A PUBLIC SPIRIT
George H. Atkinson’s Written Legacy

Transcribed and with a foreword by Donald J. Sevetson
Our treasure lies in the beehive of our knowledge. We are perpetually on the way thither, being by nature [...] honey gatherers of the mind.

Friedrich Nietzsche

The “Bee Tree”, an iconic ivy-covered tree that stood on the Pacific University campus for many years, was already old and hollow when pioneer Tabitha Brown arrived in Oregon in 1846. Mrs. Brown started a home for orphans that would grow into Pacific University. According to the Forest Grove News-Times, the tree was “said to have housed a swarm of bees who furnished the little old lady with honey which she sold to buy provisions for her orphan children.”
Atkinson’s earlier correspondence and publications say little about Native Americans, but the three years from 1877 to 1880 produced five *Oregonian* articles devoted to various aspects of the subject. This fits with the time (1874-1880) when Gen. Oliver O. O. Howard served as Commander of the U.S. Army’s Department of the Columbia.

Gen. Howard is best known for his work as the first Director of the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees and Abandoned Lands (popularly known as the Freedmen’s Bureau), which he headed for five years, beginning in May 1865. In 1872 President Grant sent Howard to the Southwest to negotiate treaties with Indian tribes, most notably Geronimo, a Chiricahua Apache leader. From that work, Howard moved to Fort Vancouver for his assignment in the Pacific Northwest.

Howard, a lifelong Congregationalist and committed Sunday School teacher, had become acquainted with Atkinson at a national meeting of Congregationalists in 1871, where the two men were elected as vice-Moderators. While at Fort Vancouver Howard taught Sunday School at First Congregational Church in Portland, and helped to organize a YMCA in the city. He also led in the establishment of the Indian Training School, initially placed adjacent to the Pacific University campus in Forest Grove but soon moved to Chemawa, just north of Salem, Oregon, where it is still located. Atkinson’s writings include several references to conversations with Gen. Howard about Native Americans.

---

1 Howard, *Indian Chiefs I have Known*. 

[220]
The last of these articles recounts a personal visit to the Warm Springs Reservation, in Oregon, where Atkinson reviewed its schools and farms, concluding with a serious, enlightening dialogue with the tribal council.
Native Americans

Source:
The Oregonian Archives
Multnomah County Library
To the Editor of the Oregonian:

The endorsement of the very able letter of Mr. A.J. Cain upon securing land to Indians in severalty will doubtless meet a like response from many readers. The people of Oregon, Washington and Idaho want to be just to the Indians as individuals. Mr. Cain’s plan is fair to both parties. His idea is to ignore the tribe and give every man and every family a right in the soil. Mr. Cain shows that the more intelligent Indians want a title to a farm the same as a white man has. The 14th and 15th amendments to the constitution permit him to give up his tribal relations and become a citizen and take his homestead. A partial enabling act, it is said, has been passed by Congress to encourage it. The reservations and tribal treaties complicate the question, by precluding those on the reservations from taking homesteads within those limits and by restricting them at the same time within those limits. A few Indians like Timothy and seven other families at Alpoowai on the Snake river have ventured to assume their recognized rights, to take land, to fence and till farms, pay taxes, submit to the law and claim its protection. They have gained the respect of their neighbors and confidence of officials, and an abundant support for themselves. Under this new regime they improve year by year. Mr. Cain’s report of an Indian village near the upper Spokane bridge under Stylome as head man and business manager, is another suggestive facts in the same line. The fact itself commands respect and wins confidence.

Allow Indians on the reservations to own farms there, as Mr. C. and many others testify, the system of Indian homesteads will displace that of ‘Indian reservations’. If government surveys follow up this policy, the whites and Indians will choose their locations with little if any conflict. The vast areas of valuable lands within and without the reservations, now merely roamed over, will be occupied by peaceable settlers, white and Indian, subject to the same laws, and
enjoying the same privileges. From Mr. Cain’s long acquaintance with the Indians of the upper Columbia, his testimony is the more valuable on this point. It confirms the growing sentiment that it is both safe and wise to treat the Indian as a man. Give him his rights and hold him to his duties under the law. Interest will more and more bind the better class to this policy. Anchored to the soil by title he will expose and defeat any Indian league against the white settlers whose laws protect his own rights. So strong is his conviction of his title now, that enforced removal breeds war. That was the key to the war with Chief Joseph. This will arouse war again. Its opposite will promote peace, and help to save and civilize a much larger per cent of the Indians than the mixed policy has done.

