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Foodways and Family Traditions
130 Years of Cattle Ranching at Fort Hall

by

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Foodways and Family Traditions: 130 Years of Cattle Ranching at Fort Hall

Thesis Abstract – Idaho State University (2019)

The Shoshone-Bannocks' removal from their ancestral homelands to the Fort Hall Reservation marked a shift in lifestyle and culture. Their previous nomadic lifestyle and seasonal food practices were not compatible with reservation life as they were to adopt a conventional and sedentary existence meant to assimilate into American culture. With few options for employment, many Shoshone-Bannocks turned to cattle ranching. Cattle ranching afforded the Shoshone-Bannocks the ability to be outside riding horses and tending the land and animals. The Shoshone-Bannocks, now confined to a small parcel of land compared to their ancestral homelands, were able to maintain pieces of their culture through cattle ranching. Using oral histories from Shoshone-Bannock ranchers and other primary source accounts, I use cultural history as a lens to better understand the Shoshone-Bannock ranching experience from the beginning of reservation life in the late nineteenth century until now. Themes of family, tradition, and culture embody Shoshone-Bannock ranching success at Fort Hall. This work challenges Anglo-centric historical accounts and provides a fresh perspective on Native American history.

Key Words:

United States History
Shoshone-Bannock
Fort Hall Reservation
Cattle Ranching
Beef
The Bottoms

Chapter 1

History of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes

In 1863 Colonel Patrick Edward Connor led a detachment of California Volunteers into what was then southeastern Washington Territory (today, the site is located near Preston, Idaho) to expel the Shoshone Chief Bear Hunter and his followers. On January 29, 1863, the California Volunteers slaughtered nearly 400 Shoshone men, women and children.¹ This event became known as the Bear River Massacre. Years of skirmishes, food raids and failed conciliation attempts culminated in this event. There are several different accounts of what exactly happened that day. The total death numbers and belligerents have changed over the years. These varying accounts reflect the trend in the secondary literature – a trend of conquest, violence and decline. The trend over the last two decades or more emphasizes agency among indigenous people and the ability to shape and respond to changing political, social, and economic realities. Scholarship increasingly emphasized them as victims around the 1960s to the 1980s. Brigham Madsen's work, which I will cover in a subsequent section, is a product of this. Since then, interpretations have shifted to document their continued efforts to control their destinies as much as possible. The Shoshone-Bannock were not helpless victims of modernity. They have displayed the capacity to integrate into American economic markets while also maintaining their rich cultural traditions.

In 1805 Corps of Discovery embarked on a journey to explore the newly purchased Louisiana Territory. They also established trade relations with Native American or indigenous peoples and wanted to find the easiest route to the Columbia River. Early contact with Euro-Americans commenced a new age for the Shoshone-Bannocks.² This new age manifested itself

¹ Brigham D. Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 1985), xiii.

² James P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 134.

in a variety of ways. They lost the ability to live their lives as they previously had. With total autonomy lost, the Shoshone-Bannocks had to discover new ways to control their lives.

The Shoshone-Bannock people have inhabited the Snake River country for thousands of years. The traditional geographic scope of the Shoshone-Bannock land – the Snake River country – encompasses Idaho from the Salmon River south to northern Utah and Nevada and east from Oregon to the Continental Divide. While scholars debate the ancestral origins of the Fort Hall community, the Numic-spread theory, a widely accepted linguistic model, informs us of Numic speakers' origins.³ Both the Shoshone and Bannock tribes speak a derivative of the Numic language, and the Numic-spread theory tells us that Numic speakers began to spread out in a fan-like shape from the southwest corner of the Great Basin throughout present-day Nevada, eastern Oregon, western Utah and into the Snake River drainage of Idaho some 4,000 years ago.⁴

In order to understand the social structure and subsistence methods of the Shoshone-Bannocks, we must appreciate the environment and context in which they lived. The Great Basin of the western United States is defined by its semi-arid to arid climate. Because of the aridity and scarcity of resources, the Shoshone-Bannocks, along with other Great Basin indigenous people, had to adopt specific subsistence patterns to mitigate the shortcomings of an arid environment. A “Desert Culture” prevailed among the Shoshone-Bannocks. To survive, the group adopted an approach or model based on, “Social fluidity, mobility and a flexible and opportunistic approach to subsistence.”⁵ A communal and opportunistic approach to subsistence

³ John W. Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks: Culture and Commerce at Fort Hall, 1870-1940* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 21.

⁴ Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks*, 23.

⁵ Robert F. Murphy and Yolanda Murphy, *Handbook of North American Indians: Great Basin*, Vol. 11, s.v. “Northern Shoshone and Bannock,” Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1986.

allowed for these people to exist in an arid environment by adopting strategies that best suited their needs.⁶

After contact with Europeans, life for the Shoshone-Bannock slowly transitioned from one based on social mobility and fluidity and the freedom to travel where they pleased for food to a very restricted lifestyle, both in terms of their traditional hunting grounds and ability to govern themselves. The Rocky Mountain fur trade made them powerful brokers from about 1820 to 1840. Up to this time, they were still able to exercise their own autonomy and seasonal patterns of subsistence. However, by the late 1840s, the situation had changed. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints moved to the Shoshone-Bannock's southern boundaries near present day Salt Lake City, Utah. The discovery of gold in the nearby Boise Basin and Beaverhead country of Montana further increased traffic and emigrants. And the expansion of the market economy in the Snake River Country had profound consequences for the Shoshone-Bannock and their way of life.⁷ The traditional way of life for the Shoshone-Bannocks began to disappear. They could no longer travel hundreds of miles in either direction and not expect to see another Euro-American. Big changes occurred in Snake River country, and the Shoshone-Bannocks soon faced monumental decisions.

Upon being forced onto the Fort Hall Reservation in 1868 by way of the Fort Bridger Treaty, the Shoshone-Bannocks struggled to find a foothold in the emerging American economy and that of the nearby – and encroaching – city of Pocatello. After mixed success in agriculture, ranching provided a new opportunity to make a living by the end of the nineteenth century. It is important to note that agriculture and ranching were not chosen by the Shoshone-Bannock, but rather forced upon them as a result of the Fort Bridger Treaty, which established the Fort Hall

⁶ Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks*, 22.

⁷ Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 23-25.

Indian Reservation, and the subsequent Dawes Act of 1887. Located in southeast Idaho, Fort Hall's original acreage of 1,800,000 reduced to 1,336,000 in 1869 and reduced again to 540,764 acres in 1900.⁸ The Dawes Act established, among other things, individual allotments of 160 acres to each household to promote subsistence farming and assimilation into the wider American culture.⁹ Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Agents recognized the lack of success in agriculture and promoted ranching as another means for Shoshone-Bannock families to make a living. Many Shoshone-Bannocks acknowledged ranching as a way to maintain pieces of their culture and some of their autonomy and began ranching in earnest at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The following sections will dive into the secondary literature related to the Shoshone-Bannocks, their involvement in cattle ranching, cattle ranching in the Americas, and several case studies involving the Shoshone-Bannocks. The first section includes several books by Brigham D. Madsen regarding the Shoshone-Bannocks. John W. Heaton's *Culture and Commerce at Fort Hall, 1870-1940* is discussed and highlights a trend away from histories of violence and loss. Case studies, such as irrigation and water rights on the reservation and remembrance of the Bear River Massacre are considered. Finally, I end this section by defining the role of cattle ranching in the Americas to help put the Shoshone-Bannocks' involvement in ranching into a broader context.

Historiography

The secondary literature on the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes emphasizes cultural studies, origin stories and warfare. The field provides numerous studies on treaty rights, military history

⁸ "Fort Hall Indian Reservation Districts," Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, accessed June 30, 2018, http://sbtribes-ewmp.com/land_base_fort_hall.html.

⁹ Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks*, 44 & 115.

and in-depth cultural analyses. Through these, one can develop a strong background in Shoshone-Bannock history. However, there remains a void in the study of the rich and proud ranching tradition at the Fort Hall Reservation in southeast Idaho. For the economy of Fort Hall, ranching provides one of the most important sources of income for the Tribes. If we can understand ranching from the perspective of the people who work the ranges every day, we can observe that ranching bonds families and tribes together. By examining new sources, primarily oral histories, I aim to fill this lacuna, which will add additional depth to this understudied topic. These oral histories will shed light on ranching at Fort Hall in the twentieth century.

Much of the scholarly and mainstream focus on the Shoshone-Bannocks has fixated on such issues as broken treaties, their loss of culture, and conflict – a sad history of loss and decline. While these prove to be important topics in our understanding of the Shoshone-Bannock people, it leaves out a crucial piece – the word of the people who have actually experienced life on the reservation. Often overshadowed by treaties and warfare, Shoshone-Bannock ranching remains understudied. By looking at figures from cattle sales on the reservation, government reports, and interviews from Shoshone-Bannock people whose families have been involved in the cattle business for decades, we gain a fresh perspective on an important aspect of their culture. I rely on oral histories that provide information not captured in the traditional documentary record. They provide first-hand accounts that traditional sources just do not provide. Traditional sources, such as Land Deeds, Commissioner of Indian Affairs bureaucratic records, and treaty documentation are not written from the perspective of the Native American. They are often paternalistic in voice and intention. These types of sources will not provide insight into Native American culture and life the way that an oral history can. Furthermore, we can grow an appreciation for the dedication to their craft and commitment to family values. An

examination of the relationship between family and ranching in later chapters will show that success in the cattle industry resulted not from blind luck, but from a long tradition of culture and family and determination to succeed in southeastern Idaho's Anglo-dominated economy.

This chapter highlights the main methods scholars have used to study both the Shoshone-Bannock people and the ranching industry. This first section covers the Shoshone-Bannock literature and the ranching literature will receive attention later in the chapter. A plethora of works contribute to the large body of Shoshone-Bannock literature, however most tend to focus on issues surrounding their forced removal, broken treaties and promises, warfare, and, more recently, a celebration of cultural resistance. Finally, I will address what scholars overlook: the great success the Shoshone-Bannock achieved in the ranching industry at the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. Furthermore, my contribution blends oral history, ethnohistory and economic history to reconstruct the social history of indigenous ranchers among the Shoshone-Bannock.

Classic Studies on the Shoshone-Bannocks

In this section, I focus on the seminal works of Brigham D. Madsen. Madsen worked extensively with the Shoshone-Bannock and authored several books over a career that spanned the second half of the 20th century. His first, *Bannock of Idaho*, released in 1958 and his last on the Shoshone-Bannocks, *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre* released in 1985.

¹⁰ Madsen's longevity is undeniable. His surveys of the Shoshone-Bannocks provide important context and are the backbone of the literature on the Shoshone-Bannocks. Perhaps the leading historian on the Shoshone-Bannock people, Brigham D. Madsen worked extensively with the Shoshone-Bannock and authored five books about these tribes as well as numerous other publications. In *Bannock of Idaho*, Madsen offers a broad study of the Bannock. Once confined

¹⁰ "A Tribute to Brigham Madsen," *Blackfoot Journal*, accessed July 1, 2018, <http://blackfootjournal.com/tribute-to-brigham-madsen/>.

to the reservation, Madsen suggests that cattle ranching offered an easier transition into the markets because of the Shoshone-Bannock traditional nomadic lifestyle.¹¹ Madsen's book, *The Northern Shoshoni*, provides a comprehensive study of the Northern Shoshoni, including cattle ranching. The Shoshone-Bannock faced numerous struggles in the reservation's early years but have since begun to direct their own affairs and regain some of their proud culture and heritage. Additionally, Madsen devotes a whole chapter to cattle ranching. He concludes that raising stock at Fort Hall proved to be an easier transition than farming, possibly due to haphazard irrigation projects.¹² Madsen astutely interprets the Shoshone-Bannocks evolution into ranching, but focuses on the external push factors. Using the same sources – government and bureaucratic records – to tell the story rather than definitive sources on cattle ranching. Whereas Madsen tries to define the factors that pushed the Shoshone-Bannock into ranching, I want to find exactly what it is or was that made them, or prepared them, to become astute ranchers.

John W. Heaton highlights an emerging group of literature that finally moves past the tragic history of loss and decline theme and embraces unique aspects of the Shoshone-Bannock culture and way of life. Heaton's monograph, *The Shoshone-Bannocks: Culture and Commerce at Fort Hall, 1870-1940*, moves past the early fascination of broken treaties and an erasure of unique cultures as if they no longer existed and begins to look at specific aspects of Native American life. This case study examines the integration of the Shoshone-Bannocks into the wider economic markets during the end of the nineteenth century into the beginning of the twentieth century. Ranching served as an entrance into the economic markets. Heaton's conclusion about the success of their industry offers both similar and differing interpretations than Madsen. Heaton believes that success in ranching and the marketplace resulted from rich

¹¹ Brigham D. Madsen, *The Bannock of Idaho* (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1996).

¹² Brigham D. Madsen, *The Northern Shoshoni* (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, 1980).

cultural traditions that blended well with the cattle industry.¹³ Madsen considers external factors – failed irrigation projects – and a previous nomadic lifestyle as the explanation for thriving in ranching. Failed irrigation projects may have been the push factor, but rich cultural traditions paved the way for a bustling ranching industry at the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. The history of loss and decline has been told numerous times. Heaton offers a fresh, interesting and important perspective on the social, cultural and economic history of the Shoshone-Bannocks.

One episode that captures the imagination of many scholars is the Bear River Massacre of 1863. Here, I will explore two sources that look into the Bear River Massacre and how the event has been told, re-told and, perhaps, misinterpreted. Madsen explores the Bear River Massacre and the distinct groups that comprise the Shoshoni in his book *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre*. It is both a survey of the seven distinct Shoshoni groups and a lamentation of the Bear River Massacre. Madsen determines that the treaties signed after the Bear River Massacre brought relative peace to an area hostile for nearly two decades but wonders how and why the Bear River Massacre is often overlooked in the broader literature on Native Americans and Native American warfare.¹⁴ Likewise, John Barnes delves into the history and remembrance of the Bear River Massacre in his article “The Struggle to Control the Past: Commemoration, Memory and the Bear River Massacre of 1863.” Locally and regionally, the Bear River Massacre remains cemented in people’s minds; but, like Madsen, Barnes contemplates its absence on the national scale. Interestingly, the language used on the plaques at the site of the Bear River Massacre has changed and mirrored shifts in attitude occurring within the United States. Early plaques referred to Bear River as a “battle” although most everyone knew it was a

¹³ Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks*, 15.

¹⁴ Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 21.

slaughter and it stayed that way for nearly a century before being changed to “massacre.”¹⁵ The Bear River Massacre offers an interesting case study because of its early omission from public display. Wounded Knee and Sand Creek receive much attention from early scholars although Bear River may have been more destructive. By looking at the Bear River Massacre and its remembrance, we can begin to understand the shifts in attitude and perception towards the Shoshone-Bannocks.

Here, I will shift my attention from specific authors of Shoshone-Bannock history into thematic approaches. Water has long been a contentious point at Fort Hall and scholars focus on the unfair irrigation practices. Also focused on in this section are the scholarly works pertaining to cattle ranching in the Americas – their origins and practices. These case studies will further shed light on the thematic approaches taken by scholars and also help place the Shoshone-Bannocks in context of other ranching traditions in the Americas.

Another area of scholarly interest is the relationship between irrigators and the water supply. Southeast Idaho’s landscapes are arid and farming in the area necessitates that water be brought to the farms. Amy Canfield explores water rights on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in her article, "'These Lands are Worthless without Water': The Federal Government's Divided Loyalties' in Irrigating the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, 1902-1920.” Canfield found another instance of Native American security and comfort being taken for granted at the behest of government agencies. The Indian Agency and Reclamation Service worked on the reservation to divide water rights among the newly established homesteads at Fort Hall and the city of Pocatello but had different endgames in mind. The federal government eventually sided with the city of Pocatello, and much of the irrigated water was rerouted off the reservation. This

¹⁵ John Barnes, “The Struggle to Control the Past” Commemoration, Memory and the Bear River Massacre,” *The Public Historian* 30, no.1 (February 2008): 81-104.

compelled many Shoshone-Bannock families to lease their lands to white farmers and, ultimately, many Shoshone-Bannock families adopted cattle ranching.¹⁶ This provides yet another story of Native Americans being taken advantage of. However, because of the failed irrigation projects, Shoshone-Bannock families embraced cattle ranching and found a way to survive and prosper in the trade.

While rich literature on the Shoshone-Bannock exists, much of it glazes over their involvement in cattle ranching. By studying cattle ranching at Fort Hall through the lens of ethnohistory, we can make evident the experiences of Shoshone-Bannock people that may have otherwise been overlooked or wholly disregarded in mainstream American history narratives. The Shoshone-Bannock people have a rich cultural history and cattle ranching remains an important aspect.

Cattle Ranching in the Americas

Now, it is necessary to define the field of cattle ranching. There exists a breadth and depth to the literature, spanning continents and centuries. From American cattle ranching origin stories to the development of ranching in Africa and its transfer to the Americas, cattle ranching proves an important topic in scholarship. In the last few decades, the topic has taken a turn to involve cattle ranching stories from those under-represented in historical research. Also, a new vein of study in cattle ranching looks at the environmental impacts of the beef industry and calls into question the ethical and moral behavior involved in the consumption of beef. My study of Shoshone-Bannock ranching at Fort Hall provides voice to under-represented groups of cattle ranchers.

¹⁶ Amy Canfield, "'These Lands are Worthless without Water': The Federal Government's Divided Loyalties' in Irrigating the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, 1902-1920," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 105, no. 3 (Summer 2014): 122-35.

