

# The Goshute Indians of Utah

Dennis R. Defa

The Goshute Indians live in a little known and sparsely populated portion of the state of Utah. There actually are two Goshute reservations, the largest of which is the Deep Creek Reservation located on the Utah-Nevada border about sixty miles south of Wendover, with a portion of the reservation in each state. The second, and smaller, reservation is located in Skull Valley in Tooele County, about ninety miles west of Salt Lake City. Most people who visit this region of the state view it as a harsh, hard, and unforgiving place and wonder why anyone would choose to live there. However, for the Goshutes this desert region is home and they view it much differently than does the casual visitor. Before white Americans moved into the region, the Goshutes knew the land intimately and took from it all they needed to sustain life. As efficient and effective hunters and gatherers, they understood the fragile nature of the desert and maintained a balance that provided for their needs without destroying the limited resources of their arid homeland.

At the time of their first contacts with whites, the Goshute people lived in the desert regions southwest of the Great Salt Lake. Exact boundaries are difficult to determine because of the nature of the land and the proximity of other peoples, but early chroniclers and surveyors provided some written descriptions of the general Goshute homelands.

Captain James H. Simpson located the Goshute from the Great Salt Lake to the Un-go-we-ah Range, or Steptoe Mountains, in Nevada. Howard Egan believed they inhabited the area extending from Salt Lake Valley to Granite Rock in the West Desert, and from Simpson's Springs to the Great Salt Lake Desert.<sup>1</sup> A treaty with the Indians in 1863 defined the boundaries of the Goshute Indians:

Article 5. It is understood that the boundaries of the country claimed and occupied by the Goship tribe, as defined and de-

scribed by said bands, are as follows: On the north by the middle of the great Desert; on the west by Steptoe Valley; on the south by Toedoe or Green Mountains; and on the east by Great Salt Lake, Tuilla and Rush Valleys.<sup>2</sup>

The English traveler Sir Richard F. Burton wrote that Egan Canyon, Nevada, was the western limit of the Goshutes. George M. Wheeler believed the limits of the Goshute territory extended from the Sevier Lake Desert west to the mountains bordering Spring, Steptoe, Sierra, and Goshute Valleys, and south to about 38 degrees latitude; however, anthropologist Julian H. Steward was of the opinion that this latter boundary was "certainly too far south."<sup>3</sup>

Whatever the exact boundaries may have been at the time white people begin entering the Goshute domain, the region lies entirely within the Great Basin. The Great Basin is not one large cup-shaped depression; instead, it is a series of more than ninety basins which are separated from each other by some 160 mountain ranges. These mountains have a north-south orientation and vary in length from about thirty to one hundred miles. The highest mountain ranges reach altitudes of from 8,000 to 12,000-plus feet; they are separated by desert plains lying at altitudes from near sea level in the southwest to 4,000 or 5,000 feet in the north—the area inhabited by the Goshutes. The Great Basin is relatively uniform in its principal characteristics and can be defined precisely on the basis of its interior drainage, having no outlet to the sea.<sup>4</sup>

A quality common to virtually all of the Great Basin is aridity, resulting from a number of factors that include the rain shadow caused by the Sierra Nevada, the distance of the Basin from the ocean, and latitudes unfavorable to recurrent storm patterns. Because of this lack of precipitation, the flora and fauna of the Great Basin, if compared with most other areas of North America, are not especially abundant. The Goshute domain is topographically considered to be a steppe and desert area broken by a number of small mountain ranges. These mountains average about 7,000 feet in elevation, but it is common for some of them to extend to 10,000 feet, and, in one case, the Deep Creek Mountains, there are two peaks greater than 12,000 feet in elevation. The valleys between these ranges are from 4,000 to 6,000 feet in elevation and are floored with gravel, silt, sand, and salt. One portion, the Bonneville Salt Flats, is almost pure salt and is almost barren of plant life.<sup>5</sup>

The Great Salt Lake Desert is the least favorable portion of the Great Basin for human habitation. Because none of the valleys have an outlet

to the sea, they become receptacles for water and debris washed down from the mountains. The Goshute portion of the Great Basin has no real rivers, and the springs that exist form in the higher mountain regions only to sink into the desert sands. The majority of the 10,000 square miles that comprise the Great Salt Lake Desert are a barren salt flat that today is still perceived as having little economic promise. Only in the higher mountain regions are conditions favorable for the survival of plants and animals, and it was in these areas that the Goshutes acquired most of their resources.<sup>6</sup>