Secretary Schurz’ report of Nov. 1, 1877, just received, commends ‘allotments of small tracts of land to heads of families on all reservations, to be held in severalty under proper restrictions, so that they may have fixed homes.”

Those who support their families he would admit to the benefits of the homestead act, if they are willing to detach themselves from their tribal relations, to the privileges of citizenship.

He adds, “To protect the security of life and property among the Indians, the laws of the United States, to be enforced by proper tribunals, should be extended over the reservations, and a body of police composed of Indians, and subject to the order of government officers, should be organized on each of them. It is a matter of experience that Indians thus trusted with official duty can almost uniformly be depended upon in point of fidelity and efficiency.

These views accord with the experience and judgment of Mr. Cain and many other gentlemen who, like him, have been agents, or have become acquainted with Indians in their own country. It is to be hoped that this policy will be distinctly adopted by the government, and carried out promptly by the interior department in its conduct of Indian affairs both on and off the reservations.

Yours, respectfully,

G.H. ATKINSON

[225]
June 27, 1878

The Indian Question: Its Hopeful Signs

REPORT OF THE CONGREGATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OREGON AND WASHINGTON AT OREGON CITY, JUNE 22, BY REV. DR. ATKINSON

Every element of a problem in its process of solution must be weighed. The public have long been considering the problem of the Indian. It would be strange if no progress had been made toward solution. The two policies stand out in sharper lines by their effects. That of force tends rapidly to extermination. Treated as tribes, any man can cause an Indian war, filling them with the terror of utter ruin—they foresee that end—and ourselves with shame.

“Three young Nez Perce of Chief Joseph’s tribe left their camp on Camas prairie where they were digging their annual supply of roots in June a year ago and went over to Salmon river. One of the young men, whose father was killed on Salmon river by a white man, on coming to the man who killed his father, killed him and three others with him. This is the first murder the Indians committed. The next day they returned to the camp and it is said they openly told what they had done at Salmon river, and induced young men to join them and kill more whites on Camas prairie, although the chiefs tried all they could to prevent further depredation, but all was to no purpose. The next night many more Indians joined and killed more white men at Camas prairie. Thus the war with Chief Joseph and his band commences.”

This is the account given to Mr. Barstow by James Reuben, assistant teacher at Lapwai agency school, and a scout under General Howard until those Indians fled to Montana. It bears the marks of truth and agrees in substance with other accounts given at that time.

Had such murders been committed in the British territory the civil government, employing both a white and an Indian police, would
have seized, tried and punished the murderers, first the white man who slew the Indian’s father, and then the Indian who slew the white murderer and his friends. This process of municipal law in holding every man responsible for his own acts, would have prevented other murders and saved the community from disturbance and even from alarm. English law deals with the individual without regard to race, color or condition. It does not recognize the tribe, and it cannot come in conflict with the tribe. This is understood by both parties. Both assent to it. Justice is done. An Indian war cannot occur in the British dominions.

The American policy loses sight of the Indian and holds the tribe responsible for his crimes. It fails to arrest and punish the white man for his crimes against the Indian. It prepares for war and excites other tribes into hostile confederation; prolongs the conflict for months as last year at a cost of hundreds of lives on both sides, and $800,000 in cash, and general alarm and suspense of the white community.

The commissioner of Indian affairs testifies that: “During the forty years prior to 1868 the cost of Indian wars—without including the destruction of private property—was not less than $500,000,000, or an average of $12,500,000 per year. The great Sioux war of 1852, 1853, 1854 cost the government $40,000,000, without improving our relations with those Indians. In 1854 and 1855, the cost of quelling disturbances by the army in Oregon alone was $10,000,000. The Cheyenne war, caused by the barbarous massacre at Sand Creek, besides the immense loss of property and life, cost the government $35,000,000 and the lives of many soldiers. And the war that broke out again in 1867, by reason of an unprovoked assault of our troops upon peaceful Indians, was continued two years at a cost of $40,000,000.”