L.F. Allen delivered the first comprehensive look into the cattle ranching industry in the United States in his book published in 1890, *American Cattle: Their History, Breeding and Management*. Allen looks at cattle reports and census records to paint a broad picture of the prices, breeds, climates and numbers involved in the industry at the time. Allen concludes that, “We confidently assert that North America is the healthiest cattle country in the world!”¹⁷ Another early book concerning cattle ranching written by Ernest Osgood Staples in 1929 and then reprinted in 2009, explores the westward expansion of cattle ranching in the United States. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the westward expansion of cattle ranching mirrored that of the nation’s westward expansion. The first ranches began as trading posts where fresh cattle could be traded to emigrants and settlers; the discovery of gold in California and the Rocky Mountains strengthened the cattle market; and finally, these large mining populations increased westward traffic while the railroad disturbed Native American populations and ensuing hostilities necessitated a military presence, opening new markets for cattle.¹⁸ These early works provide a framework for which to study cattle ranching.

Hollywood and popular culture have perpetuated the myth that portrays cattle ranching as a lawless, open range system. Terry G. Jordan turns this myth upside down, and much more, in his book *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusions, and Differentiation*. He traces these cattle-ranching frontiers, or systems, from their origins on different continents and their influence on American ranching. First, Jordan expels the open range myth by pointing out that the open range system lasted for only a short time. Cattle ranching originated from four spots on the globe: the British Highlands, Extremadura in West Spain, Andalusia in South Spain,

¹⁷ L.F. Allen, *American Cattle: Their History, Breeding and Management* (New York, NY: Orange Judd Company, 1890), 18.

¹⁸ Ernest Osgood Staples, *The Day of the Cattlemen* (1929; repr., Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

and tropical West Africa. Elements of all these traditions transferred to the United States and by the mid-nineteenth century, three herding cultures – the Californian, Texan and the Midwestern – vied for supremacy in the industry. Jordan largely finds the cattle ranching frontier as a place of diversity that is far more complex and ethnically diverse than first realized.¹⁹ Terry Jordan's realization that cattle ranching in the United States evolved from very diverse Old World roots opened the door for subsequent studies into under-represented and forgotten peoples and places in American History.

Andrew Sluyter examines a previously unexplored topic in ranching histories with his book *Black Ranching Frontiers: African Cattle Herders of the Atlantic World, 1500-1900*. Whereas previous works have focused on the unskilled work of blacks, Sluyter investigates the ideas, knowledge and ingenuity brought to western ranching cultures. He conducts case studies of New Spain in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century Louisiana, Barbuda from the seventeenth century on, and the Pampas region of Argentina and Uruguay in the nineteenth century. His work provides a counter-narrative of the white European and American-centric cattle ranching. Sluyter argues against a statement made by Terry Jordan that, "I find no compelling evidence of meaningful African influence in the cultures and adaptive systems of the various American cattle ranching frontiers."²⁰ Sluyter expands on his earlier work of African cattle ranching frontiers in "How Africans and their Descendants Participated in Establishing Open-Range Cattle Ranching in the Americas." He magnifies his case studies in New Spain and the Pampas to include some techniques and equipment that Africans transferred from Africa to the New World. In New Spain, Africans were deeply involved in the practice of lassoing cattle

¹⁹ Terry G. Jordan, *North-American Cattle Ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusions and Differentiation* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1993).

²⁰ Andrew Sluyter, *Black Ranching Frontiers: African Cattle Herders of the Atlantic World, 1500-1900* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 17.

from horseback and in the Pampas region, Africans very likely introduced a water hoist that had been in use for centuries in Africa and Asia.²¹ Sluyter's work discovering African influence on cattle ranching in the New World is unprecedented in the field and opens up a whole host of opportunities. Understanding the dynamics of ranching frontiers in the Americas demands that we understand the Atlantic networks that connected them to Africa, Europe and beyond. By distancing himself from those white European and American-centric methods of studying history, he has paved a way for similar case studies. My case study of Shoshone-Bannock cattle ranching at the Fort Hall Indian Reservation follows this path. This study will strive to find the networks that connected Shoshone-Bannock ranching families at Fort Hall.

Ranching on the Great Plains remains an iconic image in American minds. Wide-open ranges and miles of barbed wire fence dominate this image. Edward Everett Dale spearheaded the scholarship about ranching on the Great Plains in his book *The Range Cattle Industry: Ranching on the Great Plains from 1865-1925*. Dale examines the growth and decline of the ranching industry on the Great Plains. The reasoning behind the decline is twofold; Dale suggests that competition with farmers accelerated the decline and also posits that the public domain system, where small-scale ranchers are forced onto smaller land tracts, as another reason for the decline. He suggests that single-family ranches, rather than large-scale ranches would make for a stronger and more resilient business.²² Dale offers an interesting case study of ranching on the Great Plains in his article "The Ranchman's Last Frontier." Ranching boomed in Oklahoma and elsewhere on the Great Plains thanks, in large part, to the massive buffalo slaughter and as a result of Native Americans being killed or forced onto reservations. Before

²¹ Andrew Sluyter, "How Africans and their Descendants Participated in Establishing Open-Range Cattle Ranching in the Americas," *Environment and History* 21 (2015): 77-101.

²² Edward Everett Dale, *The Range Cattle Industry: Ranching on the Great Plains from 1865-1925* (1930 repr., Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1960).

Oklahoma became a state, it was set aside as an Indian reservation. Quickly, ranchers and farmers alike recognized prime grazing and farming areas and made deals with Native Americans on the reservation to lease land. Eventually, ranchers gave way to farmers and rows of wheat replaced fields of cattle. This case study mirrors the direction of ranching industry on a larger-scale at the time. Ranchers were often squeezed out of areas for a variety of reasons like their perceived rowdiness, and because of farming's supposed lucrativeness.²³ These sources tell us much about the dynamics of cattle ranching in its early days. We can use these sources to analyze why things happened the way they did, postulate reasons for booms and busts, and hypothesize on the future of ranching.

There have been scholarly works in the study of ranching that look into the lives of American families as a way to tell the story of ranching. The people tell the story rather than stats and labels. Sherm Ewing paints a broad picture of American ranching in *The Ranch: A Modern History of the North American Cattle Industry*. Ewing aims to produce an interesting account of twentieth-century ranching by focusing on some of the people, breeds and important events. Many of the people who work in the industry speak of the hardships of modern-day ranching. Water rights, grazing rights, and availability of schooling are just some of the hardships that face modern ranchers in the American West.²⁴ Linda Husa followed suit, using the stories of families actually involved in the ranching industry to tell their stories and produce a more personal account of ranching. She interviewed six families to discover what ranching life looks like. They talked about many of the same challenges discussed in Ewing's book and elaborated on different ones. Taxes, inheritance laws, operational costs and international politics

²³ Edward Everett Dale, "The Ranchman's Last Frontier," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 10, no.1 (June 1923):34-46.

²⁴ Sherm Ewing, *The Ranch: A Modern History of the North American Cattle Ranching Industry* (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1995).

all doom ranching families to some extent. However, with schools often far from the ranches, ranch parents teach their kids respect for the land and others, ingenuity, shared work and responsibility – the American West depends on what Husa coined the “mothering dynamic.”²⁵ These families all share the same grief and worry that they may lose their land and way of life because of near-sighted decisions, both past and present. Many of these decisions do not take into account the countless ranch families who have worked in the pastures all their lives. These two pieces can serve as a model for my work. They are as much ethnohistory as anything else. Rather than letting government reports, census numbers, cattle numbers, or people far removed from the ranch tell the story, these works, and mine, strive to discover the humanity behind the ranch and aim to find the personal stories that make the industry so rich.

A thematic approach taken by some historians of ranching inspects the environmental effects of cattle ranching. James A. Young and B. Abbott Sparks offer an interesting case study of the environmental impacts of cattle grazing in the intermountain west in their book *Cattle in the Cold Desert*. Young and Sparks look specifically from about 1860, when cattle were first brought to the region, until the end of the nineteenth century. It is an environmental history woven with science and ecology to gauge the effects of grazing animals on the sagebrush and grasslands that dominate the intermountain west. Young and Sparks found that the sagebrush and grasslands were one of the last vegetation resources to be irrevocably changed by domestic livestock and those new dynamics introduced by livestock around 1860 are still underway. Plant communities in the Great Basin did not adapt fast enough, thus, grazing in the intermountain west sagebrush and grasslands is often viewed as a horror story.²⁶ Because of the negative

²⁵ Linda Husa, *The Family Ranch: Land, Children, & Tradition in the American West* (Reno & Las Vegas: The University of Nevada Press, 2009), xxvii.

²⁶ James A. Young & B. Abbott Sparks, *Cattle in the Cold Desert* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2002).

effects grazing has on the ecology of the sagebrush and grasslands, ranching has not always been well-received.

Following the same path as the environmental historians of ranching, some studies debate the ethical and moral behavior involved with beef in American culture. Jeremy Rifkin tackles the touchy subject with his important contribution *Beyond Beef: The Rise and Fall of the Cattle Culture*. Rifkin looks into the effects of cattle raising on both the earth's ecosystems and human populations. He points to deforestation and desertification as consequences of cattle ranching. A love for beef has developed in many societies – what Rifkin calls “cattle complexes.” They are elaborate cultural networks that have helped shape the environmental, economic and political dynamics of whole societies. Rifkin's book provides more than a narrative of ecological collapse, it is a story of human dependence and love for beef. It is a manifesto and a call for humans to rethink our relationship with cattle and the earth.²⁷ What these environmental and ethical-centered scholarship provides for the field is an antithesis and an alternative viewpoint. Knowing where the field is headed proves just as important as knowing where the field has already been.

Within the field of ranching there exists a small assortment of literature relating to Native Americans in the industry. One such source, *When Indians became Cowboys: Native Peoples and Cattle Ranching in the American West* by Peter Iverson demonstrates the importance of ranching to Native Americans and vice versa. *When Indians became Cowboys* looks at Native cattle ranching on the Plains of the Midwest and the American Southwest. Hollywood has pushed and perpetuated this old western view of cowboys and Indians. But, as Iverson points out, today cowboys and Indians are one and the same in some instances. Iverson argues that

²⁷ Jeremy Rifkin, *Beyond Beef: The Rise and Fall of the Cattle Culture* (New York: NY: Penguin Books, 1993), 12, 25.

cattle ranching contributed to – and reinforced – tribal identity and individual self-esteem, thus becoming “a symbol for a new day.”²⁸ Iverson’s conclusion echoes the conclusion that John Heaton came to in *The Shoshone-Bannocks*. Ranching served as a way to maintain culture and bolster tribal identity.

Another publication, which studies the economic efficiency of Native ranchers, provides even more support for Native ranching. “American Indian Relative Ranching Efficiency” by Ronald Trosper analyzes Northern Cheyenne ranching efficiency on their reservation in southeastern Montana versus that of their neighboring white ranchers. Trosper disproves the hypotheses that poverty persists on reservations because Natives had: 1) different constraints on their participation in the market, 2) a general lack of managerial and technical knowledge, and 3) different goals in mind. Using economic equations and statistical analysis, Trosper discovers that the Northern Cheyenne proved as good or better at ranching than the neighboring non-Natives. Furthermore, Trosper points to issues such as land tenure, institutional problems and access to capital as the underlying difficulties in ranching for Native ranchers, not managerial shortcomings.²⁹ This publication provides a blueprint for my work. Using some of the same arguments and analyses, I can offer concrete evidence to demonstrate the great success achieved by Shoshone-Bannock ranchers.

Uncovering the Tradition of Cattle Ranching at Fort Hall

My study focuses on cattle ranching at Fort Hall during the twentieth and twenty first centuries and is based on several oral histories I conducted from 2017 to 2019. Fort Hall is an important case study because the Shoshone-Bannocks have completely integrated themselves

²⁸ Peter Iverson, *When Indians became Cowboys: Native Peoples and Ranching in the American West* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 14.

²⁹ Ronald L. Trosper, “Indian Relative Ranching Efficiency,” *Economic Review* 68, no. 4 (September 1978): 503-16.

into the local economy and this could inform economic practice and cultural resistance in the future. Chapter One will discuss the origins of cattle ranching at Fort Hall – the “why” and “when.” Chapter Two and Three will look into the specific oral histories conducted. These chapters provide the voice that Chapter One does not. These chapters are the “how” – their words provide us with a primary voice, something that government records do not. This study will show that the Shoshone-Bannock people, by virtue of their nomadic and opportunistic approach to life, served them well in their transition to cattle ranching. Furthermore, this study will also show that family, and family tradition, are the most important things to ranchers at Fort Hall. Although the bulk of the oral histories conducted limit my study to a more modern era, there will be pieces from earlier in the twentieth century that will connect with the oral histories.

Sources abound when dealing with the Shoshone-Bannock people and the ranching industry. Certain trends and ways of studying and looking at these subjects appear. Within the Shoshone-Bannock literature, the earliest trends dealt with loss of culture, lands and broken treaties. Through oral interviews, I aim to give a voice to the Shoshone-Bannock peoples and families who are involved in cattle ranching. The great success of Shoshone-Bannock cattle ranchers needs to be told through the authoritative voices who have lived it.

Chapter 2

Beginning a Cattle Ranching Empire

Ranching offered opportunities for the Shoshone-Bannocks to maintain aspects of their culture while providing for their families. Ranching practices honored land allotments stipulated through the Dawes Act of 1887. This chapter examines the early years and formation of cattle ranching at the Fort Hall Reservation. First, I provide an overview of the start of reservation life. As touched on early in Chapter I, reservation life forced Shoshone-Bannock families to farm for survival. The Dawes Act mandated individual land allotments to curtail communal land ownership, promote single-family households and offer farming and ranching as alternative methods of living.

These measures contrasted greatly with traditional Shoshone-Bannock hunting and farming practices. No longer were seasonal trips to the plentiful salmon runs, buffalo hunting grounds and the abundant camas prairies possible. Farming provided an opportunity to enter the market economy as well as tend the land. Ranching afforded the ability to ride horses on the range and uphold pieces from their previous ways of life. The next section, “The Early Years,” highlights early farming and ranching success at the Fort Hall Reservation that paved the way and set a precedent for future farming and ranching ventures. Using Commissioner of Indian Affairs reports and the Shoshone-Bannock *Tevope* and then the *Shoshone-Bannock News*, which describe cattle sale numbers and new projects on the reservation, a picture of how the cattle ranching business began and moved forward during the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century emerges. Farming and ranching are so closely tied that one cannot be discussed without the other.

Section I: The Early Years, 1890-1910

Through the 1880s and 1890s, polluted water and poor medical facilities on the reservation threatened the Shoshone-Bannock's health. The water used came from nearby streams and creeks, which often dried up in the summer.³⁰ Water was dirty and scarce and access to healthcare proved virtually non-existent. Indian Agent C.A. Warner noted, "The water in use at the agency is ditch water. The Indians bathe, wash their hair, soak hides and utilize the ditch above us for all such purposes, until when the water gets here it is filthy and not fit for use, and the cause of much sickness."³¹ Water became highly contested at the Fort Hall Reservation in subsequent years and is discussed below. Unsanitary conditions opened the possibility for disease and sickness. Even when access to a doctor was possible, doctors practiced in terrible conditions because no hospital or medical facility existed on the reservation.³² Agency Doctor M.A. Miller noted that since no medical facility existed, patients saw him at his place or traveled to the camps to care for them. Often, he found, "his patient lying on the ground, with scarcely any bedding and no interpreter."³³ Furthermore, a misunderstanding and general belittling of the Shoshone-Bannock culture ensued. C.A. Warner, in his annual report, stated "I think the influence of the 'medicine men' has rapidly declined in the past year, a statement I have been quite unable to make in my former reports... from the present outlook they will not long be a factor affecting the progress of these people," and "These people are not sufficiently advanced to avail themselves to the benefits of a hospital..."³⁴ Warner was not alone in his demeaning and

³⁰ United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, For the Year 1898*, 142, C.A. Warner (Washington D.C, 1898), accessed December 2, 2018, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/History.AnnRep98>. [Hereafter cited as "ARCIA"]

³¹ ARCIA 1898, 142.

³² Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks*, 66.

³³ ARCIA 1892, 235.

³⁴ ARCIA 1898, 143.

condescending remarks about the Shoshone-Bannock people and their culture, and this served as the backdrop as the Shoshone-Bannock attempted to make new lives at Fort Hall.

The lands encompassing the Fort Hall Reservation proved well-suited for farming projects and cattle grazing. Several riparian areas with lush grazing meadows afforded the ability to keep large cattle herds well-fed. Initially, the Shoshone-Bannock camped and farmed at four main districts on the Fort Hall Reservation – the Bannock Creek District, furthest away from the agency buildings and separated by the Portneuf River and Pocatello Range, the Ross Fork District, along the Ross Fork of the Portneuf River, the Blackfoot District, and the Agency District, closest to the agency buildings.³⁵ Now, five districts comprise Fort Hall Reservation – Lincoln Creek District, Ross Fork District, Fort Hall District, Bannock Creek District, and Gibson District.³⁶ The abundance of water afforded suitable living conditions since water proved scarce elsewhere on the reservation.

I.a: Irrigation and Water Rights at Fort Hall

This paragraph introduces the dynamics surrounding irrigation and water rights at the Fort Hall Reservation. Irrigation became the foremost problem at the Fort Hall Reservation because it resides on semiarid, mostly sagebrush covered land in southeast Idaho. This subsection highlights the repeated efforts to deliver water to the Fort Hall Reservation through irrigation projects. If the United States government wanted the Shoshone-Bannock ranchers and farmers to be successful and assimilate into mainstream society, water remained a vital need.

The first irrigation attempt for Fort Hall failed in the 1890s. The Idaho Canal Company (ICC), a

³⁵ United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, For the Year 1887*, P. Gallagher (Washington D.C, 1887), accessed March 12, 2018, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/History.AnnRep87>. [Hereafter cited as “ARCIA”]

³⁶ Fort Hall Indian Reservation Districts,” Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, accessed June 30, 2018, http://sbtribes-ewmp.com/land_base_fort_hall.html.

privately owned, government contracted company, billed the tribes more than \$100,000 for the project, with little progress to show.³⁷ Walter Graves, sent by the government to inspect the ICC's work in 1898, noted a failed irrigation canal system and a squandering of tribal funds: "In 1895, [The Indians] [sic] had a permanent fund in the Treasury of \$174,295.94... The balance of this fund [as of June 30 1898] was \$46,598.95."³⁸ The first attempt at a large scale-irrigation project failed and proved costly for the tribes.

