s were helpful in encouraging a restored sense of pride in Native identity. Nagel attributed the growing number of self-reported Indians in census records to increased indigenous pride and large groups of people of marginal Indian ancestry beginning to report themselves as Indian for the first time in history.
the goal of restoration. Members of the Restoration Committee made sure that attendance at their meetings was always consistent and did not suffer from the same divisions that had plagued the tribe during the termination years. It is important to look at the Klamath Restoration struggle because it demonstrated that although termination did take a toll on the tribe, it did not destroy the tribe. Discussion of the restoration effort will also assist readers in understanding where the tribe stands today and what remains to be done.

It would be inaccurate to describe the Klamath Tribe as completely isolated from the pan-tribal activities that were beginning to flare up in the 1940s and 1950s. There is strong evidence to suggest that members of the Klamath Tribal governing bodies were very conscious of the growing community of American Indian activists. In an August 26, 1953 meeting of the Klamath Executive Committee, Secretary Dibbon Cook read a letter from the League of Nations Pan-American Indians inviting the Klamath and other tribes slated for termination to a convention in Denver to help “protect the property interests of all Indian Tribes where possible.” At the meeting, tribal representatives decided to send tribal leaders Boyd Jackson and Wade Crawford to the conference.99

Two years later in March of 1955, tribal chairman Seldon E. Kirk read an excerpt produced by the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) condemning termination to tribal members at an Executive Committee meeting. NCAI was a pan-tribal organization that campaigned fervently against termination and brought together tribal leaders from a vast array of different tribes from across the United States. The organization still exists today as a strong lobby for American Indians in all parts of the country.100 A June 1955 meeting of the Executive

99 Minutes of Executive Committee, August 26, 1953, pp. 4-5, Klamath Tribal Council Records, Box 1.
Committee saw to it that a vote on whether to join the NCAI was placed on the ballot for an upcoming tribal election to be held the third Thursday of that July.

After the passage of termination, Klamath Tribal leaders recognized the importance of the NCAI as an ally in the fight against termination proceedings. On September 11, 1956 the Klamath Executive Committee convened. Tribal leader Boyd Jackson read a resolution in support of the NCAI and its work with the Klamath Tribe to defend tribal rights. Jackson read:

Whereas, it is believed that the N.C.A.I. is an organization nationally looked upon as a reliable body rendering service in behalf of Indian Tribes of the Nation before the Committees of the Congress, the press, and whatever the cause of Indians may be involved and as such we believe can be of great assistance to the Klamath Tribe during the 85th session of the Congress of the United States.101

So, the tribal record has made it quite clear that the Klamath Tribal government did not intend to engage in their fight with the U.S. government alone. They recognized the resources and support that larger organizations like the NCAI could bring to the table.

In her book, American Indian Ethnic Renewal, Joane Nagel made an observation that seems to partially explain the reason for Klamath leaders to involve themselves in early pan-tribal organizations. Regarding termination, she hypothesized that, “the pursuit of federal assimilationist goals provided an unexpected impetus for the emergence of intertribal and ultimately supratribual Indian organizational and identity formation…”102 It only made sense for the tribes that were facing a crisis as looming as termination to try to work together to form a united bloc that could stand up to the mighty United States government. NCAI focused a majority of its attention on termination and was thus a perfect fit for the Klamath Tribe.

NCAI and the Klamath Tribe seemed to have a positive and productive relationship. On October 2, 1956, the Executive Committee reviewed a telegram that had been sent a few days

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101 Minutes of Executive Committee, September 11, 1956, p. 4, Klamath Tribal Council Records, Box 2.

102 Nagel, Ethnic Renewal, 119.
earlier to the Oregon State Bar Association from the NCAI. The telegram was sent to petition the association to, “join the Klamath Tribe and NCAI in bringing about public attention, support, and legislative action to correct the situation brought about by passage of the Klamath Termination Act.” Needless to say, the Klamath governing body did not see termination as a purely tribal issue that could only be dealt with as such.

Klamath participation in large pan-tribal movements did not continue on the same path into the restoration years however. Although the tribe would retain its relationship with the National Congress of American Indians throughout the 1980s when restoration was becoming a reality, they never received support from urban Indian organizations like AIM during the 1960s and 1970s. They also did not seem to reach out to those types of organizations either. Although, the Klamath Restoration Committee did receive external support for their efforts, it was not from the types of radical Indian organizations that have popularly characterized indigenous activism during that time. The similarities and differences between the Klamath Restoration struggle and that of the Menominee do much to illustrate the diverse forms that Native American activism has taken and still been successful. It also highlights the fact that termination affected different tribes in different ways.