A blunder in our policy is like a misplaced switch. The wreck and death and losses are prolonged the whole length of the train. So our national blunder of dealing with Indian tribes, instead of individual Indians, has been a prolonged series of disasters, wars, death and losses for more than two centuries, and the present year, even this hour, continues its long train of horrors. The Bannacks
A Public Spirit

[ed.—the Bannock tribe] were starving at their reservation agency in April last. They hurried off to their old camas grounds. A conflict doubtless ensued with herders on those plains. The result is a costly war of extermination.

Hopeful Signs From Another Quarter

In 1853-5 treaties were made with many tribes of the interior and with all in Oregon and Washington, with provisions for the survey of their reservations and the allotment of small farms to Indian families, with the pledge of patents of inalienable title to individuals in severalty. A part of these surveys and allotments were made. The law is still in force. Steps are taken to secure the patents. Special attention is called to these treaty stipulations by the general commanding the department of the Columbia. Their completion is urged as a war measure, in order to satisfy the just claims of those Indians who have improved their farms and who desire peace, and who will thus become a strong barrier against any and every hostile band.

Another fact is the right of every Indian under the amended constitution. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the constitution gave every ‘American’, without distinction of race or color or previous condition of bondage all the rights of citizens. The judiciary committee of the Senate affirmed that the Indian can become a citizen by abandoning his tribal relations. The negro became a citizen at once by the act itself. The question arises whether the American Indian did not also become a citizen by the act itself? If he may do it by simply taking oath before a magistrate, viz., “I renounce my tribal relations and claim my rights as an American,” What is there in the amendments to forbid the census-taker or assessor from counting him as a citizen as it does the negro? In either case, his citizenship is placed in his own hands by the constitution, and beyond the reach of all policies or Indian laws. These amendments at one blow broke the yoke of negro slavery and of the Indian tribal bondage. It is a strange anomaly that continues the latter bondage in national legislation since it is possible for the entire population of the Indian territory and of every state to assert their freedom from tribal relations and to claim their individual rights as citizens.
The 15th and 10th sections of the act of congress of March 3, 1875, extends the benefits of the homestead act of May 20, 1862, and the acts amendatory thereof, to the Indian and his family if he will accept them. The point may be taken, why put the burden upon the Indian to abandon his tribal relation, which requires in him more courage than to go to battle? Why not declare the tribes a nullity and void in law by judicial decision or by act of congress, under the late amendments, instead of asking the poor Indian to make it a nullity and void by abandoning it? The power given him to do it is very much like saying it is done already in fact. The area of citizenship has taken in the negro and Indian alike.

The board of Indian commissioners in their ninth annual report January 10th, 1878, declare that, “The ultimate solution of the Indian question is the absorption of all Indians into the body politic, and their endowment with all the rights and duties and responsibilities of citizenship.” To this end they recommend four things:

2. Division of reservation lands and homestead rights.
3. Larger appropriations for the support of schools.
4. Consolidation of agencies and reduction of expenses.

The secretary of the interior in his annual report to the president Nov. 1, 1877, recommends that Indians who support their families be admitted to the benefits of the homestead act, and that those who abandon their tribal relations be allowed the privilege of citizenship, that the laws be extended over the reservations, and an Indian police, subject to the orders of the government officials, be organized on each of them; that the attendance of their children in school be compulsory, that boarding schools be established, and that the English language be taught, and that they carry on their own reservation farms instead of depending on white employees. These are advanced positions tending to solve the Indian problem justly and humanely.

A more favorable sign is the census table which illustrates some fruits of the policy during nine years past.
The number of Indians in the United States (those in Alaska not included) is 278,000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1868</th>
<th>1877</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. who wear citizens dress</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>112,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houses occupied</td>
<td>7,470</td>
<td>22,194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houses built last year</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholars</td>
<td>4,716</td>
<td>11,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money spent for education</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$337,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. who can read</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40,397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. who learned to read in last year</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church buildings on reservations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian church members</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres cultivated by Indians</td>
<td>54,207</td>
<td>292,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. male Indians who work</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Indian Territory not included)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushels of wheat raised</td>
<td>126,117</td>
<td>688,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; corn</td>
<td>467,363</td>
<td>4,056,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; oats and barley</td>
<td>43,976</td>
<td>349,247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; vegetables</td>
<td>236,926</td>
<td>656,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. tons hay</td>
<td>16,216</td>
<td>148,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horses and mules owned</td>
<td>43,950</td>
<td>216,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>42,870</td>
<td>217,883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swine</td>
<td>29,890</td>
<td>127,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>2,683</td>
<td>587,444</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results, say the commissioners, in industry, education and Christianity in the short space of nine years confirms our belief, often expressed in former reports, that the peace policy is the only right policy.
But the most hopeful sign of the solution of this problem is the Indians’ own action. They begin to know and to desire titles to their lands as homesteads. They plead for their rights under the law. The moment is opportune to win many of them from the tribe to the homestead of citizens.