A national directive put the issue of irrigation at Fort Hall within the hands of the Reclamation Service. The year 1902 marks an important year for not only Fort Hall Reservation residents, but for scores of people in the arid American West. The National Reclamation Act (also known as the Newlands Act) passed that year and the Fort Hall Reservation, receiving only 15 to 18 inches of rain annually, gained a bid for irrigation projects.³⁹ The Reclamation Act, among other things, allowed for the use of federal funds to irrigate privately held farms, that would in time be paid back through filing and maintenance fees if one decided to settle within a project's boundaries.⁴⁰ At this point, two government agencies – the Indian Office and the Reclamation Service – served as the governing agencies for the project.

From the project's outset, the Indian Office and Reclamation Service exhibited different outlooks for the irrigation project.⁴¹ The Indian Office served the tribes' interests and the Reclamation Service possessed no loyalty to the tribes. Considering the reclamation project began on reservation lands, the interests of Indians and non-Indians were supposed to be considered equally. This became an especially important topic since reservation lands opened

³⁷ Canfield, "These Lands are Worthless without Water," 124.

³⁸ Canfield, "These Lands are Worthless without Water," 124.

³⁹ Murphy and Murphy, *Handbook of North American Indians*, 285.

⁴⁰ Daniel McCool, *Command of the Waters: Iron Triangles, Federal Water Development, and Indian Water* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 14.

⁴¹ Donald J. Pisani, *Water and American Government: The Reclamation Bureau, National Water Policy, and the West, 1902-1935* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), xxi.

that year (1902) to non-Indian settlement after the land cession agreement of 1898.⁴² The agreement happened in February and ceded 418,500 acres to the U.S. government for a price of \$600,000.⁴³ Indian Office personnel and Shoshone-Bannocks soon criticized that their interests

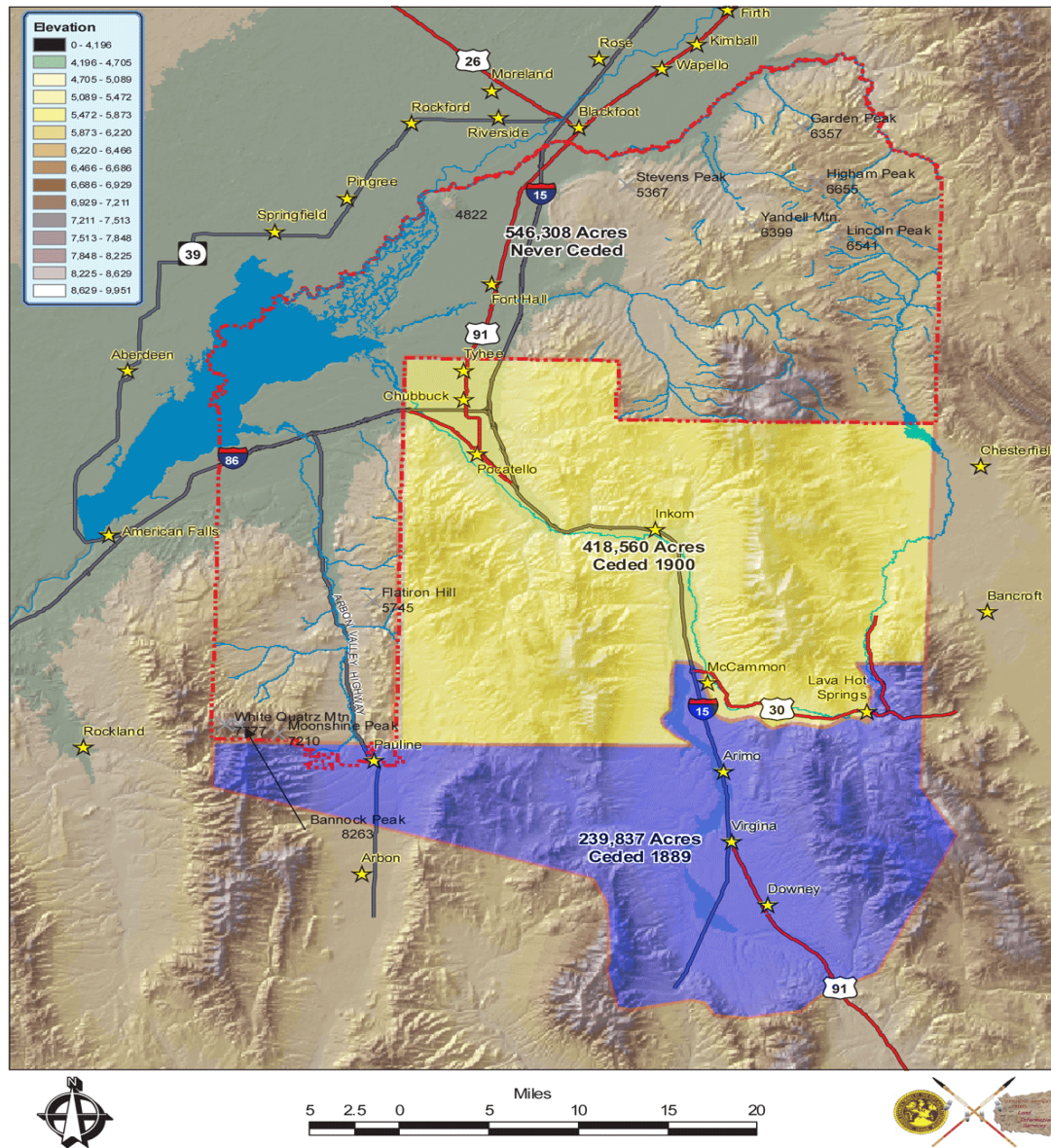


Figure 1. Land Cession at Fort Hall (agreement concluded in 1898 but land did not actually enter the hands of the government until the following year)⁴⁴

⁴² Canfield, "These Lands are Worthless without Water," 124.

⁴³ *ARCIA*, 1898, 143.

⁴⁴ Fort Hall Indian Reservation Districts," Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, accessed June 30, 2018, http://sbtribes-ewmp.com/land_base_fort_hall.html.

were not met and non-Indians received priority. Further exacerbating the issue, the Reclamation Service took lead in the construction of the irrigation canals, using some of the tribes' trust fund in the process.⁴⁵ Divided loyalties proved to be the undoing of the irrigation project.

This paragraph demonstrates the guidelines for how the Reclamation Service divided the water and how that became a problem for Shoshone-Bannock ranchers and farmers. The Reclamation Service broke ground with the Fort Hall Project (FHP) in 1907, and within a few short years, water began to trickle to Indians and non-Indians alike.⁴⁶ Construction of the project brought on a whole host of problems though. Initially, payment of the maintenance fees was not required of Shoshone-Bannocks unless they leased their lands.⁴⁷ It is easy to ascertain that the Reclamation Service would incentivize the Shoshone-Bannocks to lease their lands (or take it from their tribal funds) to help pay for construction and maintenance. This thought process based itself off the idea of "beneficial use" – landowners who demonstrated beneficial use of the land received water.⁴⁸ Today, although many states define beneficial use differently, it is understood that beneficial use means the use of a water source beneficially – agricultural, industrial or household..⁴⁹ When water did not show up for their farms, many Shoshone-Bannocks faced either loss of their water allotments, or the possibility of leasing their lands to non-Indians. In a way, this forced many Shoshone-Bannocks to look elsewhere for employment. Stock raising served as an obvious choice because of the availability of lush grazing lands at the bottoms near the Snake River. The story of irrigation at the Fort Hall Reservation reflects the haphazard way in which the federal government treated Native Americans. The Dawes Act's

⁴⁵ Pisani, *Water and American Government*, 160.

⁴⁶ Canfield, "These Lands are Worthless without Water," 124.

⁴⁷ Canfield, "These Lands are Worthless without Water," 125.

⁴⁸ McCool, *Command of the Waters*, 2.

⁴⁹ "The Law Dictionary," accessed December 14, 2018, <https://thelawdictionary.org/beneficial-use/>

main provision for assimilating Native Americans asserted farming as the most important piece of the process. But with divided loyalties and incentivizing Shoshone-Bannocks to lease their lands, a new sector of the economy arose at the Fort Hall Reservation.

I.b: Cows and Hay

Cows need hay to survive and Fort Hall boasted a good environment for the production of hay. As production of one increases, so does the other as the output numbers below exhibit. The production of oats, hay and beef dominated the local economies at Fort Hall during these early years. This subsection examines the economic impacts of both cattle and cattle-related farming implements at Fort Hall approximately from 1900 to 1920. The completion and subsequent plans for further irrigation projects helped improve both the quality of oats and hay, and helped produce leaner, more profitable cattle. With no other economic data to look at, total sale of oats and hay, and number of cattle will help paint a picture of the emerging industries at Fort Hall.

As the production of farming outputs such as hay and oats increased during the years 1900-1920, so, too, did the production of beef at Fort Hall. With more money in the local market economy, outputs increased. 1899 proved successful for the Shoshone-Bannock in the form of farming outputs. The Indian Agency collected 72,000 pounds of oats from the Shoshone-Bannock farmers and a surplus sold to other parties.⁵⁰ Hay making, an integral source of food for cattle during the winter months, succeeded at Fort Hall. The same year, 2,000 tons of hay sold to cattlemen with the extra harvest used to buttress winter food supplies.⁵¹ The cattle market also expanded that year with hopes of further expansion in the coming years. The

⁵⁰ *ARCIA*, Warner, 1899, accessed March 13, 2017, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/History.AnnRep99>.

⁵¹ *ARCIA*, Warner, 1899.

Shoshone-Bannock ranchers sold 150,000 pounds of beef in 1898 with another 225,000 due to sell the following year.⁵² Indian Agent C.A. Warner spoke highly of the cattle industry in his 1899 report to the United States Office of Indian Affairs: “The majority of these people are taking an active interest in the cattle business,” and that “The class of cattle owned by these Indians is exceptionally good...”⁵³ Shoshone-Bannocks undertook ranching and commercial farming with little experience and began a profitable local economy at Fort Hall.

Just a couple of years later in 1901, 4,000 tons of hay hit \$16,000⁵⁴ and the following year sales topped out at \$25,000.⁵⁵ Hay sales never returned to that \$25,000 high of 1902, but the cattle industry soon emerged as the main source of income for the Shoshone-Bannock at Fort Hall. Two years later, in 1904, 3,000 tons of hay sold for \$18,000 and 300,000 pounds of beef worth \$16,000 sold to the government for use on the reservation.⁵⁶ It seems counterintuitive that the commodities produced by the tribes sold to the government for use on the reservation, but the government owned their produce and used it on the reservation how they saw fit. In the span of five or six years, cattle sales nearly doubled at Fort Hall, which did not go unnoticed by Indian Agent A.F. Caldwell. He applauded that he found, “much more interest among the Indians in raising cattle, and the cattle as a class are increasing in grade each year,” and that a “better quality of dressed beef has been obtained in this year than in previous years.”⁵⁷ Interest and output for the cattle industry increased each year.

⁵² *ARCIA*, Warner, 1898.

⁵³ *ARCIA*, Warner, 1899.

⁵⁴ *ARCIA*, Caldwell, 1901, accessed March 13, 2017, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/History.AnnRep01p1>.

⁵⁵ *ARCIA*, Caldwell, 1902, accessed March 13, 2017, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/History.AnnRep02p1>.

⁵⁶ *ARCIA*, Caldwell, 1904, accessed March 13, 2017, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/History.AnnRep04p1>.

⁵⁷ *ARCIA*, Caldwell, 1904.

The following year marked the year that the cattle industry overtook the hay industry in terms of monetary value. Nearly 400,000 pounds of beef sold to the agency as hay sales dropped.⁵⁸ A.F. Caldwell once again praised the cattlemen, saying, “The Indians are anxious to sell their cattle to the government and as long as gross beef is required there will be no question as to the ability of the Indians to furnish the necessary amount of beef. Their cattle are of much better quality than heretofore.”⁵⁹ That the cattle industry continuously improved, and had the blessings of the Indian Agent assigned to Fort Hall, which unfortunately carried much weight, bode of good things to come for the Shoshone-Bannock. However, this early success and momentum achieved by the Fort Hall ranchers soon ran into complications with the United States government. These numbers help demonstrate continuous improvement in both farming and beef outputs at Fort Hall even though access to water remained problematic during the early twentieth century. The improvement in the face of obstacles established a hard-working precedent that Shoshone-Bannock ranchers and farmers adhered to for years to come.

Up until this point, Shoshone-Bannock farmers and ranchers used the 160-acre grazing and 160-acre farming allotments provided through the 1887 Dawes Act. In lieu of individual allotments, in 1896 the Indian Agency approved a 120,000-acre grazing reserve of the most productive tribal rangelands for the exclusive use of Shoshone-Bannock ranchers.⁶⁰ This grazing area provided both Native and non-Native ranchers before. This reserve lot became especially important because, as mentioned previously, allotment began again in 1902 stipulated from the 1898 land cession agreement. Ralph Dixey led a delegation to Washington to argue, and ultimately fail in that argument, for the 160-acre farming and grazing allotments promised them

⁵⁸ *ARCIA*, Caldwell, 1905, accessed March 13, 2017, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/History.AnnRep05p1>.

⁵⁹ *ARCIA*, Caldwell, 1905.

⁶⁰ Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks*, 137.

through treaty. Recognizing a circumvention of previous treaties, Dixey reminded the government officials that they could not sell tribal lands without the tribes' consent.⁶¹ Assistant Indian Commissioner F.H. Abbott, in a unilateral movement, invoked the 1903 Supreme Court decision in *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock*.⁶² In this landmark case, a Kiowa chief, Lone Wolf, argued that Congress could not open up Indian Territory set aside for the Kiowa, Apache and Comanche tribes because it violated the Medicine Lodge Treaty of 1867. Unsurprisingly for that era, the Court upheld the Congressional action, and Congress now had the power to abrogate the provisions of an Indian Treaty.⁶³ Instead of two 160-acre plots, the Shoshone-Bannocks received one 160-acre grazing plot and a 20-acre irrigable plot. The grazing plots came out of the 120,000-acre tribal reserve lot.⁶⁴ With such a small plot to raise cattle, many Shoshone-Bannock farmers could not keep up with non-Indian ranchers who grazed their cattle on vast ranges. For those who had no stock, again it incentivized them to lease out their grazing allotments. Although government officials hid under the guise of helping native farmers and ranchers, it seemed they were more interested in opening tribal lands for non-Indian development. The rescindment of the original Dawes Act stipulations for two 160-acre plots reveals the lack of trust that Shoshone-Bannocks had in the United States government. However, Ralph Dixey astutely argued for the Tribes' case to keep their 160-acre plots and displayed agency in that pursuit, although he ended up unsuccessful. This again dismisses Native Americans as powerless against the United States government and foreshadows Shoshone-Bannock agency in response to government overreach directly related to a misallocation of tribal funds.

⁶¹ Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks*, 154.

⁶² Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks*, 154.

⁶³ "Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock," OYEZ, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1900-1940/187us553>

⁶⁴ Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks*, 155.

Section II: A New Day for Shoshone-Bannock Ranchers

Despite blatant racism from Indian Agents, abrogation of treaties and a general lack of effort by government officials to develop irrigation that would help farmers and ranchers assimilate, the Shoshone-Bannock survived and had found a niche in the market economy. It became increasingly clear that the Shoshone-Bannocks needed to take measures to protect their spot in the local and regional economies. This section examines the formation of a stockmen's association in response to government overreach. This section also continues to highlight strides taken by Shoshone-Bannock ranchers in the market by looking at production and cattle sale numbers.

An event in 1914 led directly to the formation of the stockmen association several years later in 1922. In 1914, the Commissioner's office directed Indian Agent Horton H. Miller to use tribal funds to purchase 20 Hereford bulls and 452 heifers to help encourage the development of the allotments.⁶⁵ The Shoshone-Bannocks were unaware of this allocation of their funds and only realized the purchase happened when the new bulls and heifers were released onto the range, but by that time it was already too late. The cattle purchased without their knowledge had scabies and soon exposed many Shoshone-Bannock owned cattle to the disease, forcing them to seek treatment, a costly matter. The government eventually paid for the treatment but this did not placate the Shoshone-Bannock ranchers who were tired of government overreach and meddling in their affairs.⁶⁶ It was at that point that the Shoshone-Bannock ranchers knew they had to form some sort of protective and competitive organization to combat government overreach and modernize their industry.

⁶⁵ Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks*, 161.

⁶⁶ Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks*, 161-62.

The Shoshone-Bannock response to the disaster of 1914 and a general diminishing control of their reservation lands manifested in the form of an Indian stockmen's association. The Fort Hall Stockmen's Association had clear objectives from the beginning according to Brigham D. Madsen: "to encourage raising a better breed of stock, to sell or remove all ponies weighing less than 700 pounds, to keep Indian and white herds within their respective boundaries, and to protect the range."⁶⁷ The Fort Hall Stockmen's Association proved such a success in their formative years that in 1928, the Bannock Creek Stockmen's Association formed to service the ranchers in that area.⁶⁸ This was Shoshone-Bannock agency – effecting change and helping solidify and modernize their industry at Fort Hall. They reasserted control of their lands and resources.

Difficult economic conditions brought on by the Great Depression highlighted the late 1920s and early 1930s at Fort Hall and elsewhere, and the cattle industry limped along but remained relevant thanks to the formation of an indigenous administrative body. New Indian Agent Fred Gross reported cattle sales and observations in the reservation newspaper, the "Shoshone-Bannock *Tevope*." The March 1936 cattle count at Fort Hall topped over 8,000 head, a substantial increase over previous years.⁶⁹ That summer's cattle sale also proved successful and more profitable than previous years. Gross reported, "Approximately 250 head of steers and dry cows will be offered for sale. There will be some choice offerings as most of the stock has been on unusually good range this spring."⁷⁰ In total, 215 head of cattle brought a return of \$8,385.90 and buyers from as far as Ogden, Utah and Tacoma, Washington attended.⁷¹ At a time

⁶⁷ Madsen, *The Northern Shoshoni*, 150.