We can begin by looking at how those seeking Klamath restoration differed tactically from the more militant approaches of DRUMS in Wisconsin. Although the archival material regarding Klamath Restoration has not yet been fully sorted and filed, I was able to find a few documents that were helpful in understanding the means used by tribal representatives and supporters to gather support for the restoration effort. One packet, which must have been distributed to members of the Restoration Committee outlined the “ten commandments of

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103 Minutes of Executive Committee, October 2, 1956, Telegram from NCAI to Oregon State Bar Association dated September 28, 1956, p. 6, Klamath Tribal Council Records, Box 2.
lobbying” and included guidelines for lobbying by telephone, letter, testimony, and in person.

Another pamphlet, from the spring of 1979 was included in the Restoration Committee’s resources. This one was entitled, “On Organizing: A Simple Recipe for Social Change,” and was actually written by Michigan State Representative David Hollister.104

These pamphlets suggest that those who fought for Klamath Restoration were willing to go through legal and orderly means of achieving change. They would not be occupying buildings or picketing outside of private residences, but rather be aggressively pursuing more acceptable means of changing the law. There were several logical explanations for why the Klamaths would take this course of action. For one, the era of militant indigenous activism that had coincided with the Menominee restoration movement had passed. Also, the extremely rural locale of the former Klamath Reservation prevented easy access for urban activists; one of the factors that had been so important for DRUMS. Located three hundred miles south of Portland, it was unrealistic to expect an urban Indian organization to team up with Klamath organizers. Finally, the most productive years of the Klamath Restoration movement came at a time when national attention and excitement for American Indian activism had passed. There was a small window of opportunity that Menominee activists had managed to take advantage of during the early 1970s that had closed by the time Klamath people had mobilized the resources necessary to begin a serious restoration struggle.

A simpler explanation may have been that there was no longer a need to make the types of displays that the Menominee had made in order to have their tribal recognition restored. Many tribes had already been restored, including several in the state of Oregon. The federal government had already shifted its direction as far as Indian policy and publicly acknowledged

that termination was a mistake as early as 1958. So, the Klamath Restoration Committee and other concerned tribal members must have recognized that the militant tactics so prominent in the preceding decade would not have worked as well in their situation.

In addition to differing tactics, the Klamath also reached out and received aid from organizations that one would not immediately think of as being concerned with the restoration efforts. On October 10, 1984, Restoration Committee member Faith Mayhew sent a memo to the chairman of the Restoration Committee, Joe Coburn. The document’s subject heading read, “Klamath Tribe Restoration Outreach List,” and included a vast array of potential sources for tribal support. The four subcategories included Klamath Area Organizational Outreach, State and National Organizational Outreach, Tribal Support, and Individual Outreach. The groups to be solicited represented an extremely diverse array of political ideologies and ranged from the Republican and Democratic Parties to the Izaak Walton League and the ACLU. Pan-tribal organizations included the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, National Organization of Indian Social Workers, the Native American Resource Network, and others. The document illustrated the extremely focused and well-organized efforts of the tribe and categorized the restoration effort as fairly non-political.

The committee’s vigorous attempts to attain financial support for their struggle certainly paid off. In March of 1985, a letter to Joe Coburn revealed that the tribe had been awarded a seven-thousand dollar grant from the Presbytery of the Cascades to fund travel to community meetings within Oregon. Religious organizations got behind the Klamath Restoration effort

106 Memorandum, To: Joe Coburn, From: Faith Mayhew, Subject: Klamath Restoration Outreach List, October 10, 1984, Klamath Indian Tribes Materials, Box 1.
107 Letter to Joe Coburn (Klamath Restoration Committee Chairman) from Francis Harjoe, March 16, 1985, Klamath Indian Tribes Materials, Box 1.
and would continue to aid the tribe through their years of hard work. The Klamath Basin Cooperative Ministry, a Methodist organization, mailed a letter to Oregon State Representative Bob Smith. Among other pro-restoration sentiments, the letter stated, “Klamath County has several pockets of rural poverty, mainly in the Chiloquin and Beatty areas. Along with poverty there exists severe social problems. Most of these problems can be directly linked to the disastrous effects of the dissolution of the Klamath Tribe.”