It is our duty to help them to attain the position and rights awarded to them by our constitution and laws.

_June 29, 1878_

**THE INDIAN WAR. CAN IT BE STOPPED?**

We are in the midst of an Indian war. It has signs of being more extensive, costly and bloody than any of the past wars with them. This arises from the fact that the treaty Indians, the peaceable and industrious, as well as the non-treaty, idle and nomadic, have come to believe that the government does not mean to keep its faith with them or to redeem its treaty pledges to give them titles for their allotments of farms on their reservations. They learn that congress and the commissioner of Indian affairs propose to force them from their homes to new, strange and rugged reservations, or to mass them on one or two large reservations.

**THEIR FARMS ARE THEIR HOMES**

Many of them have made small farms, built houses, bought agricultural equipment and stock and other means of comfort. All these have cost them much labor. They love and cling to their homes as we do to ours.

**CAUSE OF WAR**

They know that the war with the Nez Perce chief, Joseph and his band, arose from this purpose to force him and his band away from their own—never-sold lands—in the Wallowa valley, and drive them on the Nez Perce reservation. This was felt by many to be unjust in principle and impolitic in practice. Those Indians felt it more
keenly. All the tribes sympathized with them. Runners have passed from tribe to tribe during twelve or fifteen months past, discussing their grievances among themselves, and trying to bring all to a common purpose not to go to the new reservations, and not to give up their homes. The result is that a general distrust of the word of the whites and the honor of our government prevails among them. They will not furnish General Howard with scouts for this war. They will if pressed fight and die in defense of their homes.

**AN INJUSTICE TO THE INDIAN GIVES HIM GREAT POWER**

Treat any man unfairly and you put a mighty weapon in your hand that will smite yourself. The avenging Nemesis will find and punish the guilty. Word has come that a white man has filed on the farm of Charley, a Nez Perce of Timothy’s band, at Alpowai, also a faithful scout under General Howard last year. The white man now alleges that the Indian has not taken his land exactly according to the forms of law. But we know that the law giving Indians homesteads off the reservations was not passed until March 3, 1875, and that these Indians have lived several years as citizens at Alpowai, and that their rights began as citizens with their occupancy of the claim, either by pre-emption or homestead. They can and must hold in chancery these homes in which they have lived ten or fifteen years. It will be a fine opportunity for a generous-minded attorney to go into court and defend the case and secure the rights of this faithful scout.

The general land commissioner ordered the farms of those Indians to be kept for them. The Coeur d’Alenes, whose farms are probably on unsurveyed lands, will doubtless present similar cases in equity. Meanwhile the attempt of white men to jump that Indian claim will be like a lighted match to powder. It will destroy the faith in us of the best Indians, our longtime friends. It will fire their hate and expose the guilty and innocent alike to revenge. Such a deed published among the other tribes will incite them to deeds of blood. The meanness of the act will arouse sympathy for the Indian, who is striving to do all his duty as a citizen. Every one of that band gave their property under oath to the assessor to pay their taxes. How
base the deed that will strike an Indian down and cast a firebrand into the homes of the settlers.

The injustice of withholding titles to homesteads on the reservations, of not securing to the Indian his home in law, causes the same peril to communities on the frontier. In fact there is no safety to any man, white or black or copper colored, except under the protection of law. This flag of law, instead of war, ought to have been thrown over the Indian long ago. The cost and difficulty of doing it now, of turning him from war, will be great; yet it must be done, and that soon, or the next offer of the Sybylline leaves of wisdom will come with added losses and costs.

EXTENT OF THE DISTURBANCE

General Howard said to me the day before the outbreak of the Bannacks: “I expect war at any moment. I have been in constant communication with Gens. McDowell and Sherman for several weeks. The ferment is widespread. It is among many once quiet tribes. It seems to extend across the continent.”