⁶⁸ Madsen, *The Northern Shoshoni*, 150.

⁶⁹ F.A. Gross, "Proceeds from the Fort Hall Stockmen's Association Cattle Sale," *Shoshone-Bannock Tevope*, March 1936, vol. I, no. 1.

⁷⁰ F.A. Gross, "Livestock Notes," *Shoshone-Bannock Tevope*, June 1936, vol. I, no. 4.

⁷¹ F.A. Gross, "Progress of Cattle Industry," *Shoshone-Bannock Tevope*, July 1936, vol. I, no. 5.

when most of the nation suffered economically, and certainly the reservation suffered too, this was quite the return for the smaller summer cattle sale. The fall cattle sale typically generated the best returns monetarily because cattle had all spring and summer and part of the fall to graze and put on lean muscle. The *Tevope* reported that, “Cattle on the ranges are in good condition and are putting on flesh every day. Recent rains have helped the ranges, and stock should be in good shape for the fall sales.”⁷² The Stockmen’s Association provided stability at a time of great instability. These cattle sale numbers help express the success of the Shoshone-Bannock ranchers, thanks, in large part, to the formation of an indigenous administrative body. The Shoshone-Bannock ranchers decided that the government could no longer use their funds however they saw fit and decided to actively manage their own enterprises.

The fall 1936 cattle sale proved to be particularly lucrative for the Shoshone-Bannock cattlemen. Cattlemen brought 649 heads of cattle to the sale for a total of \$27,992.20 with an average per head of \$43.13.⁷³ This average is important to note because the Shoshone-Bannock cattleman saw the average price per head drastically increase in the coming years, thanks to the bargaining power of the Stockmen’s Association and general improvement of their craft. Ralph Dixie (also spelled Dixey in other sources), the President of the Fort Hall Stockmen’s Association commented on the previous month’s cattle sale in the Shoshone-Bannock *Tevope*. He noted, “We had buyers from seven different states, and they were surprised to see good quality cattle. One of them said, ‘I didn’t know they had such a good quality cattle in the country.’ He’s from Stockton, California, where they handle good cattle.”⁷⁴ These quotes and numbers show the emergence of the Shoshone-Bannock cattlemen’s prestige as buyers from all

⁷² F.A. Gross, “Livestock Notes,” *Shoshone-Bannock Tevope*, July 1936, vol. I, no. 5.

⁷³ F.A. Gross, “Proceeds of Fort Hall Stockmen’s Association Cattle Sale,” *Shoshone-Bannock Tevope*, October 1936, vol. I, no. 8.

⁷⁴ F.A. Gross, “The Annual Cattle Sale,” *Shoshone-Bannock Tevope*, November 1936, vol. I, no. 9.

over the American West traveled to the Fort Hall Stockyards to purchase cattle. Not only did they flood the Stockyards, but they had very good things to say about the quality and excellence of the cattle.

Reorganization improved productivity on the ranches. Within a few short years an already successful business began turning bigger profits. Structured grazing schedules, more money and a range management system provided by the Stockmen's Association all played their part in the increasing profitability of the cattle industry. The smaller Bannock Creek Stockmen's Association owned roughly 100 more head of cattle in the 1939 spring count over the 1938 count.⁷⁵ That the smaller Bannock Creek Stockmen's Association increased their cattle count by 100 in one year meant that the whole cattle industry at Fort Hall flourished. Later that year in the fall cattle sale, there were high praises for the Shoshone-Bannock cattlemen once again. "Our people will be interested to know a very successful cattle sale was had on October 10th, with prices secured for better than listed on the Ogden Market which shows our stock are superior and in high demand."⁷⁶ The Ogden Market was widely regarded as the best and most productive livestock market in the American West at the time.

The Ogden Stockyards, constructed in 1916-17 with investments from wealthy businessmen quickly outgrew its modest beginnings by the mid-1920s.⁷⁷ Such that the National Park Service's *Historic American Landscapes Survey* reported that, "A new \$100,000 coliseum funded by Ogden businessmen was constructed in a record fifty-four days and was ready to house the seventh annual show January 5-9, 1926."⁷⁸ The Fort Hall Stockmen faced stiff

⁷⁵ F.A. Gross, "Progress of Cattle Industry," *Shoshone-Bannock Tevope*, May 1939, vol. IV, no. 5.

⁷⁶ F.A. Gross, "Congratulations," *Shoshone-Bannock Tevope*, October 1939, vol. IV, no. 10.

⁷⁷ National Park Service, *Historic American Landscapes Survey*, "Ogden Union Stockyards," HALS No. UT-5, United States Department of the Interior, Washington D.C., 5-6, accessed March 18, 2017, <https://cdn.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/ut/ut0700/ut0717/data/ut0717data.pdf>.

⁷⁸ National Park Service, "Ogden Union Stockyards," 7.

competition from a well-funded entity. The Ogden Stockyards received support from wealthy businessmen whereas the Fort Hall stockyards received at first meager government funds and chaotic support. Eventually the cattlemen's very own money funded the stockyards. Within a few short years of the new coliseum construction, the Ogden Stockyards expanded again. Business boomed so much that by the early 1930s Ogden, "saw a flurry of construction at the Ogden Union Stockyards in a half million-dollar improvement and expansion campaign that included truck-in facilities... expanded railroad service, doubling of the loading and unloading chutes, and the beginning of construction on a new livestock exchange building."⁷⁹ These improvements certainly had their effect on the local community. The Ogden Standard-Examiner declared that the 1937 Ogden Livestock Show was "The Greatest Ever."⁸⁰ With seemingly endless amounts of money pouring into the Ogden Stockyards funding construction improvements, they were well set up for success. It is important to note the success of the Fort Hall Stockyards in comparison with the Ogden Stockyards. Whereas the Fort Hall cattlemen faced obstacles at every turn, the Ogden Stockyards' advantageous position among wealthy businessmen certainly favored them.

The success had by Shoshone-Bannock ranchers in fall 1939 cattle sale is of particular importance because it marked an improvement in the quality of cattle. The Shoshone-Bannock ranchers focused on grading, (or the quality of the beef produced). Gross reported in the Shoshone-Bannock *Tevope*, "The closer grading done this year received the general approval of the buyers. If such grading is continued upon in the future, the more particular buyers will no doubt be attracted to our sales," and, "This together with the better facilities that are planned for

⁷⁹ National Park Service, "Ogden Union Stockyards," 8.

⁸⁰ National Park Service, "Ogden Union Stockyards," 10.

handling the cattle, should bring added future income to the cattle owners.”⁸¹ The USDA defines grading as the composite evaluation of factors that affect palatability or meat (tenderness, juiciness, and flavor). These factors include carcass maturity, firmness, texture, and color of lean, and the amount and distribution of marbling within the lean.”⁸² A general emphasis on grading beef and future facility improvements meant that Fort Hall cattle sales poised to increase in the coming years.

Certain cattlemen began making great strides in their individual endeavors at Fort Hall. The *Shoshone-Bannock News* (which replaced the *Tevope*) reported on Frank Yellowjohn’s farm steer project, noting “Here we saw 18 thrifty steers converting luxuriant grasses into profitable beef. More projects like this would bring fertility to the land and larger profits to many Indian farmers.”⁸³ Fort Hall boasted prime grazing lands and it helped produce cattle with a high quality of beef. As consecutive successful years piled up, leaders of the stockmen’s associations realized they needed a structured business, with goals and thresholds to be met each year to maximize profits. “In 1939, a goal of 10% yearly increase in total cattle owned by Indians was set up, the increase to continue until the number of cattle the reservation will support safely is reached.”⁸⁴ By placing target increases, the Shoshone-Bannock ranchers began to develop a business model that helped expand the business. Another element facilitated growth as well. “Fort Hall cattle associations are known all over the service for their fine cooperative work. Complete cooperation of all owners in working toward the 10% yearly increase will further Fort Hall’s prominence.”⁸⁵ Cooperation among ranchers, and farmers from whom they bought hay,

⁸¹ F.A. Gross, “Livestock Notes,” *Shoshone-Bannock Tevope*, October 1939, vol. IV, no. 10.

⁸² “Meat Science,” Texas A&M University Agriculture and Life Sciences, accessed December 14, 2018, <https://meat.tamu.edu/beefgrading/>

⁸³ “Seen on the Farm Tour,” *Fort Hall Indians: Shoshone-Bannock News*, September 1941 vol. I, no. 5.

⁸⁴ “Progress of Cattle Industry,” *Fort Hall Indians: Shoshone-Bannock News*, October 1941 vol. I, no. 6.

⁸⁵ “Livestock Notes,” *Fort Hall Indians: Shoshone-Bannock News*, October 1941 vol. I, no. 6.

emerged as a key element to the whole process. In order to increase the profitability of the cattle business, ranchers realized they needed to work together for a common goal.

This paragraph illustrates continued profitability for the Shoshone-Bannock ranchers and the closer grading of cattle helped ensure their place among the top cattle markets of the American West. The October 1st cattle sale in the fall of 1941 exemplified the hard work and cooperation between cattlemen as it was another profitable sale. A total of 803 cattle sold for a \$50,394.81 profit for an average of \$62.76 per cattle sold. The top price for that particular sale was \$11.50 per cwt (hundredweight) with one lot of 42 steers averaging \$11.15 per cwt.⁸⁶ In North America, cwt or hundredweight is equal to one-hundred pounds and is the unit of measurement for weight in buying and selling commodities like livestock, grain, etc.⁸⁷ The cooperation among cattlemen at Fort Hall began to pay off and again these prices were better or comparable to those secured at the Ogden Market. The November 19th sale, typically smaller and less profitable as the best cattle sold in the October sale, generated significant income as well. A total of 408 cattle sold for \$22,219.60 with an average of \$54.46 per head.⁸⁸ These numbers compared well with the previous month's cattle sales. The cattle sales of 1941 proved very profitable for the Shoshone-Bannock cattlemen and were a testament to the hard work and cooperation among ranchers. However, events in late 1941 forced the Shoshone-Bannock cattlemen to shift focus from their own enterprises and concentrate on the problems at hand.

December 7, 1941 – the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor – turned the United States upside down. The government scrambled in response to these acts of war and prepared to enter a

⁸⁶ "Proceeds of Fort Hall Stockmen's Association Cattle Sale," *Fort Hall Indians: Shoshone-Bannock News*, October 1941 vol. I, no. 6.

⁸⁷ Brett Barham, et al, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, "Understanding Price Slides in Beef Cattle Marketing," accessed December 9, 2018, <https://www.uaex.edu/publications/PDF/FSA-3127.pdf>

⁸⁸ "Proceeds from the Fort Hall Stockmen's Association Cattle Sale," *Fort Hall Indians: Shoshone-Bannock News*, December 1941 vol. I, no. 8.

worldwide conflict. Questions of manpower persisted which led to questions of feeding the influx of servicemen. The government turned to rural farmers and ranchers to help feed the war effort and implored them to provide foodstuffs. Surplus was sent to government agencies and they also urged farmers and ranchers to be judicious with their foods and to can, dry and store whatever food they could. The Shoshone-Bannock News reported in January 1942 that “Newspapers are daily carrying articles about war production programs for farmers and rural people. Federal agriculture agencies, state agencies, county organizations and community organizations are holding meetings and formulation plans of action. Our commissioner has indicated his wish that Indian reservations cooperate in this emergency movement.”⁸⁹ The Shoshone-Bannock farmers and ranchers had been called up to support the war effort. The newspaper directed that, “The reservation stockmen can cooperate sufficiently, we feel, in the meat production program if they retain all good heifers and producing cows.”⁹⁰ The Shoshone-Bannock farmers and ranchers gave up personal gain for the nation that desperately needed their aid. The United States government often treated the Shoshone-Bannock like second-class citizens, but the Shoshone-Bannock realized that their participation served a greater good. That the Shoshone-Bannock participated in the war effort speaks volumes about their values. It also speaks volumes about the success and sustainability of the cattle industry to suspend personal efforts to cooperate with the nation they called home. Chapter 3 discusses a year in the life of a Shoshone-Bannock rancher, as told by those people who experience it every day.

Conclusion

Perseverance and improvement despite adversity encapsulates the history of cattle ranching at Fort Hall during years 1890 – 1942. Establishing a profitable and well-respected

⁸⁹ “Agency Notes,” *Fort Hall Indians: Shoshone-Bannock News*, January 1942 vol. II, no. 1.

⁹⁰ “Agency Notes,” *Fort Hall Indians: Shoshone-Bannock News*, January 1942 vol. II, no. 1.

cattle empire at the Fort Hall Reservation represents a significant accomplishment for the Shoshone-Bannock. Indigenous cattlemen endured obstacles at nearly every turn from the federal government under the guise of progress and support. However misguided the support, the Shoshone-Bannock cattlemen kept fighting and striving for a self-sufficient industry. Their cultural values supported their endeavors as they worked together and tended to their livestock with great care, just as they tended the earth. Shoshone-Bannock agency and business acumen manifested in the creation of the Fort Hall Stockmen's Association, an administrative and management body to help modernize and safeguard their industry. The Shoshone-Bannock cattlemen gained much notoriety for their successful business and at times matched, and sometimes surpassed, the largest and most prosperous stockyard in the American West. Although reservation life presented many problems for the Shoshone-Bannock people, the emergence of the cattle industry as a lucrative and eventually autonomous business meant that the Shoshone-Bannock people had something that was theirs.

Chapter 3

A Year in the Life of a Shoshone-Bannock Rancher

Ranching sustains the family: it provides both food and income. This chapter examines a typical year on the ranch for three Shoshone-Bannock ranchers. I use interviews conducted with three ranchers – Martinez Cortez, a man considered an elder in the Shoshone-Bannock tribe, Krissy Broncho, a woman in her early fifties, and Kaycee Dixey, a young woman in her early twenties, as well as additional research to supplement and support their responses. I purposefully intended to interview Shoshone-Bannock ranchers from different generations to perhaps provide different perspectives on ranching. All three of the interviewees work in the ranching business and their families have a long history of ranching. Their interviews provide first-hand accounts of the work involved in ranching while also describing why aspects of their culture prepared them for work in the cattle business. Their responses mirror the other's in many instances, such as the family importance during round-ups, however, they also offer varying perspectives on such things as the future of ranching, why the Shoshone-Bannock found success in ranching and cultural assessments. The next section "Culture as a Factor in Ranching Success" begins with introductions of the three interviewees and how they have become involved in the ranching business as well as their responses to an important question I have pondered since beginning my research – what made the Shoshone-Bannock ranchers so adept at ranching when first introduced, especially considering they boasted no prior experience? After discovering what traits and experiences prepared the Shoshone-Bannock to be skilled ranchers, I then turn my attention to painting a picture of a typical year on the ranch at the Fort Hall Reservation.

In this chapter I argue that family, tradition, and cultural values aided Shoshone-Bannock ranchers in their pursuit of ranching. Family provided the instruction needed to succeed in ranching, and tradition reminded ranchers why they continue to ranch at Fort Hall today.

Cultural values inherently guided Shoshone-Bannock ranchers as they tend their cattle. These three factors – family, tradition, and cultural values – prove to be vital to the success of Shoshone-Bannock ranchers at the Fort Hall Reservation.

Section I: Introductions and Cultural Factors

To offer context, introductions for Krissy Broncho, Martinez Cortez and Kaycee Dixey follow. Krissy Broncho, currently a counselor on the reservation, grew up ranching. For her, the story of ranching begins with her great-grandfather, Broncho Jim, who lived some time during the mid-to-late 1800s. His family does not know when he was born because he lived at a time when the government had yet to take roll and natives did not keep track of when babies were born. This quote shows how Krissy’s family got their name and Broncho Jim’s propensity for “breaking” horses, or making them easier to ride:

His Indian name was ‘Snow-in-the-Mouth’ and that was his Indian name as a child but because he was riding horses they started to call him the ‘Bronc Rider’ so he would break these horses and they’d be bucking around on him and he’d get them broke. That’s how he got the name Broncho and from there they called him Broncho Jim and when the government came around to give Indians official names they changed it to James Broncho, so that’s how our name came to be.⁹¹

This quote’s significance lies in horse riding and the family name. Horse riding plays a substantial part in cattle ranching. From pushing cows to specific grazing spots or checking fences, Shoshone-Bannock ranchers constantly ride horses. The family name “Broncho” also shows where and how things started and what Krissy and the rest of her family must honor.

Broncho Jim lived through the Dawes Act and received his allotted acreage. The Dawes Act mandated individual land allotments based on family size.⁹² Importantly, Broncho Jim had

⁹¹ Krissy Broncho, interviewed by Les Miller, Pocatello, ID, February 2018. [hereafter cited as Krissy Broncho interview]

⁹² Heaton, *The Shoshone Bannocks*, 114.

many children who also inherited cattle. As his children disengaged from the cattle business, Broncho Jim inherited their cattle and by the time he died in the 1920s, “he had over 800 head of cattle, 300 head of sheep and about 50 horses that he was running.”⁹³ This large herd of cattle set the model for Krissy and her family and the name “Broncho” became synonymous with ranching.

Her father was born into ranching as well as her mother. Ranching hit Krissy from both sides of her family and helps explain why she continues to ranch today. Currently, Krissy runs thirty head of cattle in lieu of working her full-time job as a counselor. For Krissy and her extended family, ranching is tradition. Her dad, Lyle Broncho, and brother, Pace Broncho, who is the current president of the Fort Hall Stockmen’s Association, run about 600 head of cattle; her uncle and cousin run about 250 head of cattle; and her cousin, Carol, runs 60 head of cattle.⁹⁴ According to Krissy, the average ranch consists of around 100 cattle, “and that’s probably for like the rancher and his kids, and his wife, a single family.”⁹⁵ The precedent Krissy’s great-grandfather Broncho Jim set at the beginning of reservation life survived the twentieth century and continues today. These cattle numbers show that the ranching tradition started by Broncho Jim in the 1800s remains prosperous and lives through Krissy and her family members.