The support of religious organizations contributed to the popular appeal of restoration and its eventual passage. It also characterized the Klamath restoration movement as being quite separate and distinct from radical and militant politics.

Of course, the Klamath people also received support from across Indian Country. Specifically, Indian media outlets covered the story and helped spread important facts about the situation of the Klamaths to indigenous people outside of Oregon. Francis Harjoe noted in a letter to Joe Coburn in March of 1985 that she had been interviewed by the Migizi Radio Corporation, which was the largest Indian Radio Corporation at the time. She also indicated that, “The Lakota Times and Navajo Times were very interested,” and that “The Oglala Sioux Community College Newspaper and staff visited the Tribal office” to investigate the story. She even mentioned the presence of members of the Associated Press and United Press International. It was not that Klamath Restoration was not an issue that garnered some national attention, but it certainly did not receive the same type of publicity as had been received by the Menominee or AIM. Additionally, the support from Indian country was not coming in the form of direct and hands-on assistance. Rather, it was through publicity and the spreading of information that other

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108 Letter from Klamath Basin Cooperative Ministry (Methodist) to Bob Smith, February 24, 1986, Klamath Indian Tribes Materials, Box 1.
Native Americans were able to assist the Klamaths in a struggle that they took on as a tribal entity and not as a pan-tribal organization.

The Restoration struggle brought with it an opportunity for Klamath tribal members to reflect on the cultural impact of termination. As part of the government requirement for being granted restoration, the Klamath tribe had to present evidence that their culture was still alive and important within the Klamath community. It was ironic that in order to reverse a government policy that severely damaged cultural sustainability, the tribe needed to illustrate how strong their culture was. Nonetheless, the Klamath were able to show government officials that it was worthwhile to devote federal money into cultural projects. On the first of April, 1986, the Restoration Committee sent a memorandum to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs to respond to the six questions which provided the criteria to the federal government as to whether or not a tribe could be restored. The letter read, “An annual Pow Wow is held each year on Memorial Day. The general membership have (sic) formed cemetery committees to maintain the graves of their people and their elders. Classes are held so the culture, traditions and language of the tribe can be maintained and passed onto the youth. Vision walks, a tribal tradition, are being taken by members of the tribe.”

The letter accurately asserted the fact that Klamath cultural activities had been resurging in the last years.

The Klamath Restoration Committee and other tribal members carried out an extremely well-organized campaign for tribal restoration. They effectively collected financial resources from a number of different organizations and publicized their event to audiences who could provide them with support. Because of their hard work, the Klamath Tribe saw their tribe federally restored on August 27, 1986. Public Law 99-398 brought a return of federal support to

109 [Memo to Deputy Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, April 1, 1986], Klamath Indian Tribes Materials, Box 1.
the tribe and allowed the tribe to outline a plan for economic recovery in the region. Although restoration was a great victory for many Klamath people who had value their status as a federally recognized tribe, it did not heal the wounds that had been inflicted by termination. It also did not return the tribe its reservation or even a portion of its ancestral land base. Klamath people have struggled into the 21st Century to argue that their land has always been an integral part of both their cultural practices and livelihoods. The tribe is presently in a place where there is still much to be done in the way of land reclamation, but where recovery is happening as well.

Conclusion

Today, Chiloquin, a traditionally Klamath locale, does not look like a town whose inhabitants became rich from their termination payments. Rather, it is an amalgamation of modest ranch houses, trailers, and a modern tribal headquarters. The second most notable structure, the Chiloquin Christian Center, is located only a few hundred feet from the complex housing of the tribal administration buildings; a reminder of the blend of cultures that came from over 150 years of cultural mixing that has occurred in the area. The day I visited the tribal
council building, I noticed a car donning a bumper sticker; it read, “I was Indian before it was cool.” On the road into Chiloquin a trailer sat in a field off of Highway 97. Its owner proudly displayed a full-sized statue of an Indian woman and the skeleton of a tipi in the yard. Four ribbons, representing the four colors embraced by the American Indian Movement, swayed atop the structure. There was a proud Indian community in Chiloquin; a community that had withstood termination and continued the fight to regain its culture and identity.