Understanding that titles to Indian homesteads on the reservations had been pledged to them by treaties, and that they had long desired these titles, and that they knew the recent plan to move them to new reservations, and that they would not go unless forced to do it, but would be quiet and friendly, if the patents were given to them, Gen. Howard, in view of these facts, sent a telegram to the president, asking him to issue those patents at once as a war measure. No reply has come. Meanwhile, the war has begun with its usual murders, raids, uncertain movements, alarms, vexatious suspense, costly traversing to and fro by long marches and slow trains over the arid plains of the interior, 600 miles away southeast of the headquarters of the department of the Columbia, on whom the responsibility has again fallen to quell the disturbances.

Distrust of the whites and the government turns friendly Indians into foes. Telegrams today give signs that the Umatillas, the Warm Springs and Klamaths are hostile. Gen. Howard strives to prevent the union of those now at war, with those on the reservations. The
duty of the hour is to redeem every pledge and win back their faith to the government. The president and the commissioner of Indian affairs can do this by fulfilling the treaties. Life, property and the welfare of the frontier settlements are at stake.

When this is over and peace restored, not the war policy or the peace policy, but the citizens policy should be enforced.

G.H. ATKINSON

Aug. 8, 1878

SETTLEMENT OF THE INDIANS

A THOUSAND INDIAN HOMESTEAD FARMS ON THE RESERVATIONS IN OREGON, WASHINGTON AND IDAHO

This is possible under the treaty pledges made in 1855. Suppose the allotments of 40 to 320 acres each to 150 Nez Perces, 150 Umatillas, Cayuses and Walla Wallas, 150 Yakimas, 100 Spokanes and Coeur d’Alenes, 100 Warm Springs or Wascos, 100 Puyallups, 100 Skokomish, Clallams and Makahs, 100 Tulalip and adjoining tribes and 100 on Grand Ronde and Klamath reservations, the quote of 1,000 would be filled. Suppose that these Indians receive their patents from the president as the treaties provide, and that the titles to these farms legally vest in them and their heirs, on condition that they occupy and till a portion of same, and that a majority or all of them get the idea of ownership which no changes of agents or Indian policy can make void; and suppose a majority of these Indians shall within two years have houses, gardens and fields of grain, horses and cattle on these homesteads, and begin to have some of the comforts of a settled home life, suppose that several hundred of their children attend school, and that some of them are learning to work on the farms or in mills and shops, would such a class of facts offend the whites in any degree or injure the country?
Suppose the Indians have begun their farm life under these pledges, but have lost courage and hope by the long delay to grant them patents or certificates to an acre, and hence have felt no motive to work on lands not their own, would such a class of facts be strange, or wrong on their part, or unnatural even for white men? How long and how hard will a white man work on a farm not his own or on a claim to which he can get no title?

How would he feel to be called a lazy, worthless wretch, fit to be kicked and chased out of the community or shot because he will not build a house, till a garden or cultivate a field without pay or ownership?

Suppose the Indian department of government begin to look at this matter and assign to Indians their pledged homesteads and to grant patents to them on the reservations as fast as these can be made out, in due form, with well-defined limits, according to the U.S. surveys, will it be a means of quieting the ferment that has every year prevailed among the Indians as the white settlements have crowded more and more upon them?

Will a thousand Indian owners of farms upon these scattered reservations act as a constant barrier to war parties, outlaws, and the hostile runners who pass from tribe to tribe every season to stir up strife?

Suppose the board of Indian commissioners authorize every Indian agent to appoint an Indian police to detect and arrest every criminal and bring him before a legal tribunal for trial, and thus act with white sheriffs and constables to preserve the public safety and peace instead of our annual Indian war, and would the people be glad to have this done?

Suppose the board of Indian commissioners should urge all the Indians to take homesteads at once, and should open the reservations to public sale and use the funds for permanent Indian schools, or for mills and shops, and to pay for head mechanics and farmers to instruct them, as the treaties of 1855 provided, would the present public sentiment approve and sustain this policy?
These questions are practical at this moment. We can hardly doubt that the answer will be in favor of such measures from every part of our Pacific Northwest.

G.H. ATKINSON

Apr. 17, 1880

WARM SPRINGS INDIAN AGENCY

Indian Farmers

It is well to study every subject in sight of its examples. The rule of the Great Teacher, ‘by their fruits shall ye know them’, is as true in business and in education as in religion. ‘Every tree is known by its fruit’. This test will always be applied, and its results must be accepted. A public journal stands upon its merits, or fails for lack of them. So a public man—and every citizen is in a degree a public man—wins that measure of respect, confidence and esteem, which his general conduct deserves. His race, or nationality or color adds no weight to the decision. A watch, whether made in Waltham, Lyndon or Geneva, is valued at its worth, and not for its trade mark. A bushel of wheat rates in market by its quality, not by its producer, whether a Russian or an American, or whether his skin is white, or black, or copper colored.