Likewise, Martinez Cortez’s family boasts a long and important history on the Fort Hall Reservation. Martinez is a fifth-generation descendant of Chief Pocatello on his mother’s side, something he speaks proudly of. Chief Pocatello, a Shoshoni, gained prestige as a military leader and negotiator during the mid-to-late nineteenth century and the city of Pocatello, Idaho

⁹³ Krissy Broncho interview.

⁹⁴ Krissy Broncho interview.

⁹⁵ Krissy Broncho interview.

bears his namesake.⁹⁶ His grandparents, Lasell and Louella Pocatello got the family started in the ranching business. They lived in the McCammon Valley of Idaho and received cows in 1889, but were forced to move out of the area with the land cessions approved in the late 1800s and early 1900s.⁹⁷ Fort Hall's land area was reduced by 239,837 acres in the 1889 land cession agreement and again by 418,560 acres in the 1900 land cession agreement.⁹⁸ From there, his grandparents migrated with their cows, first to the Bottoms (a term used by the Shoshone-Bannocks to describe the low-lying area surrounding the Snake River), and then eventually to where he lives today and where the interview took place. Currently, Martinez and his family run close to 30 cattle, and they are especially important to him and his family because, "To this day we have those cattles [sic] yet from way back."⁹⁹ Marty referred to the cattle his grandparents moved from the McCammon, Idaho area. They are from the same bloodline as the cattle from over 100 years ago. It is clear why his cattle remain such an important part of his family's legacy.

Kaycee Dixey currently studies accounting at Idaho State University, and her family also has a long history involved in ranching at the Fort Hall Reservation. For Kaycee, the story of ranching in her family begins with her great-great Grandfather, R.W. Dixey. The cavalry marched R.W. Dixey from his home in the Boise area to Fort Hall, and when he got here, there was nothing here. The Lemhi Shoshone, from central Idaho and the Boise area, first resided on the Lemhi Indian Reservation situated along the Lemhi River. The Lemhi Reservation existed from 1875 until 1907, when all natives living at the Lemhi Reservation transferred to the Fort

⁹⁶ Brigham D. Madsen, *Chief Pocatello: The White Plume* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1986), 12.

⁹⁷ Martinez Cortez, interviewed by Les Miller, Fort Hall, Idaho, January 2019. [hereafter cited as Martinez Cortez interview]

⁹⁸ Fort Hall Indian Reservation Districts," Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, accessed June 30, 2018, http://sbtribes-ewmp.com/land_base_fort_hall.html.

⁹⁹ Martinez Cortez interview.

Hall Reservation.¹⁰⁰ According to Kaycee, the only way for R.W. to survive involved owning cattle, so he did. “R.W. Dixey and Krissy Broncho’s grandfather Alfred Broncho, they were the two biggest cattlemen here in Idaho in the 1920s I think. They both had about a thousand head of cattle. R.W. Dixey helped build Blackfoot and he had his own little apple business and also his own little cattle business.”¹⁰¹ From Kaycee’s great-great grandfather to today, their family still ranches. Her grandpa, Clyde Dixey currently runs about 50 head of cattle, with Kaycee, her brother and her aunt also helping.¹⁰² Interestingly, before Kaycee met me for the interview, she had just traveled from Blackfoot, Idaho, where she filled out paperwork to secure her own brand. Her grandfather gave her two bulls and she plans on continuing to ranch and keeping the Dixey ranching legacy alive. Kaycee’s involvement in ranching, and the fact that her grandfather gifted her two bulls, shows the importance of ranching to her family. Her descendants began ranching in the late-1800s and the tradition will last at least one more generation in the Dixey family. Clearly, ranching remains a family affair.

I.a: Culture as a Factor in Ranching Success

As stated in the opening paragraph of this chapter, a question persisted in my mind, and it proved to be one that traditional sources could not seem to answer. It seemed that the answer to my question – despite the fact that the Shoshone-Bannock had never raised cattle before, what factors led to their great success? – could best be answered by asking a Shoshone-Bannock rancher. A scholar or government report could postulate why they think Shoshone-Bannock ranchers demonstrated success, but it would not tell the whole story. John W. Heaton in *The*

¹⁰⁰ Brigham D. Madsen, *The Lemhi: Sacajawea’s People* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1979): 13-15.

¹⁰¹ Kaycee Dixey, interviewed by Les Miller, Pocatello, Idaho, January 2019. [hereafter cited as Kaycee Dixey interview]

¹⁰² Kaycee Dixey interview.

Shoshone-Bannocks: Culture and Commerce at Fort Hall, 1870-1940 uses a variety of sources, such as newspaper articles, Commissioner of Indian Affairs reports, and classic Shoshone-Bannock studies to conclude that the Shoshone-Bannock demonstrated ranching success because of their culture and their previous lifestyle that involved horse-riding and nomadism and transferred easily to raising cattle on the range.¹⁰³ Similarly, Peter Iverson in his book *When Indians became Cowboys: Native Peoples and Ranching in the American West*, argues that ranching served to bolster tribal identity and maintain unique aspects of native culture.¹⁰⁴ My work reinforces theirs, but adds a different element – the word of a Shoshone-Bannock rancher to explain ranching success. The way one grew up and the culture they learned presents a possible answer to my question. The Shoshone-Bannock ranchers gained prestige in the early 1900s, and were successful enough to challenge one of the biggest stockyards in the American West at that time. The Shoshone-Bannock *Tevope* reported that Shoshone-Bannock ranchers often secured better prices for their stock than the Ogden Stockyards did.¹⁰⁵ That evidence points to successful ranching, especially considering that Shoshone-Bannocks had only been involved in the business for about forty years.

Krissy attributed Shoshone-Bannock ranching successes to a few different factors: their previous hunter-gatherer lifestyle and their “shepherd” mentality in dealing with the earth and its animals. Although the Shoshone-Bannocks could not travel vast expanses of land as they once had, ranching gave them a means to still travel the land. The Fort Hall Reservation covered

¹⁰³ Heaton, *The Shoshone-Bannocks*, 15.

¹⁰⁴ Iverson, *When Indians became Cowboys: Native Peoples and Ranching in the American West*, 14.

¹⁰⁵ Gross, F.A. “Shoshone-Bannock Tevope,” October 1939, vol. IV, no. 10.

nearly 1.8 million acres in the beginning, before subsequently being reduced to the 540,764 acres that it sits at today.¹⁰⁶ Krissy offered up her factors for Shoshone-Bannock ranching success:

I think we got homestead and given land and cattle and it was just something like ‘Okay we’re used to being outside and taking care of things.’ And I think because we have that connection, we call it ‘*sogo-bia*’ which means ‘Our Mother Earth.’ It’s real important that we don’t waste and we don’t take more than we need and I think just living in harmony. So, animals, we call them our ‘four-legged-brothers.’ And so we live in harmony with them, so it’s something that just kinda came natural.¹⁰⁷

For Krissy, the connection with the earth and animals provided the means for successful ranching.

Smiliarly, Kaycee presented similar factors for Shoshone-Bannock ranching success when posed with the same question:

It has to do with our spiritual beliefs as well because we believe animals are just as us. I think it was easy for us to pursue ranching because we already lived in a natural state in the Boise and Salmon area, we already fished, we already knew how horses act. It was just easy to take on ranching because we treated the animals the same as us. They need to eat, we need to eat and you feed them before you feed yourself.¹⁰⁸

Striking a balance and mutually beneficial relationship with the animals they tend afforded them the ability to be successful ranchers. Kaycee spoke more than once about the importance, at least in her family, of feeding the animals before one feeds themselves. Her grandpa taught her that and he learned it from his grandpa. Kaycee also provided specific dynamics related to her family, specifically her great-great grandfather who started it all:

I think it was just easy for my great-great grandfather to take it because no one else would. I guess you could say he already knew what hard work is and taking on cows wasn’t a hard thing for him to do, so he did it. And like I said, it’s just something you needed to do to survive back in the day, so it wasn’t hard for him to do that. Especially when you have big families, you have a lot of help if you have a big family.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Fort Hall Indian Reservation Districts,” Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, accessed June 30, 2018, http://sbtribes-ewmp.com/land_base_fort_hall.html.

¹⁰⁷ Krissy Broncho interview.

¹⁰⁸ Kaycee Dixey interview.

¹⁰⁹ Kaycee Dixey interview.

Her great-great grandfather was no stranger to hard work, so the hard work related to ranching did not deter him. Everyone on the ranch helps, too. Speaking of her siblings and family today, Kaycee stated “I have a twin sister, so me and her were always raised as boys cause there’s three girls and one boy, so all of us were ranch hands.”¹¹⁰ For Kaycee, the most important factors for ranching success are family, hard work and spiritual connections with the earth and animals.

Martinez offered up a bit of a different answer when asked why Shoshone-Bannocks were such astute ranchers. He attributed it to their love for riding horses and being out in the wilderness and fondly remembered his time as a young boy on the reservation:

Yeah they were pretty much in it back then in the 50s and 60s. Lot of people, we didn’t even have that many cars, they used a lot of animals at the time. Wagons and wagon trains. They’d use em’ [sic] on the reservation. Young kids used to ride horses from here to Gibson. That’s how we used to travel. My grandfather, right there at the house, people would come over on horses and on the side, he had a trough, a water trough, where you’d hook up your horse and tie it on. Lot of people on horses, we did a lot of riding. Lot of trails out here.¹¹¹

Riding horses filled the interviews not only with Martinez, but Krissy and Kaycee as well. This points to the tradition of horse-riding at Fort Hall. Shoshone-Bannocks, before reservation life, rode horses that suited their nomadic lifestyle. The ability to seamlessly transfer those riding skills to the range speaks to the importance of the tradition. Riding and ranching go hand-in-hand so it comes as no surprise that Martinez points to that as one of the main factors in Shoshone-Bannock ranching achievement.

The answer to the question – why were Shoshone-Bannock ranchers successful at ranching when first introduced? – sets the stage for subsequent questions and answers. It is important to keep these cultural factors in mind when talking about ranching and what a typical day or year on the ranch looks and feels like. Family, the Shoshone-Bannock connection with

¹¹⁰ Kaycee Dixey interview.

¹¹¹ Martinez Cortez interview.

Mother Earth and her animals, and their love for riding horses provide context and serve as the most important factors in determining successful ranching. These factors filled the conversation, and they are not just talking points for the Shoshone-Bannock ranchers, they remained important dynamics and direct their actions in the ranching business.

Several factors lead to Shoshone-Bannock ranching success. First, the family played a significant role. Families involved in ranching today have had the trade passed down from earlier generations, and they aim to honor that family ranching legacy by continuing to work hard. Secondly, like Heaton concludes, their previous lifestyle prepared them for a life in ranching. Equestrianism and nomadism transferred to the ranching business as Shoshone-Bannock ranchers could jump on a horse, and travel many miles across the reservation to round up cows and push them to the mountains. Lastly, Shoshone-Bannock culture that teaches harmony with the land and special attention to their “four-legged brothers” also attributes to ranching success. These three factors prove to be the main attributes that equipped Shoshone-Bannock ranchers for a life in the ranching business.

Section II: A Year in the Life of a Shoshone-Bannock Rancher

Every season is ranching season. From new calves in April to branding in May to round-ups after branding and irrigation and hay-cutting at the end of summer, every month of the year involves either working down at the Bottoms, branding, cutting hay, bailing hay, and driving the cows to the mountain range. Although every ranching family performs tasks differently, the times of the year remain the same. Every task involves early mornings and late days. The notion of hard work permeated the responses I received and seems to be one theme of cattle ranching at the Fort Hall Reservation.

For ranching families, the ranching season begins in the spring with the birth of new calves to replenish the cattle sold. Kaycee touched on this, "... about April you'll have your new calves coming in, so then you need to make sure those calves are healthy and make sure the cows don't disown them, because if you touch a calf that's newly born, the mom won't take it back. So if that happens then that calf is probably gonna die, there's nothing you can do about it."¹¹² Rejection, unfortunately, is a common occurrence during birth for a variety of reasons. According to Dr. Joseph Stookey of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, the presence or lack of milk within the cow or heifer, which is a first-year mother, indicates their interest in mothering. As the milk produces within the mother, mothering interest increases.¹¹³ Other factors include mothering experience and hormone levels. Perhaps the most important factor in rejection is the presence of birthing fluids. Specifically, "the smell and taste of birth fluids is another strong attractant that stimulates the cow to lick the calf. If the mothering process is interrupted before she licks the calf, the likelihood for rejection increases," and "if the calf is pulled, birth fluids should be smeared across the muzzle and tongue of the dam following delivery."¹¹⁴ This is one measure that can be taken to decrease the chance of rejection by the mother, but rejection still occurs nonetheless. If the mother totally rejects the calf, then, like Kaycee said, that calf will probably die and not much can be done about it. If the calf dies, the ranching family cannot make money and it will hurt the business. Which makes saving the calf even more important.

Interestingly, the morning of the interview (February 13), Krissy's calving period had just started:

¹¹² Kaycee Dixey interview.

¹¹³ "Assisting the bonding process between cow and calf," Tri-State Livestock News, accessed February 11, 2019, <https://www.tsln.com/news/assisting-the-bonding-process-between-cow-and-calf/>

¹¹⁴ "Assisting the bonding process between cow and calf," Tri-State Livestock News.

We try to calve out in a forty five day calving period and that started this morning. You have to be dedicated, you have to be there every day. Especially if you have heifers because heifers are the first year mamas and you gotta be able to go out there and check em' and see if they need help. A lot of the time they'll get hung up trying to calve and it's all about production so you don't wanna lose your babies. So if they're struggling calving you gotta be out there to pull that calf out and warm it up or do what you need to do to keep it alive.¹¹⁵

This quote expresses the great lengths ranchers will go to in order to prevent the rejection and subsequent death of a calf. Considering that Shoshone-Bannock ranchers see their cattle as “four-legged-brothers,” saving the calf proves to be especially important. A rancher has to be dedicated, present and judicious during the calving period because, as Krissy said, production remains ever important because they run a cattle ranching business. Krissy also fondly remembered calving as a child, which sticks in her mind as one of her earliest ranching memories:

I can remember him bring calves in that were frozen almost when they were born. He'd bring them in and we'd put em' in the bathtub and we'd run hot water. We'd be in charge of rubbing em' and trying to get em' warm and keeping them alive because when you're on a ranch, that's what your product is, is your calves, and so if we lost a calf that would hurt the business. We'd do everything we could to keep our baby calves alive.¹¹⁶

The calving period presents a host of problems and some that are out of the ranchers' control. Certain techniques, however, can decrease the likelihood of the mother rejecting the calf. Also, considering the cold winters and early springs in Idaho, frozen calves remain a concern but measures can be taken to decrease the likelihood of a calf dying, as displayed by the warming methods taken by Krissy and her family. Many of these rearing skills are passed down from the earliest days on the reservation. Krissy certainly learned these skills from her father who

¹¹⁵ Krissy Broncho interview.

¹¹⁶ Krissy Broncho interview.

probably learned it from his father. Considering that births happen on the ranch and the owners administer, skills have remained the same since ranching began at Fort Hall.

Branding season follows calving season for Shoshone-Bannock ranching families. Brands identify the owner of the cattle but for ranchers, branding season serves as a time to take stock of their cattle and meet with old friends. Kaycee spoke warmly of branding season considering it falls on her birthday, “Then about May, I usually brand on my birthday and my birthday is May 11 and we usually brand that day. We’ll do that for a whole weekend in May.”¹¹⁷ It takes dedication to tend to your cows and brand them on one’s birthday, but for Kaycee, branding provided the only birthday celebration she desired. Branding remains an easy way to identify the cattle owner and proves to be a cheap and effective method. Many brands have remained in the family since the earliest days of the reservation, and Marty pointed out that his family’s brand has been in the family for generations.¹¹⁸ Brands essentially resemble family crests, and the families treat them that way.

Martinez spoke of branding in a way that pointed out the importance of family and friends on the reservation and the bond that ranching families have. He and his grandfather both ran around with the Broncho family in their lifetime, specifically his grandfather, Lasell Pocatello. “They got a big family too, the Bronchos. My grandfather was raised with them, the Bronchos, with her (Krissy) uncles and everybody. They took him in. My grandma has a nice big picture with him and all the Bronchos. They got these chaps on, real old picture. He branded with them and was pretty much raised with them. He helped them out.”¹¹⁹ Considering Kaycee acknowledged there were only five families that she knew who ranched on the reservation

¹¹⁷ Kaycee Dixey interview.

¹¹⁸ Martinez Cortez interview.

¹¹⁹ Martinez Cortez interview.

currently,¹²⁰ the fact that Marty and his grandfather grew up with one of those families reveals volumes about the longevity and the bond and respect that these ranching families have for each other.

Following branding season, the round-ups mark perhaps the most celebrated and anticipated event in the year of a Shoshone-Bannock rancher. Families get together to push their cows up to the mountains on the reservation and ride all day. Often, those not riding will prepare large meals to feed all the riders. By all accounts, it is an all-day job and takes everyone involved to get the job done. “The Bottoms,” or “down Bottoms,” as Shoshone-Bannock ranchers refer to the lush, low-lying area adjacent to the Snake River, permeates this section regarding the round-ups and hay-cutting season, and the next subsection will illustrate what the Bottoms mean to ranching families and the Shoshone-Bannock culture.

Ethnography broadly studies human cultures.¹²¹ Studies of Native Americans inevitably turn to their multifaceted cultures. While ethnographical accounts of the Shoshone-Bannock have been completed in the past.¹²² This is the first ethnographical account that looks directly at Shoshone-Bannock ranching culture. These works prove their worth and provide great accounts of Shoshone-Bannock culture. However, this project offers the first recorded accounts of Shoshone-Bannock ranching.

Krissy, Martinez and Kaycee all spoke caringly about the round-ups and touched on different subjects. Krissy emphasized the importance of food, family and cooperation during the round-ups:

Someone’s gotta make the meals and feed the crew because we can’t just expect people

¹²⁰ Kaycee Dixey interview.