The tribe has made a stunning comeback since its first decades as a terminated tribe. Although many of the environmental damages that were done to the former reservation can never be repaired, cultural revitalization programs have worked for years to regenerate the flourishing reservation culture that was important to so many during the pre-termination days. Tribal member Ivan Jackson has taken on the task of spreading traditional Klamath culture to those who had been deprived for so many years. He explained his motivation during an interview with Linc Kesler: “So this is where, I'm trying to, trying to, finish the gap, you know, trying to fill the gap. You just go on, to show the world, that we're still alive, a live culture. That's about what it's all about, to share the whole world that we're still alive, that we're not going to be extinct, as long as I keep talking.”

Ivan’s sense of optimism for the future of the Klamath Tribe is shared by others.

Restoration allowed the tribe to receive federal funding once again. That access has fueled the rebuilding efforts of tribal members who have remained close to the Klamath community. Morrie Jimenez reflected about the gains that the tribe has made since its restoration in 1986:

Now that we're a Restored tribe again, I see reinforcement for that belief system, by, when I go back and I see them trying to reestablish our government, restore the land base

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110 Ivan Jackson, interview by Kesler, Session 17.
and fight for their water rights. And I take a look at their new health buildings, and their new facilities there. And I read their educational goals and everything else that. You know, I think they've come a long ways and I think they're back on track again.\footnote{Morrie Jimenez, interview by Kesler, Session 4.}

As a tribal elder, Jimenez’s role in the tribe has become that of an advisor and a spectator. New communities of young Klamath people have stepped up to ensure the continued vitality of the tribe. That is proof of the fact that termination did not destroy the tribe beyond repair. Despite tremendous socio-economic changes within the tribal community, Klamath people have been able to retain their cultural heritage, traditions, religion, language, government, and identity.

Although the Klamath language is only spoken by a handful of elders, efforts have been made to revive use of the native tongue. The Klamath Tribes Culture and Heritage Department offers a Klamath language class as well as an instructional CD and booklet. Keeping the language alive has certainly been a victory in itself after the tumultuous years following termination.

The Klamath Tribe also opened the Kla-Mo-Ya Casino in the summer of 1997. The name combines the three tribes who once called the Klamath reservation home. The casino employs nearly 150 individuals, most of whom are of native descent. Although the casino is not relied upon for a significant portion of tribal funding, it has shown growth and potential since its opening over a decade ago.

Perhaps the best news for the tribe in recent years came only recently. A December 18, 2008 article in “The Oregonian” entitled, “Land deal returns slice of Klamath tribal homeland,” covered a recent victory for the Klamath Tribe. Tribal officials negotiated a deal with Cascade Timberlands, a lumber company owned by Fidelity National Financial. The deal, brokered by The Trust for Public Land, will see 90,000 acres of former reservation land returned to the tribe.
Tribal official Jeff Mitchell helped to develop the agreement and testified to the troubling nature of how the tract of land had been managed to date. He noted that, “Much of the forest is now overcrowded lodgepole pine at high risk of severe wildfires.” However, the return of the land is still an overwhelming victory for members of the tribe who have continued to fight for a restoration of tribal land.

The return of the land will be extremely helpful to the tribe especially when considering the ongoing battle for water rights in the region. Winona LaDuke wrote an extremely informative article on the issue for a November 2001 issue of “News from Indian Country.”

Coming to a head in 2001, the struggle over water rights in the Klamath Basin has pitted a number of competing interests against each other. Members of the Klamath Tribe, who hold claim to water rights for time immemorial, farmers who have moved into the region over the last century, environmentalists, and tribes down-river who rely upon fish have all laid claim to more water than the land can provide. The Klamath have been lucky enough to see their water rights upheld through all of their interactions with the federal government through to the present day. However, promises have also been made to farmers who hold a powerful voice in the region. Ultimately, the water crisis has led to a large decline in the population of water foul in the region, altered the chemistry of the water in the basin, and the disappearance of roughly 4000 jobs in the fishing industry. Needless to say, termination and more broadly, federal interference in Klamath affairs has had a lasting impact on the entire Klamath Basin.

There are many lessons to be learned from the federal termination of the Klamath Tribe. I hope I have made it clear that there is no single voice of the Klamath Tribe, but rather many. It is important to remember that there were and still are Klamath people who supported and benefited from termination. But it is even more important to remember the thousands of lives
that were negatively affected by the reckless implementation of termination by a powerful minority of federal officials. If Indian policy can be understood as an ongoing, current, and extremely important issue, perhaps we will see a new direction in relations between our government and the indigenous inhabitants of the United States.

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