Newe country: Environmental degradation, resource war, irrigation and the transformation of culture on Idaho's Snake River plain, 1805--1927.

Sterling Ross Johnson, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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Abstract
Idaho’s Shoshone and Bannock Indians have long relied upon the Snake River. The waterway provides salmon and waters the vast Camas Prairie. Grass also grows on the prairie and the surrounding plains, which fed huge herds of bison that Shoshones and Bannocks also relied upon for food and trade. As a result of integration into the globalizing economy initiated by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, indigenous peoples of the area and Euroamericans overhunted bison populations, driving them to near extinction. Equestrian culture centered on the bison hunt as the primary means to accumulate wealth and prestige. As bison numbers declined, American cattlemen drove their herds onto the prairie, consuming and trampling the plants and roots that Shoshones and Bannocks also relied upon for food. The combination of the decline of bison numbers, the severe degradation of the Camas Prairie and the failure of the federal government to provide Shoshones and Bannocks with treaty promised food rations and cash annuities drove a coalition of Bannocks, Shoshones and Paiutes to war in 1878, led by a Bannock named Buffalo Horn. The Bannocks quickly lost the war, but the conflict marked a significant transition period in the history of the Northwest in which indigenous armed resistance to colonization and the reservation system became no longer viable. After the war, the Carey Act of 1896 opened the Snake River and southeastern Idaho to irrigation privatization. Wild speculation characterized much of the investment, and Fort Hall reservation farmers largely lacked the huge capital sums required to extract hydraulic value from the plan. Despite exclusion from Carey Act development, the reservation community continued using traditional irrigation and farming techniques to raise low water crops and begin their own pastoral cattle industry.

Keywords
Agriculture; Bannock Indians; History; Idaho – Fort Hall Indian reservations; Indian Wars (Bannock : 1878); Shoshoni Indians; United States – Snake River

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