¹²¹ The American Ethnological Society, accessed March 2, 2019, <https://americanethnologist.org/about>.

¹²² John Heaton’s *The Shoshone-Bannocks: Culture and Commerce at Fort Hall, 1870-1940*, Brigham Madsen’s *The Bannock of Idaho, The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre*, and Sven Liljeblad’s *Indian Peoples in Idaho*.

to work all day and not get fed or not get paid. It's basically company and how do we all work together. The nice thing is we're family, so we can have our aunties come in or my sister will come in. They'll cook for us, ya know we don't pay them to cook we just give em' money to go get the food and they cook it up and feed everybody and it's a joyful time. Ya know, everybody comes together and it's a gathering. We work hard but we sure appreciate everybody's help.¹²³

For Krissy, round-ups mark a coming together of family and good food, but also a time of hard work and cooperation amongst friends and family. Marty also touched on the family affair as well as the food, hard work and danger that accompanies it when asked about the round-ups that take place on the Bottoms. "Yeah, and have a big feast after that, some of the people. It's like an all day job, get everybody involved. You gotta be careful though, these animals will run over you. We had one kid get attacked by a horse. He attacked him and killed him. Cause it was a wild horse and he was trying to rope him and everything, right down on Bottoms."¹²⁴ Inherent in the ranching and agricultural industry that accompanies it, injuries and deaths highlight the darker and more dangerous side of the business. This makes the presence of family and friends even more important. Everyone looks out for each other and help keep the round-ups safe while also enjoying some good food.

Multiple medical personnel from Southern Idaho published an article for the National Institute for Health regarding farming and ranching related injuries in Southern Idaho in 2014. They sought "Injuries known or likely to have occurred on properties intended for farming, ranching, animal care, or milk production, and relating to those activities were included."¹²⁵ They found that among the 72 patients, "injuries were related to horses (31%), machinery (17%), ATVs (17%), and hay bales/haystacks (13%)," and those injuries resulted in "1 inhospital [sic]

¹²³ Krissy Broncho interview.

¹²⁴ Martinez Cortez interview.

¹²⁵ Shaver, J, et al., "Farming and Ranching Related Injuries in Southern Idaho," U.S. National Library of Medicine: National Institutes of Health, May 2017, accessed February 13, 2019, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28404206>.

death and 4 on-scene fatalities.”¹²⁶ Shoshone-Bannock ranchers naturally put themselves in harm’s way as they perform their duties, and as shown above, danger can come from a variety of factors. I can personally attest to the danger associated with the large haystacks on the Bottoms. When I worked on the range for a day, which I cover in Section III, we fed cows from haystacks. The haystack I pulled bales from stood about 30 feet high, and each bale weighed about fifty pounds. As one pulls bales down from high on the stack, they come down fast and bring a lot of force with them, and one never really knows if pulling one bale down will cause some sort of avalanche. It is no surprise that hay bales/haystack injuries occur.

Kaycee talked about the round-ups as well, and touched on taking off work to perform the round-ups and the importance of your brand and keeping your cattle in your pen away from cattle thieves:

I’d say about end of May all of us five families that own cows on the reservation will get together in the Bottoms, and we all have different pastures down Bottoms. So we all get together and get all of our cows together, and we all have different brands so that makes it easy, and then also the cows have slits in their ears, ours look like fingers. So that’s how we know they’re ours, and then look at the brands. We’ll get together and push our cows up to the mountain range. We’ll ride all day. Usually we’ll do it on weekdays and we’ll take off work to do that. This past year it was May 25 we started pushing up to to the cattle range on the mountain. It takes us all day to do that. Once we get up there, you put all your cattle in that pen up there and make sure that all of them have their brands because there’s a lot of thieves on the rez.¹²⁷

Kaycee and her family take their cattle up to the Portneuf Range, which borders Fort Hall to the east. Krissy lives in the Ross Fork District on the eastern side of Fort Hall, and keeps her cattle

¹²⁶ Shaver, J, et al., “Farming and Ranching Related Injuries in Southern Idaho,” U.S. National Library of Medicine: National Institutes of Health, May 2017.

¹²⁷ Kaycee Dixey interview.

right in her own backyard. “I just run mine up to the mountains there, right next to Mount

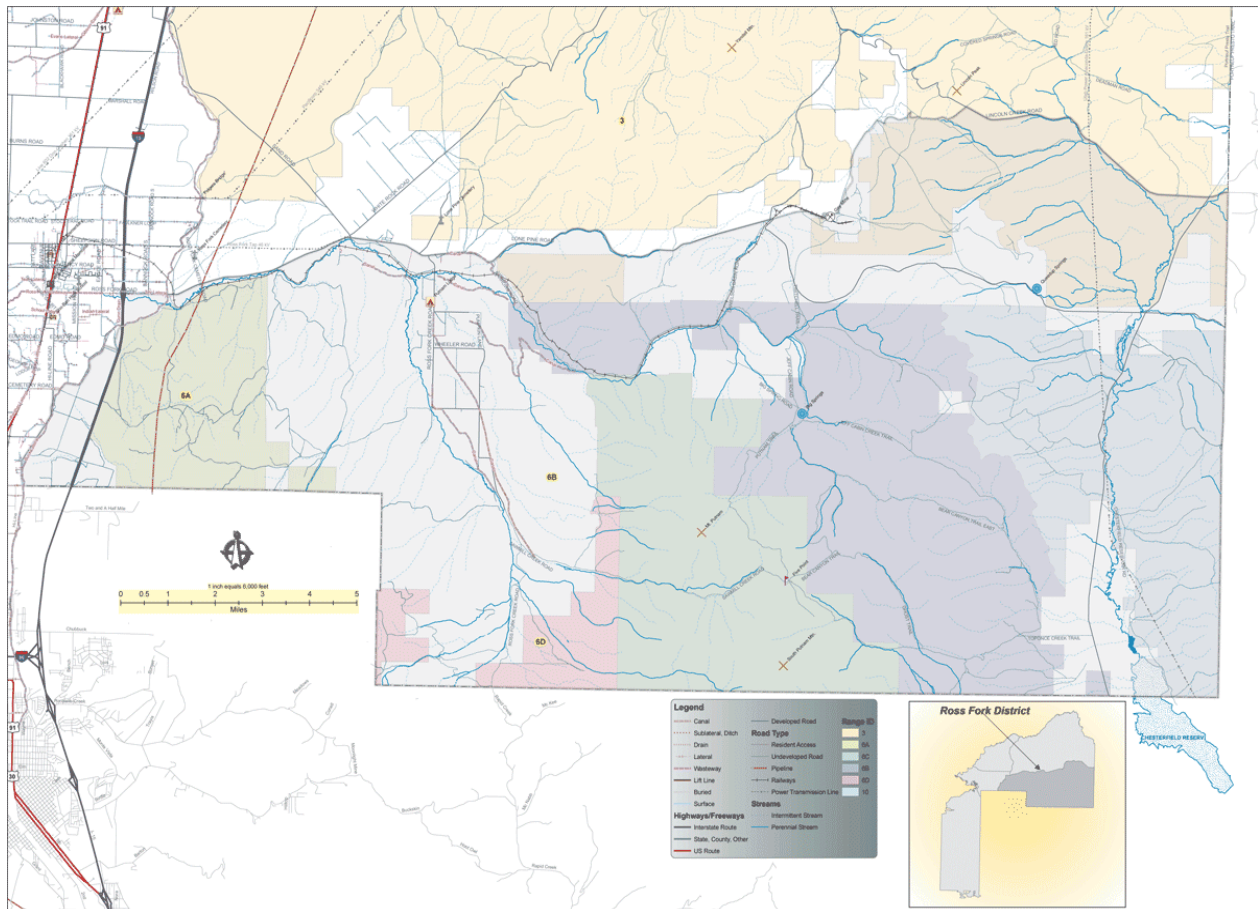


Figure 2: Ross Fork District, located at the Fort Hall Reservation.¹²⁸

Putnam. And so I’m kinda up where it’s colder but it’s really nice having my cows just right there in my backyard.”¹²⁹ This map shows the five districts that comprise Fort Hall and the location of the Ross Fork District. Krissy lives in the Ross Fork District, to the east of the Bottoms. Considering Krissy keeps her cattle at her home in Ross Fork, and then pushed them up to the mountains for most of the winter, it saves her time and makes the cattle drive much easier. The scale bar represents five miles so one can get an idea of the immensity of Ross Fork District and the whole reservation. Cattle drives take all day and many miles traversed. The

¹²⁸ Fort Hall Indian Reservation Districts,” Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, accessed June 30, 2018, http://sbtribes-ewmp.com/land_base_fort_hall.html.

¹²⁹ Krissy Broncho interview.

mountains serve as a haven for Shoshone-Bannock ranchers and putting them on the range up there allows for them to graze almost freely. Historically, Shoshone-Bannock ranchers have used the mountains to graze their cattle as well. Sterling Justice, a Forest Service Ranger during the first half of the twentieth century in southeast Idaho, took account of the Shoshone-Bannocks use of the mountains for grazing in *The Forest Ranger on Horseback*. He noted in 1927 that “thirty or forty Indians were riding on this roundup” and they were gathering two thousand cattle during this round up.¹³⁰ Justice demonstrates that the mountains on the eastern side of Fort Hall have been used as an important grazing ground for the Shoshone-Bannock since the early years on the reservation. The process of getting the cattle up to the mountains, however, could not be possible without the hard work of friends and family with each doing their own part and looking out for each other.

The next step in the year of a Shoshone-Bannock rancher involves checking the grazing cows in the mountains and letting the hay grow down on the Bottoms for the upcoming winter. Some of the land on the Bottoms belongs to the tribes and some belong to individual ranching families, and during the summer months, irrigated water feeds the bottoms to grow hay. For families that do own land plots on the Bottoms, the summer months indicate hard work.

Kaycee’s family are one such family:

June comes around and my grandpa will start irrigating down Bottoms, and then let the hay grow until July, end of July. Then we’ll start taking the tractors down from our house to Bottoms... Then the first week of August we start cutting. We usually take a whole week to cut, or more. Depends on how many pastures you have; my grandpa has four. Each pasture we take about two weeks on. That’s eight weeks total we do cutting, bailing, stacking and it’s really fun to do that.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Sterling R Justice, *The Forest Ranger on Horseback* (unpublished manuscript, 1967).

¹³¹ Kaycee Dixey interview.

Kaycee also mentioned that several family members will camp down on the Bottoms during this time to keep an eye on the equipment. Hay then gets loaded into the bailer and the individual bails can be stacked on the pastures down on the Bottoms and used for winter feeding.

For small-scale ranchers, like Krissy Broncho, hay bought directly from the tribes supply their cattle. She runs about 30 head of cattle, not enough to justify the expenses for additional land and the equipment needed to irrigate, cut, load, bail and transport, so she acquires her hay directly from the tribes. Krissy spoke about the process of growing hay, something she is well-versed in:

Most people get in about three crops a year, so that's nice. And we do, down on the river bottoms, have meadow feed lots and so we put up meadow hay as well. There's a difference in the minerals in that versus alfalfa hay that you produce. Just kinda knowing what hay you've got and which crop you're feeding. I do know quite a bit about it because I grew up doing it. We were out there and then knowing you gotta do crop rotation, too. You can't steal all the minerals from the soil, you gotta be able to put minerals back into it. So there are times when we do crop rotation and we end up buying hay from other farmers or ranchers.¹³²

Cooperation among farmers and ranchers again highlights the hay season for the Shoshone-Bannock. The Tribe helps supply small-scale ranchers with hay and this helps keep the ranching tradition alive at the Fort Hall Reservation.

The final step in the year of a Shoshone-Bannock rancher involves bringing the cattle back down from the mountains to the Bottoms. "Before winter comes we'll start pushing our cows back down from the mountain range to Bottoms I'd say about September."¹³³ After that, the cattle stay on the Bottoms for the majority of winter, eating up the hay cut and bailed during the summer. For ranching families such as Martinez's, though, they do not go through this process of moving cows:

¹³² Krissy Broncho interview.

¹³³ Kaycee Dixey interview.

Our cows never leave this area, they stay here (his house). She (Martinez's mother, Dinez) don't want em' [sic] out there. She's afraid someone might walk off with her kids. They used to do that a long time ago. They used to steal each other's cows. When they have cows like here, my mom said they would, people would walk to the fence and grab the babies. My mom would say my cows are not leaving, they're staying right here. So we do, all our cows stay right here. Used to take em' down Bottoms, we had grazing down bottoms.¹³⁴

Not all ranching families go through the same process. Some families keep their cows right on the property around their houses, while some have big enough cattle operations that they need to round them up and get them to the mountains. One thing all their operations have in common, though, is hard work, family and friends, and a dedication to their craft. Each season brings its own difficulties, but when you love what you do, the work never seems that hard.

II.a: The Bottoms

The Bottoms flooded my interviewees responses, and not just when answering questions directly related to ranching. The Bottoms hold deep significance for the Shoshone-Bannock people and their ranching operations. As noted earlier in Section II, the Bottoms' location adjacent to the Snake River offer many resources for the Shoshone-Bannocks and hold a special place in Shoshone-Bannock culture. This section highlights what the Bottoms mean to the Shoshone-Bannock people personally and culturally as well as the special connection that they feel with that area.

Martinez's family boasts a long history on the reservation considering his mother made the move from the McCammon Valley area with her cattle in the early 1900s. From there his grandparents and mother lived on the Bottoms. Martinez spoke of their time on the Bottoms:

Our grandfather was named Lasell Pocatello and our grandmother was named Louella Pocatello. And so these are the old people that had our place here on the reservation. At one time they used to live down at the Bottoms. The willows – they lived along the willows. They made huts out of them. One time I asked my mom, "How do you guys survive in the summer when there's so many mosquitoes?" and she said, "Well there's a

¹³⁴ Martinez Cortez interview.

secret to that” and I asked what, and the old people would get cow pies and they burn em’ and put em’ around the camp, and the smell of it just keeps the mosquitoes away.¹³⁵

His family acquired the houses that they continue to live in today, and which also served as the location for the interview, in the 1920s.¹³⁶ Martinez fondly remembers the Bottoms from his childhood and recalled stories from his mother, like the mosquito story. While his family did not begin their Fort Hall lives there, a chunk of time spent there cemented the Bottoms’ importance into his mind.

Although Kaycee’s family originally emigrated from the Boise area, she considers the Bottoms as the starting place for the Dixey family. I asked Kaycee to tell me about the Bottoms and what they mean to her people, and this is what she recounted:

Of course, that’s like my second home. When the cavalry first pushed us here, that was where they pushed us, on the Bottoms. That’s where everyone’s roots are from, it’s like our homeland. My grandfather’s grandfather, R.W., that’s where he lived, that’s where he grew up. Today, that is probably the most untouched land that we have around here. It’s mostly used for ranching now, but people go fishing down there, hunting.¹³⁷

The Bottoms certainly hold a special place in her heart, and thanks to her own grandfather, she knows the Bottoms in and out and relishes the chance to camp there during the hay cutting season. The Fort Hall Reservation is very large and once covered a larger area, so for Kaycee to say that the Bottoms are their homeland speaks volumes about their importance culturally. “The bottoms is where everyone comes from, our roots live there.”¹³⁸ The Bottoms, historically, have been at the center of Shoshone-Bannock culture. Such so that during initial treaty negotiations meant to establish reservation boundaries, prominent Shoshone-Bannock leaders Chief Taghee and Washakie made it a priority to include the traditional winter campgrounds on the Fort Hall

¹³⁵ Martinez Cortez interview.

¹³⁶ Martinez Cortez interview.

¹³⁷ Kaycee Dixey interview.

¹³⁸ Kaycee Dixey interview.

Bottoms.¹³⁹ That prominent leaders negotiated for the Fort Hall Bottoms to be included in their reservation lands reveals that this location has always been an important part of their reservation and serves as a cultural milestone for the Shoshone-Bannocks. Roots deliver nutrients to the rest of the plant, and the roots planted by the Shoshone-Bannocks down at the Bottoms provide them with their cultural and spiritual strength.

Section III: My Day on the Range at Fort Hall

This section will catalogue my experience working on the range for a day at the Fort Hall Reservation. For this project, it was imperative for me to go out on the range and experience cattle ranching first-hand. Not only did I want to get my hands dirty and feel what it was like to ranch, albeit only one day, I also strived to gain the trust and respect of the people whom I have talked with and learned from. I figured there was no better way to get a real feel for the work cattle ranchers do unless I actually performed the duties and performed them with someone who has worked in the business for years. It was a long day of work and I remain grateful for the experience.

In anthropology and ethnography, understanding one's culture from their perspective is cultural relativism. In order to understand the Shoshone-Bannock ranching culture, one must immerse themselves in that culture. Furthermore, emic knowledge exists within a culture and best described by a "native" of the culture under study.¹⁴⁰ From traditional sources, one can procure basic knowledge of ranching at Fort Hall, but to actually understand that ranching culture, one must involve themselves with "natives" of that culture and place themselves in the

¹³⁹ Gregory E Smoak, *Ghost Dances & Identity: Prophetic Religion & American Indian Ethnogenesis in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 100-01.

¹⁴⁰ Xia Jingfeng, "An Anthropological Emic-etic Perspective on Open Access Practices," *Journal of Documentation* 67, no. 1 (2011): 76.

best position to understand. Which explains why it was important to go out on the range and work for a day.

I was put into contact with Woody Teton through a friend and met him at his house on the reservation, just south of Blackfoot at about 9:45 a.m. on the morning of January 9, 2019. Snow blanketed the ground and the sun shined on this particular day. Woody advised me to dress warm with good boots. Luckily, with the sun shining the temperature remained mild. After Woody let me in, we enjoyed a cup of coffee before beginning the day by feeding the horses used in ranching. Around 10 horses roamed the pen in front of the house and we loaded up about five bales of hay onto the back of the flatbed work truck. Each bale averages about 50 pounds. Woody drove slowly past the pen, while standing on the flatbed, I cut the twine and quartered the bales over the pen. He advised me to space the hay out about every 15 feet, so that dominant horses could not eat all the hay while the less-dominant horses went hungry. The day before, Woody told me that a horse looked weak and ready to die and he was sure he would wake up the next day to it having passed on. The horse survived. Weakened and nearing death, though, it was taken up to the buttes to live out its remaining time.