In like manner a man will be judged by the use of his talents and opportunities, and not by their number. The fact that Indians whose habits for generations have been to hunt and fish and dig camas and pick wild berries for a living, and roam about and build wigwams of poles and mats where nature supplied their wants best with the labor, have now become farmers with fixed houses and board houses with doors and windows, chimney and fireplace, stoves, tables and chairs, lounges and beds, pantry and dishes, flour and vegetables and meat, books and papers, clocks and mirrors, combs and brushes; and that husband and wife and children are clad in the garb of a civilized people, command respect for them and for their instructors and for the present policy of the Indian department.
The plan of Dr. Whitman and Rev. H.H. Spalding and Rev. E. Walker and Rev. C. Eells of the A.B.C.F.M. in eastern Oregon from 1836 and 1838 and thereafter, to keep their tribes from annual trips to the buffalo ranges for meat, and the camas prairies for roots, by furnishing them with hoes and plows and axes and teams and teaching them how to raise food at home, was a credit to their wisdom and their piety.

This missionary idea was the germ of the ‘Peace Policy’. It means Indian homes on farms which they till and own. It means the school and the church. It means the six days of labor and the Sabbath of rest for them and for their households and their beasts of burden. It means the quiet domestic life in fixed dwellings which stimulates industry and insures a more intelligent responsibility and a nobler manhood and womanhood and childhood.

PRODUCTS OF INDIAN FARMS ON THE WARM SPRINGS RESERVATION IN 1879

These consist of the cereals and vegetables and hay for the most part. Of wheat they raised 10,000 bushels; of oats about 500 bushels; of hay, about 150 tons; of potatoes, about 3,000 bushels; of turnips, several hundred bushels; pumpkins, by count, several hundred.

MODES OF FARMING

On a trip of four or five miles up and down the Tenino valley, on both sides of the brook, I saw eight or nine small farms, fenced and in process of cultivation. Some were ploughing, others harrowing, another was rolling a field of oats, just sown, broadcast, as whites do it. They had ploughs, harrows, wagons, harness gear and tools, purchased of agricultural merchants.

Their methods of using them were like our methods. The present superintendent of agriculture, James Luckey, Esq., and his predecessors, had taught them these methods. Formerly they sowed grain in spots, hills and patches. Now they clear the land of bushes and make way for the plow. Their fences are of pine rails of good size and length, and well laid up zig zag. The bottom rail rests
A Public Spirit

on stones put in order along the line. Among the willows they make a kind of pole or wattle fence with stakes and thongs. They show the same kind of skill, economy and industry as other farmers. Their corrals for stock are strong. Their barns and sheds are low, but convenient for mowing hay and grain and for shelter for work horses and calves. They learn to feed work horses with hay and oats, and to take care of cows and sheep and fowls. In a word they find work enough about home and on their farms to keep them busy, and they are glad to do it for the profit and comfort which it brings.

TULLUX HOLLOQUILLA

This man’s farm lies up the creek, about 3 miles from the agency. His house is built of sawed lumber with windows, doors, floors, apartments, sitting rooms, bed room and kitchen; with stove, table, chairs and stools, crockery on shelf or in pantry, fire place, lounge, bedstead and beds, bedding and clothing like that of white people. His wife died last year leaving him three bright little children. His sisters, Mrs. Orville Olney and Miss Nettie Holloquilla [ed.—modern descendants use the spelling Holliquilla], keep house. The children attend school about eight months in the year. He was in the corral, branding yearling ponies when we drove up. His manner has the marks of intelligence and self respect. His words are few, and his replies are given with a trace of caution common to his people. While three of us—Messrs. C.H. [ed.—Cyrus] Walker, clerk and teacher and also acting agent in the absence of Capt. John Smith, Hon. I.N. Smith, who is abiding here for health, and myself called at the house. Tullux, as he is familiarly addressed, continued his hard job of lassoing, throwing and branding his wild colts. Mr. Ramsby, the stage driver, helped him finish the task of branding about thirty, and got very weary and worn by it, in addition to his all day and night ride from the Dalles.

