

The Life and Legacy of Chief Washakie

Summary

The student will be able to comprehend the changing circumstances impacting the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone through the life story of Chief Washakie.

Time Frame

2 class periods of 30 minutes each

Materials

Teacher Materials

- [At a Glance: Washakie and His Legacy](#) (pdf)
- Shoshone Interactive Map (available at <http://www.UtahIndians.org>)
- Video: [We Shall Remain: The Northwestern Shoshone](#)

Student Materials

- [The Life of Chief Washakie](#) (pdf)
- (three sections)

Background for Teachers

This lesson examines the life of Shoshone leader Washakie. Born at a time when the Shoshones were on equal footing with the United States, Washakie came to represent a group of the Shoshones during the mid-1800s, as they and other Indian nations found themselves less able to match the military power of the United States due to loss of population, changing technology, treaty-breaking, and differing land ethics.

Washakie helped to establish peace for the Shoshones as the United States Army and non-Indian settlers proved insurmountable adversaries for American Indian communities throughout North America. Perhaps influenced by the Bear River Massacre, which had devastated the Northwestern Shoshone people, Washakie entered treaty negotiations with the United States. His leadership was memorialized when the Northwestern Shoshones established a farm in the Malad Valley, near Brigham City, Utah, and named their new settlement Washakie.

Instructional Procedures

Question students to see if they have any previous knowledge about Chief Washakie, and then introduce Washakie briefly to the students in your own words. Let them know that he lived through three different eras of political relations between the federal government and American Indians. Pass out the readings so that each student gets one of the three sections detailing a period of Washakie's life. Each student should write down the five most important things he/she learned from the section. Place students into groups of three so that each student has knowledge of one period of Washakie's life. Have the students take turns teaching each other the five facts they found most important. All team members should take notes from their teammates. Once every member has fifteen important facts about Washakie, they can return to their seats.

Extensions

Lead the students in a discussion comparing Washakie to other American Indian leaders or other leaders in our federal government. They may want to create a chart or Venn diagram showing the comparison.

Create a timeline of Washakie's long life and note all the changes in world, American, and Utah history that he lived through.

Work with students to review the Fort Bridger Treaties of 1863 and 1868 (copies available online at http://www.windriverhistory.org/archives/treaty_docs/treatydocumentsi.html). Have the students try to figure out the real meaning these documents would have had for the Shoshone. Ask the class to vote on whether they would have signed the treaties. Review the following newspaper articles about Washakie, all available online through the University of Utah J. Willard Marriott Library's Utah Digital Newspaper Project (online at <http://digitalnewspapers.org/>):

"Some History of Chief Washakie," *Deseret News*, Feb. 24, 1900, p. 8

"Old Chief Washakie," *Deseret News*, Mar. 18, 1896, p. 16

"He Was a Chief of Peace," *Ogden Standard Examiner*, Feb. 27, 1900, p. 6

"San Francisco Fair to Exhibit Washakie's Autobiography," *Richfield Reaper*, Dec. 8, 1938, p. 8

Pick a few articles to share with the class. Have them think about the point of view of the author and how it reflects a different period in history.

Assessment Plan

Participation

Teamwork notes (with fifteen facts)

End of Unit Assessment

Bibliography

[Allotment Information for Rocky Mountain BIA Region](#) (pdf).

Dramer, Kim. *The Shoshone*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1997.

Hebard, Grace Raymond. *Washakie: Chief of the Shoshones*. Introduction by Richard O. Clemmer. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

Parry, Mae. "The Northwestern Shoshone." In *A History of Utah's American Indians*. Ed. Forrest S. Cuch. Salt Lake City: Utah State Division of Indian Affairs and the Utah Division of State History, 2000.

The University of Utah's [American West Center](#) (AWC) produced the curriculum materials in consultation with the [Utah Division of Indian Affairs](#), [Utah State Office of Education](#), [KUED 7](#), and the Goshute, Northwestern Band of the Shoshone, Southern Paiute, and Ute nations.

Authors

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