After feeding the horses, Woody took me to the spot on the Bottoms where the cows reside for the winter and where their massive stacks of hay sit. The hay stacked about 30 feet high and was at least 60 feet in length. First, we fed the penned cattle – 42 calves from the last birth and three bulls. We tossed 15 bales of hay over the pen, and then climbed the fence to get inside. From there, we cut the twine and began dividing the hay up and moving it to different locations within the pen. Again, we did this to ensure every cow had a place to eat. With the penned cattle fed, Woody then backed the truck up to the haystack and we loaded 30 bales to feed the 150 heifers that ranged the Bottoms. In the same method as before – standing on the

flatbed while Woody drove slowly – I fed the heifers. Woody drove in a big “U” shape on the Bottoms while I dished out the hay. At this point, I was already tired and feeling the effects of moving 30+ bales of hay, but I knew there was more work to do.

As mentioned before, wild horses present a large problem for Shoshone-Bannock ranchers and I can attest to that. I had not even finished dishing out the first bale of hay before two wild horses helped themselves to some free food. Hay is not cheap for Shoshone-Bannock ranchers, whether they cut their own or purchase it from outside sellers. Woody assured me that these horses present a problem for ranchers because they eat a lot of hay that is meant for the cows. I noticed them all over down on the Bottoms and had not even heard that they were a problem before my time with Woody.

With the free-ranging heifers fed, Woody then took me on a bit of a tour of the Bottoms, places I would never have the chance to see not being from the reservation. He drove me past the buffalo farms and threw the truck in four-wheel drive and drove right down to the Snake River, past the Old Fort Hall Monument. The Bottoms adjacent the Snake River are thick with vegetation to the point that you cannot see five feet through. It was at this point that I realized why the Bottoms are so important to the Shoshone-Bannock people as it provides them great grazing grounds, not to mention the cultural aspect. This thick vegetation brings a few problems, though. It can be swampy and cows easily become lost, either in the dense vegetation or the mud. I was grateful for the tour of the Bottoms and the opportunity to contextualize the things I had been reading and hearing about the Bottoms.

Once the Bottoms had been explored, we went back to the original staging area where we got in the work truck and fed the horses that resided in the pen behind the house. Much the same as we did on the Bottoms, Woody drove while I delivered the hay off the flatbed. Interestingly,

as we left and I was tying up the rope to close the entrance to the pen, Woody came and showed me his way of tying it, so that with one tug of the rope it all came undone. Much like Kaycee told me about her grandfather having a special way of tying the rope to their pastures. These little traditions or seemingly miniscule things extend across ranching families at Fort Hall and are unique to each.

Having finished our duties for the day, I dropped Woody back off at his house at about 2:30 in the afternoon and headed home to ponder and dissect what I had just experienced. Hard work proved to be the lesson of the day. It takes a special work ethic and perseverance to do that kind of work every day. Although I only faced one day on the range, I am no stranger to hard work and this easily exceeded my work experiences from the past. The bales got heavier as the day went on and my legs weakened but my determination to get the most out of the situation never faltered. I thanked Woody for taking me under his wing and showing me the ropes, and he invited me back to help him with his work anytime.

Woody Teton is a steel worker by trade, having recently worked on the new FBI building in Pocatello. By all accounts, Woody is also one of the best rodeo-men on the reservation. I was able to see pictures of him riding and even one standing on his horse. Both Marty and Kaycee spoke of his cowboy tendencies fondly and proudly. Currently, Woody is a hired-hand for his niece and her partner, working their cows every day of the week. He loves it, though. The ability to be outside everyday with the cattle and the chance to continue to ride and roam the expanse of the Bottoms suits him just fine, he said.

Conclusion

Each season in the year of a Shoshone-Bannock rancher brings its own set of challenges and hard work always accompanies it. From calving to cutting hay and round-ups to branding

season, ranching demands dedication and persistence. Shoshone-Bannock ranchers rely on their friends and family to get through the strenuous tasks. Just as important to their success, though, tradition and spirituality also guide them as they rely on the strength it provides. These Shoshone-Bannock ranchers want to continue the legacy set forth by their grandparents and great-grandparents. The hard work proves to be worth it when they get together on the Bottoms and reminisce about the stories that have passed down generation to generation. To keep the ranching tradition alive at the Fort Hall Reservation, these families must continue to work hard and teach the younger generations. If my day on the ranch taught me anything, it is that ranching requires attention to detail, fortitude and a strong back and that family and tradition means everything to Shoshone-Bannock ranchers.

Chapter 4

The Future of Ranching at Fort Hall Reservation

Other ranching styles and agricultural jobs are taking over the subsistence and culturally important form of ranching outlined in previous chapters. As plant-based diets become more popular and factory farm-like ranches continue to dominate, what is the future of ranching at the Fort Hall Reservation? This chapter aims to answer that question using an analysis of oral histories Shoshone-Bannock ranchers. These interviews provide insight into ranching's future at Fort Hall. By and large, their responses mirrored each other in a variety of ways. In the participant's estimation, the future of ranching at Fort Hall does not look bright, nor is it bleak. Coming from the authoritative voices of ranchers themselves, their insight holds a significant amount of weight. The following section "The Importance of Ranching to the Fort Hall Community" analyzes what ranching means to the Shoshone-Bannock culture. This establishes a precedent and helps determine why the future of ranching means so much to these Shoshone-Bannock ranchers. They and their families have lived in the ranching culture their whole lives and its future remains a vital aspect of Shoshone-Bannock life.

In this chapter I argue that without ranching at Fort Hall, the Shoshone-Bannock people will lose an important aspect of their culture. Families may lose a sense of cohesive identity as people and as a culture. For Shoshone-Bannock ranchers, ranching has been passed from generation to generation starting in the 1880s until today, so to lose that would mean a loss of their family legacy. Traits involved in ranching – hard work, cooperation, and diligence, to name a few – learned in the process may be lost or forgotten if ranching disappears at Fort Hall Reservation. Considering many ranching families began at the start of reservation life, these traits have passed down over a century and have become ingrained in their lifestyles. These families are determined to keep the ranching legacy alive at Fort Hall Reservation.

Section I: The Importance of Ranching to the Fort Hall Community

To offer context and demonstrate why the future of ranching at Fort Hall prompted such strong responses from the interviewees, this section focuses on the importance of ranching at Fort Hall. Krissy, Martinez, and Kaycee all fielded a question about what ranching means to them, their families, and the Fort Hall community. Ranching and the horse riding, fellowship, hard work and feasts that accompany it have interwoven with everyday life at Fort Hall. Krissy communicated her thoughts on the importance of ranching to Fort Hall after the Shoshone-Bannock moved to the reservation:

We had to figure out how can we stay alive in the white man's world now, because it was no longer just the Indian world. So we had to learn how to survive and I think the government, when they first put us on reservations said "well let's see if they can produce cattle." And so that's what we started to do. It's important I think to the reservation to know that, and I think more than importance is that we take pride in it. When we take pride in it, it helps our reservation to be prideful of who we are and what we can do. Ya know, like the white man may have a nice ranch and produce cattle – we can do the same thing, and have nice quality beef.¹⁴¹

Pride can sometimes elicit negative connotations like vanity and arrogance. Yet, Krissy's response expresses a deep understanding and confidence in their ability to ranch successfully. Moreover, a sense of self-respect in their work rather than a misguided sense of their importance proves true. Everyone on the reservation can be proud of the ranching legacy at Fort Hall. It also serves as a reminder that the Shoshone-Bannock people are capable of great things if they take pride in it.

Whereas Krissy focused on the pride related with ranching work, Marty emphasized the visual aspect of the ranching tradition at Fort Hall and its significance:

It is important, it is important. I don't know what would be if we didn't have no cattles [sic] on the reservation. It would be rough, I don't know. Cause that's all we see on our reservation cows on the open range. It was big but a lot of people just don't do it anymore. But right now, the number one thing on our reservation is potatoes. From

¹⁴¹ Krissy Broncho interview.

ranching we went to potatoes. A lot of people changed their ground into potato. Probably get more money for that.¹⁴²

Marty lamented the loss of the ranching culture. His reply draws on the visual and aesthetic comfort Shoshone-Bannocks receive from seeing cows on the range. Cattle have always roamed the open ranges at Fort Hall and functioned as a reminder of the hard work and dedication it took to produce the cattle they do. Transitioning from open range to potato fields represents a change in culture as much as a change in land use.

Similarly, Kaycee stressed the history associated with ranching when asked about the importance of ranching to the culture at the Fort Hall Reservation:

I'd say, it's just our history, I guess you could say. Everyone on the reservation, they either have a great-grandfather or great-grandmother who had ranched, or who have helped ranch. And now, their parents didn't keep it going, so they didn't learn. It's just in our history. Ranching is what made us strong people, and our culture has also made us that way. So, it's just in our history, all of us come from ranching families, even though they don't ranch today. It's just in our roots.¹⁴³

Kaycee demonstrates that ranching is more than just a job and a way to make money, ranching comprises a significant portion of their history. Everyone comes from a rancher somewhere down the family line, and it helped provide a sense of identity tied to hard work and food..

Kaycee bemoaned that losing that ranching culture means losing a part of who they are.

According to Kaycee, ranching means everything to the Shoshone-Bannock culture and they should continue the legacy their great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers began.

Krissy, Martinez, and Kaycee also articulated what cattle ranching means to them personally and what it means to their families. Considering their families all boast long ranching histories from the earliest times on the reservation, ranching means everything to them.

Ranching not only provides food and income but it gives them a sense of purpose and honors

¹⁴² Martinez Cortez interview.

¹⁴³ Kaycee Dixey interview.

their family name. Although they all agree to some extent that the future of ranching is tenuous at best, they remain determined to keep the ranching legacy alive in their families and at Fort Hall.

Krissy stressed the importance of passing the ranch on to her sons and how all family members assist in ranching when circumstances necessitate:

My ranch is really important, for a couple reasons. One, because it's been in the family and I'm really dedicated to keeping it going. Two of my boys are in college right now and they've got cattle too. My dad runs some of their cows for em' [sic], I run some of their cows for em'. That's something I want to be able to pass on to my children so that my boys can be able to run that ranch when they're older. With my uncle Dave, he never married and never had any children so I know that ranch is probably gonna be inherited to me and I already have my own ranch, so that will go to my boys. So it's real important. My three boys are cowboys as well and they know the lifestyle and so that will be something that will be left to them. We want the legacy to continue.¹⁴⁴

Clearly ranching runs in the Broncho family. Krissy expressed her desire to keep the ranching legacy within the family and her quote demonstrates the extreme importance they place on keeping the Broncho name synonymous with ranching. All family members help each other out, too, when one cannot tend to their cows. Earlier in the interview, Krissy explained that when she attended college, her dad kept her cows for her. This again stresses the meaning of family for Shoshone-Bannock ranchers. They aid each other because the ranching legacy needs to stay alive and strong at Fort Hall.

Whereas Krissy focused on the importance of passing the ranch on to her children, Martinez concentrated on his belief in raising cows and how it sustained his family:

It was very important to our family because the ranching fed us and we'd sell a couple cows and that helps us out with whatever bills we need, we sacrifice our cows for that. It helps out a lot. I believe in raising cows and I'll maybe continue raising cows as I get a little older here. Because they are important, these cows are very important for beef and whatnot. But it's like I say, the ranching on our reservation is very important to us.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Krissy Broncho interview.

¹⁴⁵ Martinez Cortez interview.

For Martinez, ranching did not just provide a hobby for his family, ranching afforded them the ability to eat and pay the bills. This quote shows that ranching sustains a family in a variety of ways. The sacrifice of a cow to help his family inherently expressed the “four-legged brothers” mentality that Krissy outlined in Chapter Three. With a heavy heart his family sacrifices their cows to provide food and money because cattle are not just a means to an end, but a lifestyle.

Interestingly, Kaycee shifted her attention to what the family ranch has taught her and the values it instilled in her:

It’s all we know, so it’s the most important thing we have. It’s part of who we are. And it’s sad because I’d say, there’s only five families that I know that ranch on the reservation. It’s kind of sad that I see some of my cousins and friends on the reservation that don’t know much about hard work and ranching, and you can just see the difference in how they were raised and where they are now. Ya know, they’re into drugs or doing something they shouldn’t be. So you can just tell.¹⁴⁶

Ranching provided Kaycee with the values and skills needed to succeed in life as well as ranching. Her comment articulates how ranching can instill principles and a work ethic that might may have otherwise eluded Shoshone-Bannocks. Obviously, ranching teaches hard work and the time and dedication needed to sustain a ranch keeps them consumed in that work. But without that work to keep them busy and principled, it could lead to a dark path. Kaycee lamented seeing her cousins and friends lose those values, but celebrated what she had learned through ranching.

Ranching provides positive things for the Shoshone-Bannocks – food, income, fellowship, values, etc. – but the one thing that cannot be measured or understated is that it provides them with a great sense of who they are as a people and culture and where they have come from. For Krissy, Martinez, and Kaycee, that remains the most important thing to them because it reminds them of their great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers who worked

¹⁴⁶ Kaycee Dixey interview.

extremely hard to build up the ranch and establish that ranching legacy. No matter what it takes, they will keep the ranching legacy alive and not forget where they came from and what it took to get there. The future of ranching at the Fort Hall Reservation lies in the balance and these ranching families aim to keep it alive.

Section II: The Future of Ranching at Fort Hall

With environmental and health concerns dominating the news, describing the benefits of a plant-based diet for humans and the environmental degradations caused by the ranching business, the future of ranching at Fort Hall finds itself in a fragile state. Statistics concerning the revenue generated from ranching at Fort Hall prove to be hard to find, so it remains unclear if a decline in sales or prices has led to the uncertain state the ranching industry finds itself. Furthermore, the art of ranching at Fort Hall no longer holds the prestige it once had as families turn away from ranching and turn their attention towards growing potatoes or other ventures. Using state agricultural statistics provided by the USDA, livestock, and in particular, cattle and calves, are more valuable to Idaho's economy and generate more money than other agricultural pursuits.¹⁴⁷ Why the shift away from cattle ranching at Fort Hall, then? Martinez believes people on the reservation have lost the work ethic needed to run a ranch.¹⁴⁸ Krissy and Kaycee believe families have simply gotten out of the business and no longer teach their young family members the necessary knowledge for ranching. However, the families still involved in the ranching business stand determined to keep it alive at Fort Hall as they teach their young people the hard work, values, and dedication that it takes to ranch on the reservation. Therefore, there is

¹⁴⁷ "2018 State Agricultural Review" United States Department of Agriculture, accessed April 3, 2019, https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=IDAHO

¹⁴⁸ Martinez Cortez interview.

reason for hope at Fort Hall. Kaycee has already begun building her future in ranching, Krissy intends to ranch for as long as she can and teach her sons about ranching, and Martinez continues to keep his family's cattle. Again, ranching lives on through determined people like this at Fort Hall and it will continue to do so.

Krissy, Martinez, and Kaycee all have a personal stake in the future of ranching at Fort Hall. All three are directly involved in ranching as well as active members of their extended family. While working as a ranch hand for many years, Kaycee gained the knowledge and expertise needed in ranching and now sets her sights on her own cattle. Ranching has steadily declined on the reservation as young people find new opportunities and Krissy touched on the subject when asked about the state of ranching currently at Fort Hall:

I would have to say it's probably a little on the decline, and I think I'd say that just because some of our tribal members are passing away and their children may choose not to carry on the legacy. With that, the cattle just go away, so I've seen a few families that have just gotten out of it because there's nobody that wants to do it. It takes a lot of work and if people aren't dedicated to it, they're just like okay I tried it for a year or two and it's too much, they just sell out.¹⁴⁹

According to Krissy, several things have led to the demise of cattle ranching at Fort Hall. Her quote addresses the factors that have led to the decline, some of them controllable and some not. Ranchers may pass away and do not have anyone in the immediate family to pass those cattle to, so they are auctioned off. Some children choose not to continue the ranching legacy because they do not have interest, or the time. However, the Shoshone-Bannocks can control how hard they work at it and how dedicated they want to be. Krissy believes that the drive to succeed in ranching still exists at Fort Hall and it is up to the older ranchers to teach that determination.

¹⁴⁹ Krissy Broncho interview.

Meanwhile, Kaycee remains determined to keep the ranching legacy going in the Dixey family. Kaycee expressed her desire to continue ranching and spoke about some of the factors that limit her and other young Shoshone-Bannock ranchers:

I plan on continuing it in my family, letting my kids get their cattle, but I know it's gonna be harder because of the way things are now. It's sad, but just growing up it was a part of who I was. Also, it's even harder because we are a native people, and at the same time we're trying to keep our language alive, so they teach classes. It's just really hard to be a native rancher, and living in the modern world, it is really hard. It's really hard going from ISU (Idaho State University) to Blackfoot almost all the time just to help my grandfather feed cows. My aunt and her husband took over on it because I couldn't do it anymore.¹⁵⁰

Her quote raises several interesting points. Going to school at Idaho State University and helping on the ranch at the same takes up a lot of time and energy. Also, cultural revitalization programs, like language instruction are an important part of life at Fort Hall, so there are many factors that determine the amount of time one can put into ranching. A rancher needing to be up early to feed the cows, and then to go to school, like Kaycee does, takes a lot of dedication. Another factor that helps drive the ranching legacy at Fort Hall showed up in Kaycee's comment. Again, family may be the most important factor in ranching at Fort Hall. If someone in the family cannot dedicate themselves fully, another family member helps. Ranching proves to be a family affair, and if young Shoshone-Bannock people like Kaycee remain determined to stay in the ranching business, it will continue.