These incidents show the mutual respect and confidence which exist and increase between the resident whites and Indians on the reservations.

The next farm above belongs to his father, Holloquilla Senior, a man about 65 or 67 years old, whose rather grave, dignified way
appears in his son and daughters. A fence divides their farms. They have similar fields, houses, stables and barns, not large or costly, but convenient for present needs.

Other farms taken along the brook, as the farmers elsewhere have done, are like these two. Some have five or ten acres under fence, and some perhaps thirty or forty. Farm wagons and ploughs unused were under shelter.

The bench lands and low buttes, and hill sides up to the rim rock on both sides of the valley, and all the level, grassy upper plains between the numerous valleys are stock range and timber regions, whence logs are cut and drawn to the mill at the agency and sawed by the Indians for their lumber and for sale.

Their wheat is ground by an Indian miller at the agency flour mill, which furnishes all the flour used by whites and Indians on the reservation.

NUMBER OF INDIAN FARMERS

There are between eighty and ninety of these farms. The number of houses built of sawed lumber is eighty-one and of logs only two. They gradually increase, by marriage and the settlement of young people, and by the change of others from the chase and from the camas prairies to the surer harvests of their own fields.

LAND TENURE

The reservation is about thirty-six miles square. Yet the east line meanders along the De Chutes river, the south line along the Metolius, which rises on the northeast side of Mt. Jefferson, the west line along the Cascade mountain summit, and the north line meanders eastward along the Mutton mountain range to the De Chutes. This irregular boundary implies the loose and uncertain lines which must limit unsurveyed districts. But surveys and allotments have been made of farming portions within the reservation, according to treaty. The Indian farmers usually live on these allotments. They consider them their own. They are surprised when told that they each need
A Public Spirit

a deed, signed and sealed like those of the white man. I met them in council, and after commending their progress in agriculture and in the comfort of their homes, I spoke of their uncertain land titles, and suggested to them that a bill is or will be before congress to give deeds of farms to them in severalty on their reservations inalienable for 25 years. They know or they ought to know that they can take homesteads off the reservations under the law of March 3, 1875, and become citizens at once. Wm. Chinook [ed.—commonly known as Billy Chinook], who went to Washington in 1844 or ’45 with Gen. Fremont, replied in a general way that they kept faith with the whites and found my words good. Py Nuse [ed.—usually spelled Pinouse], the head chief, in a dignified speech, related their history, dealings, and wishes, and wanted time for counsel on the subject of deeds in severalty for their lands. Both held that they own the whole reservation now. Why, then, they asked, get deeds? They recall the sale of other large sections, which they had deeded to the whites and given up to them. Why take deeds of what they had never sold, i.e., the reservation? My reply was that Tullux Holaquilla and his father, and Wm. Chinook and Py Nuse, and every other man who had land, had no records on the books, and no one could tell where their bounds were, and that others could get their farms away unless held by legal limits and written titles. These ideas seemed new and strange and somewhat startling.

AN OLD FRAUD COMMITTED AGAINST THEM

Wm. Chinook said that Agent Huntington talked good and said he was their friend and made promises to deal honestly with them. He drew up a paper and asked them if they would like to have a pass from the agent every time they left the agency? He told them it would be a good thing to protect them. He got them to sign the paper by which, they thought, they were to have passes. After he was gone, they learned that the paper contained the sale of their fisheries at The Dalles for $10,000. They were thus cheated out of their rights to fish, which was a large part of their living. They now have to pay a rent every year for fishing there, to white men who claim the land and fishing ground. It makes them afraid to sign

[240]

papers. It makes them want to know more about these deeds. This deed of the salmon fishery at The Dalles was new to me. I could make no reply. On inquiry, I learned that such a conveyance had been made years ago, and that the $10,000 had not come to the Indians, but that they had the hardship to pay a yearly rental for the use of that fishing ground which was their heritage by birthright.