Speaking of family, Martinez has brothers and sisters who may or may not continue the ranching legacy after his mother passes, and Martinez does not know if he will continue ranching as he is getting up in age as well. He articulated his and his mother's position on the future of their cows and the future of ranching at Fort Hall:

Ya know, mostly I think it's gonna be gone here soon, it's a lot of work. They're all

¹⁵⁰ Kaycee Dixey interview.

passing way, too, the people that have these cows and as soon as their families get them, they'll sell the cows cause they don't wanna do it. It's the same thing with my mom though, my sisters don't care, they wanna get rid of em'. I'm like "what are you saying this for? You never took care of em'." My mom grew up with these cows, if she doesn't get her cow, what's it gonna feel like for her? In the morning, she lies right there by her bench and looks out and sees her cows right there. I said "mom what will happen (with these cows)?" And she says, "it will probably break my heart, cause I grew up with these cows, don't you dare sell em' when I'm still around." I said "tell your daughters that."¹⁵¹

Clearly the cattle that have been in the family for over one hundred years means very much to Martinez's mom. But this illustrates how cattle are more than a way to make money for Martinez's family. The cattle are a part of their family and it would crush his mother if the cows were sold away while she's still alive. His quote also raises another interesting point – divided interests among family members. Some may want to inherit the cows while others may just want to sell them and get the money for them right away. Martinez and Krissy both pointed out that the older tribal members are passing away and no family members want to, or cannot, keep the ranching legacy alive within their families and also at Fort Hall. It is sad that ranching may decline at Fort Hall for this reason, but there is cause for hope at Fort Hall, at least within Martinez's family.

While Martinez believes he might be getting too old to keep cattle on his property, he believes his brothers will continue the ranching tradition within the family:

I think my brothers probably will, my two brothers down there. Cause they already got their places ya know in case my mom decides who gets what. They are probably gonna take over on that, but it's up to them. I'm not saying anything about it, I got my part already. I'll leave it up to them. But if we gotta start cutting everything in half, I'll take my half. I'll raise them if that's what she wants. I got almost ten acres here, they don't have to leave our ground either, I can just leave em' out right here.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Martinez Cortez interview.

¹⁵² Martinez Cortez interview.

It appears that ranching will continue in the Cortez family. His response expressed the need and importance for keeping the cattle within the family, because they know what the cattle represent and mean to their mother. Even though earlier in the interview Martinez voiced his desire to just live out his remaining years not running the cows, he will if his mom wants him to. Family means everything to him, and the cows have always been an important factor for his mother and family.

Similarly, Kaycee contemplates the future of ranching within her family and that of Fort Hall, and by her estimation, the future looks bleak:

In my lifetime, I'd say it might die down, a lot. Nowadays most of the tribal kids, they don't grow up in ranching and they don't care about it. There's a lot of gangs in Fort Hall, and most of them are growing up that way because they don't have parents to teach them. And if I don't keep up ranching in my family it will die because my grandfather was married three times, so he has other kids, and my aunts and uncles, half of them don't even care anymore. If Pace's (Krissy's brother) kids, Krissy's, Woody's (Teton) don't keep it up, it's gonna die, I think it will die.¹⁵³

Kaycee does not see a bright future for ranching at the Fort Hall Reservation. However, with the continued hard work of the Dixeys, Bronchos, and Tetons, ranching at Fort Hall may have a future yet. Kaycee's response highlights the conundrum many young people face at Fort Hall – without the hard work and values associated with ranching work, many turn towards crime. Furthermore, Kaycee likens the demise of ranching to the rise of gangs and criminality at Fort Hall. Without the guidance from veteran ranchers and something to keep them as busy as ranching might, young Shoshone-Bannock people find themselves with nothing to do. Kaycee remains steadfast in her efforts to keep the ranching legacy alive in her family and at Fort Hall and if Shoshone-Bannock people like her continue to run cattle, ranching at Fort Hall will continue.

¹⁵³ Kaycee Dixey interview.

Likewise, Krissy believes the opportunity for ranching at Fort Hall is there and can be a bright future, provided ranching families spread the knowledge and values that accompany ranching:

I think that we have great opportunity if we can get our young people interested in it. I think in order to be interested in it, it helps to be born into it to have the desire to wanna do it. So, like with my boys, my oldest is like “I’m not sure, that’s a lot of work.” And it is a lot of work. My middle son, he just loves cattle. That’s what he wants to do. He’s in school right now to be a heavy equipment operator so he’s kind of going down the same course as my dad. He wants to run cattle and be able to have a side job where he’s running heavy equipment.¹⁵⁴

Krissy sees the opportunity for ranching to continue at Fort Hall, at least in her own family. One of her boys remains interested in the trade, and will follow in the family footsteps. Her response demonstrates the importance of family and legacy to Shoshone-Bannock ranching families. It helps to grow up in that ranching culture and helps accelerate the learning curve associated with ranching. If one grows up knowing exactly the type of hard work connected to ranching, then the work does not seem insurmountable, but just a part of the process. The opportunity for a bright ranching future still exists at Fort Hall, if the older generations are willing to teach and the younger generations display interest and the will to succeed.

Ranching has long been associated with the Fort Hall Reservation and the Shoshone-Bannock people. For many of the families still involved in the trade, ranching proves to be who they are and something they have known their whole lives. Which explains why the future of ranching at their reservation stands as such an important topic in their lives. If young people do not become involved, it may fade away. Kaycee, as a young Shoshone-Bannock, remains steadfast and determined to keep the ranching legacy alive within her family and at Fort Hall. Krissy provides the necessary avenues for at least one of her sons to preserve the ranching legacy

¹⁵⁴ Krissy Broncho interview.

her great-grandfather, Broncho Jim began in the late 1800s. Finally, Martinez will do everything in his power to keep his mother's cows in the family, and he believes his younger brothers will continue that legacy as well. If these three ranching families stand as the stewards for a future of ranching at the Fort Hall reservation, ranching certainly boasts a bright future.

Section III: Putting the Pieces Together – A Recap

This section reviews the beginning of reservation life at Fort Hall and examines how those early years helped prepare Shoshone-Bannocks for a prosperous cattle industry that continued to flourish through the twentieth century and now faces an uncertain future in the twenty-first. This section also dissects how the authoritative voices of Shoshone-Bannock ranchers can help explain that family, tradition, and culture are the most important factors involved in the ranching legacy at Fort Hall. When first pushed onto the Fort Hall Reservation, the Shoshone-Bannocks faced difficult decisions and conditions. No longer could they travel in seasonal cycles for the foods they desired most – camas roots, salmon, and big game – nor could they practice the same kinship and familial ties from before. The Dawes Act mandated 160-acre plots of land to help assimilate Shoshone-Bannocks into American culture and fulfill the ideals of the Jeffersonian family farm. These 160-acre plots stood in stark contrast to everything they had practiced before. Communal ownership of land served the Shoshone-Bannock people well pre-reservation life. Splitting their ancestral lands into individual plots deviated from Shoshone-Bannock culture. Indian Agents assigned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to help the Shoshone-Bannocks assimilate often mocked their traditional lifestyles rather than finding ways to blend the old traditions with their new lives. However, a strong sense of identity, family, and culture –

and Shoshone-Bannock agency – helped ease the hardships they faced in the early years at Fort Hall Reservation.

The early years at Fort Hall Reservation – roughly 1880-1910 – were highlighted by mismanagement of tribal funds and irrigation projects meant to aid Shoshone-Bannock ranchers and farmers and ease their transition to a more sedentary and conventional lifestyle. Irrigation projects failed to meet the needs of Shoshone-Bannock farms and often served the needs of the growing and neighboring city of Pocatello, Idaho. Tribal funds sometimes diverted to projects without the Shoshone-Bannocks' consent. In one instance, tribal funds purchased nearly 500 cattle – without Shoshone-Bannock knowledge – and Indian Agents released the cattle onto the range, unknowingly carrying scabies, which infected many Shoshone-Bannock cattle. This episode proved costly for Shoshone-Bannock ranchers and they realized they needed to consolidate their power. The Fort Hall Stockmen's Association – a native governing body – formed, and ranching improved at Fort Hall Reservation.

The Fort Hall Stockmen's Association, formed in 1921, not only provided the Shoshone-Bannocks with a sense of purpose and identity, it also streamlined the ranching process and modernized the trade. Required immunizations, feeding schedules, and a focus on beef grading promoted through the Stockmen's Association helped Shoshone-Bannock ranchers compete with some of the biggest cattle markets in the American West. In some cases, Shoshone-Bannock ranchers secured better prices than non-native ranchers at the Ogden Market, which stood as the best cattle market in the American West during the first half of the twentieth century. Despite discriminatory policies against the Shoshone-Bannocks and with the help of the Fort Hall Stockmen's Association, progress in the ranching trade continued through the 1920s and 30s.

The interviews conducted with Shoshone-Bannock ranchers provide personal insight into the ranching industry and their legacy stories help illustrate why ranching holds a significant place in Shoshone-Bannock culture and within ranching families. Considering these families have been involved in the ranching business for generations, their words bear substantial weight and depict ranching in terms that cannot be understood through traditional sources. Furthermore, ranching not only provides income and food for these families, but ranching serves to honor their family name and the Shoshone-Bannock culture. For these Shoshone-Bannock ranchers, family, culture, and tradition mean everything.

What does a year on a Shoshone-Bannock ranch reveal? It reiterates the important threads of cooperation from family and friends, and attention to the details involved in every step of the process. As the new year begins, Shoshone-Bannock ranchers must prepare for the birth of new cattle. Sometimes, mothers abandon their new calves and certain methods passed down from the older ranchers help alleviate these occasions so no new calves die. As Krissy pointed out, those cows are the income, so if a rancher loses a new calf, they lose out on income. After the calving period, branding season presents a way to identify a family's own cattle and meet with old friends who help round up the cattle and place the brands. However, branding season can be dangerous as pointed out by Marty. This inherent danger makes the presence of family and friends even more important as everyone looks out for each other and minimizes the risk of being trampled or kicked by livestock.

The following phase of ranching at Fort Hall involves "rounding-up" the cattle and pushing them to the mountains to graze for the summer. The round ups hold a special place in the hearts of Shoshone-Bannock ranchers because it brings them back to their roots in a couple of ways. First, it affords them the ability to get back on the horse and become the "cowboys"

that Krissy and Martinez discussed. Riding horses represents an important pastime for the Shoshone-Bannock and many ranchers continue to ride today. Secondly, most of the cattle graze on the Bottoms during the spring and early summer. The Bottoms serve as the most significant location for the Shoshone-Bannock. Culturally, the Bottoms mean very much and Kaycee pointed out that for many Shoshone-Bannock families, the Bottoms marked the beginning for many at the Fort Hall Reservation. For Kaycee, the Bottoms represent the foundation for her family because her great-great grandfather began his life there. Krissy, Martinez, and Kaycee all spoke of the cultural importance of the Bottoms and what it means to the Shoshone-Bannocks.

Following round-ups, the hay cutting season and simultaneous checking of cows in the mountain pastures marks tedious work for the Shoshone-Bannocks, but not without some fun. Kaycee touched on her experiences during hay cutting season, and highlighted the enjoyment she receives staying down at the Bottoms to make sure their equipment stays safe. For Kaycee, hay cutting season means making camp on the Bottoms and sharing stories with friends and family. The hay cutting, bailing, and hauling process takes about eight weeks and proves vital to keep the cattle well-fed on the Bottoms all winter.

The final step in the year-long ranching process involves driving the cows back down from the mountain pastures to the Bottoms for the winter. The hard work pays off for Shoshone-Bannock ranchers as the cattle feed on the hay bailed and stacked on the Bottoms, and they can take stock of their cattle and reflect on the hard year of work. Again, though, the work does not stop here. Every day the cows and horses need to be fed, and this means getting up early. For families like Kaycee, they have always lived by the rule that the animals eat before they do. As

Krissy poignantly noted, their cattle and horses are their “four-legged brothers” and they live in harmony together.¹⁵⁵ In the image that follows, the mountain pastures are in the bottom

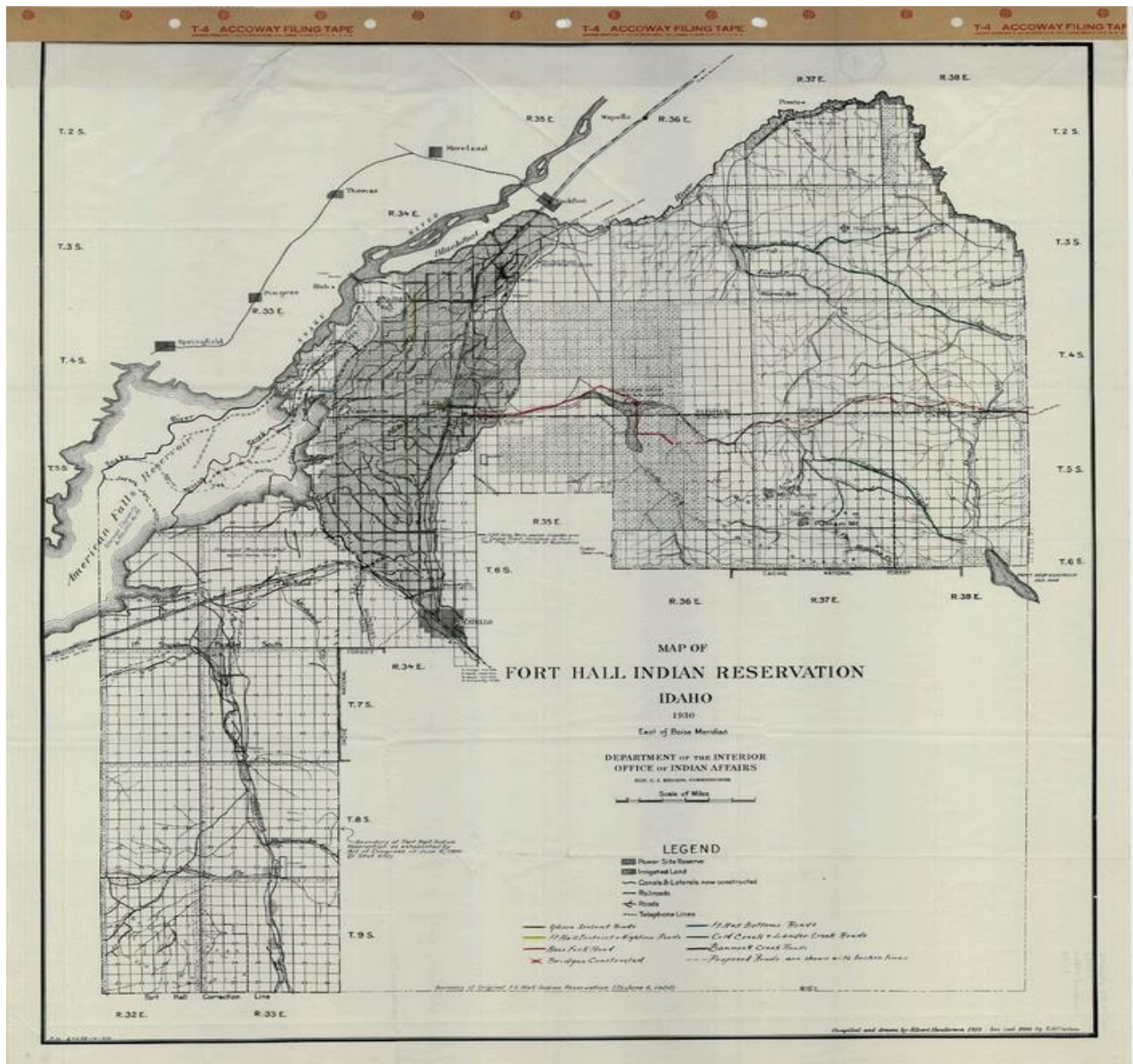


Figure 3: Fort Hall Reservation.¹⁵⁶

right and the Fort Hall Bottoms grazing land are located at the top in the darkened area next to the American Falls Reservoir. This final step in the year of a Shoshone-Bannock rancher

¹⁵⁵ Krissy Broncho interview.

¹⁵⁶ “Map of Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Idaho” Intermountain Histories, accessed April 3, 2019, <https://www.intermountainhistories.org/files/show/864>

involves a long cattle drive of about fifteen to twenty miles, according to the map legend.

Hard work and dedication highlight the year of a Shoshone-Bannock rancher. Family, culture, and tradition guide ranchers along the way and remind them why the work they do remains so important. Their family names are synonymous with ranching, and they aim to keep it that way. These families were involved in the rise of cattle ranching since the earliest days at the Fort Hall Reservation. To them, letting the ranching legacy within their families fade and perhaps disappear would be a disservice to their grandfathers and grandmothers. This explains why ranching holds a significant place in their families and Shoshone-Bannock culture.

Conclusion

The future of ranching at Fort Hall proves to be very important for these ranching families and to the Shoshone-Bannocks. The earliest days at Fort Hall presented many obstacles to their progress, but they never wavered and even succeeded to become synonymous with quality beef. Krissy, Martinez, and Kaycee all spoke reverently about their family ranching legacies and remain steadfast and determined to keep the legacy alive. Krissy and Martinez hope to pass it on to sons and siblings and Kaycee has begun the process to secure her own herd of cattle. Ranching is a part of their lives and Shoshone-Bannock culture and an integral part of the economy. To lose the values and legacies that accompany ranching would signal a loss of an important part of their culture. What follows is a quote from Krissy Broncho that sums up the life of a Shoshone-Bannock rancher: "I'd rather be outside on my horse and with my cows, and be there on the ranch. Because to me that's peace of mind. I know it's the same exact thing for my dad. He's seventy-four years old, he's got bad knees. But, he'll do anything to be out there on that horse, feeding those cows. It's a lifestyle and you've got to be able to love it and be

proud of what you do.”¹⁵⁷ This comment (and the last thing spoken in the interview) perfectly embodies the spirit, determination, and mindset of a Shoshone-Bannock rancher and encapsulates exactly what ranching means to them.

¹⁵⁷ Krissy Broncho interview.

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