After the council was over they waited in little groups around the agency for an hour. Some came to shake hands. The former hereditary chief of the Warm Springs, who had come fifteen miles to attend the council, wished to know more about the deeds. He said the words were good, but he wanted to understand it better. I referred him to Mr. Walker and to others who had it better explained. Another cluster sent Charles Pitt, the excellent interpreter, to know why the deeds would give them any better title than they now had? I went over to the group and explained the facts to him and to the young Pi-Ute interpreter, who talks English well, and to the others. As the Indian cook, Charley, came to call me to supper, the little bands began to leave for their homes up the valleys and on the hills. Tullux Hollaquilla, who had listened in silence with close attention and an occasional nod, collected his three little children and two sisters in his farm wagon and drove off home, like any regular farmer leaving town. Hollaquilla Senior mounted his pony and rode away with his family. Wm. Chinook lingered a little longer. As night came all were gone to their homes.

THEIR SCHOOL

The records show over a hundred children of school age, among the four tribes, whose total resident population is about 550. There were 18 deaths and 21 births last year, making about one per cent gain. Eighty-eight are enrolled in school. The last term roll gave an average attendance of 81. They learn to read and study in English, beginning in the primer and advancing like other children, step by step, into higher grades. They study geography and arithmetic,

---

[241]
A Public Spirit

and learn to write and sing. They do chores at home and about the school room. The matron, a very capable Indian woman, prepares them a plain noonday meal, which favor somewhat depends upon their prompt attendance and good conduct. The school term had closed, but the plans and reports commend the agent, Capt. John Smith, and the teachers, C.H. [ed.—Cyrus] Walker and Miss Smith.

THEIR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

All the men, women and children who could sing followed their leader, Komar, a sprightly young farmer, in singing several of Roupes’ version of the psalms.

A short sermon from John 3:16 on the word ‘life’, and what it does and is, was first interpreted into the Wasco language, sentence by sentence, by Chas. Pitt, and next into the Warm Springs language by another earnest interpreter. This process sometimes passes into a third interpretation into the Pi-Ute language, of whom some fifteen were present. It is slow, but seems to satisfy their craving for bible truth. They gave close and unwearied attention to every word, and joined heartily in the doxology and response ‘Amen’. Capt. Smith or Mr. Walker leads their services every Sabbath and gives them a short practical sermon. Life and property are safe on the reservation. The doors are not locked day or night. Lost animals or goods are restored if in their bounds. Order prevails. Whisky is neither sold or allowed within their limits. Ten of their number are enrolled as a police force, with C.H. Walker, whom they respect, trust and esteem as their chief and captain. All dress in uniform on Sabbath or council, or gala days. They have little to do except to keep children quiet, and seat the congregation or show authority. But they will serve well for sheriffs or constables when state and U.S. courts are held among them.

The evening closed with an hour of singing “The Gospel Songs,” led by Mr. Walker at the organ and joined by Mr. Charles Pitt and his two daughters, whose voices are clear and strong. I asked him, where or how he learned so many languages so well? He speaks four, the Wasco, Warm Springs, Pi-Ute and English equally well. He said he was born in Pitt river. When taken in war and made a slave
among the Wascos, then among the Warm Springs and was bought by a white man, and was kept in a white family for several years. Even now some of the older Indians call him a slave and dislike to have him as interpreter, but his merits keep him in this service.

It is plain that Capt. J. Smith, whom the Indians trust and esteem, and his employees have done well for these Indians and well for the government, and they deserve the esteem and confidence which they have won.

THE CHANGE OF INDIAN POLICY SUGGESTED BY THESE FACTS

Certainly a transfer to the military is not wanted. The gain thus far is in the line of personal rights, personal manhood and womanhood. They have proved the fitness of Indians to support themselves in a civilized way. They can and will be industrious and economical, if entrusted with farms deeded in severalty, if protected by law and made amenable to its obligations. The outlook for them is forward, not backward. They are no longer to be called “Siwashes”, and their women to be called squaws, and their children “papooses”. That policy degrades them as it degrades those who use such terms. The manly and honorable policy is to treat them as men and women with rights and duties under law, and to establish the laws of the state and the nation among them. Let this be the next step in the Indian department and the Indian problem will be solved. Indian wars will be arrested by courts of law. Troops on the border for the sake of protection and peace, will be superseded by an efficient corps of Indian police, who will cooperate with state and municipal police, and be part of them, and who will ensure safety and order in their own precincts. The need of large Indian subsidies and appropriations—so long and so often depleted in passage to them—will also cease. Frauds will cease also for lack of motive. The Indian question will then appear in its true light, as one of manhood and citizenship among us, and not that of tribes under government, but outside the scope of law. The blunder of two and a half centuries will thus come to an end.