Before the white invasion of the Goshute homeland, the Indians were largely concentrated in small camps in a crescent area around the southern half of the Great Salt Lake Desert. This area is among the most forbidding in North America and offered the resident Indians few resources needed for survival. Because of this lack of resources, it has been estimated that in the time prior to white contact the population could have been no more than one person for every forty square miles of territory.<sup>7</sup>

A large portion of the Goshute population, now as in the past, has been concentrated near the Deep Creek Mountains on the Utah-Nevada border near the present-day town of Ibapah. The Deep Creek Valley is some 6,000 feet in elevation and is separated from the Great Salt Lake Desert by the Deep Creek Mountain Range. The highest peak in this range is Haystack Peak at 12,020 feet, and it is also the highest point in the traditional Goshute country. Immediately west of this mountain is a valley that is drained by a small stream known as Fifteen-Mile Creek. It is joined by another small stream known as Spring Creek in the vicinity of Ibapah.<sup>8</sup> From the confluence on, the stream is known as Deep Creek. The stream moves northward, passing through a portion of the Deep Creek Mountains and terminating as a sink on the Great Salt Lake Desert.

Other important areas of Goshute activity were Simpson's Springs, Skull Valley, and Tooele Valley, which was also the eastern limit of the Goshute domain. Skull and Tooele Valleys are typical of the Great Basin; Tooele Valley is bounded on the east by the Oquirrh Mountains, with Mount Lowe being the highest peak, at 10,572 feet.<sup>9</sup> The Stansbury Mountains separate Skull Valley from Tooele Valley, and the highest peak in this range is Deseret Peak, at 10,976 feet.<sup>10</sup>

The Goshute Indians are part of the larger Shoshonean (Numic) speaking groups that live in the Intermountain West; whether speaking individually or collectively they all refer to each other as *Newe* (the People), considering themselves still connected by an ancient common ancestry. No one knows how long the Goshute people occupied the area where



An unidentified Goshute Indian who lived in Skull Valley, photographer and date unknown. (Courtesy Utah State Historical Society—USHS)

they lived before they were first contacted by white people. The Goshute believe that they have always lived there. Scientists, using a number of dating methods, have arrived at some controversial dates of what they believe was a Shoshonean arrival into the Great Basin from the Death Valley region of California.<sup>11</sup>

From their first contacts with white Americans, several different terms have been used to identify the Goshute people. Various spellings such as Go-shutes, Go-sha-utes, Goship-Utes, Goshoots, Gos-ta-Utes, Gishiss, Goshen Utes, Kucyut, and Goshute appear in historical reports, letters, and other communications. The name Goshute comes from the native word *Ku'tsip* or *Gu'tsip*, meaning ashes, desert or dry earth, and people. The term *Kusiutta* is considered more proper linguistically and is used by both linguists and present-day tribal members. It is native in origin and is not an arbitrary label placed upon the people by whites, although Goshute will be used here, as it is the most widely used and accepted American variant.<sup>12</sup>

Several Indian groups live in the desert areas of the states of Utah and Nevada: Paiute, Goshute, Western Shoshone, and Ute. Pioneers and explorers encountered small groups of Native American wanderers of various tribes devoting their energies to survival in the west's harsh environment. By gathering foods, using baskets for utensils, and wearing woven rabbitskin robes, these people survived in an area where very little survived. Lacking the strength of numbers to engage in warfare, the peaceful and scattered people living in sagebrush wickiups or caves were often indiscriminantly called "Digger Indians" by whites who observed them digging for roots, tubers, bulbs, and even small animals. They also ate insects and other small creatures that did not appeal to the palates of white observers.<sup>13</sup>

Father Pierre-Jean de Smet witnessed a communal grasshopper hunt among some "diggers" in the late 1830s or early 1840s, but it is not clear if these people were Goshute or Paiute. Whichever group Father de Smet visited, the method of the communal hunt would have been the same. De Smet noted:

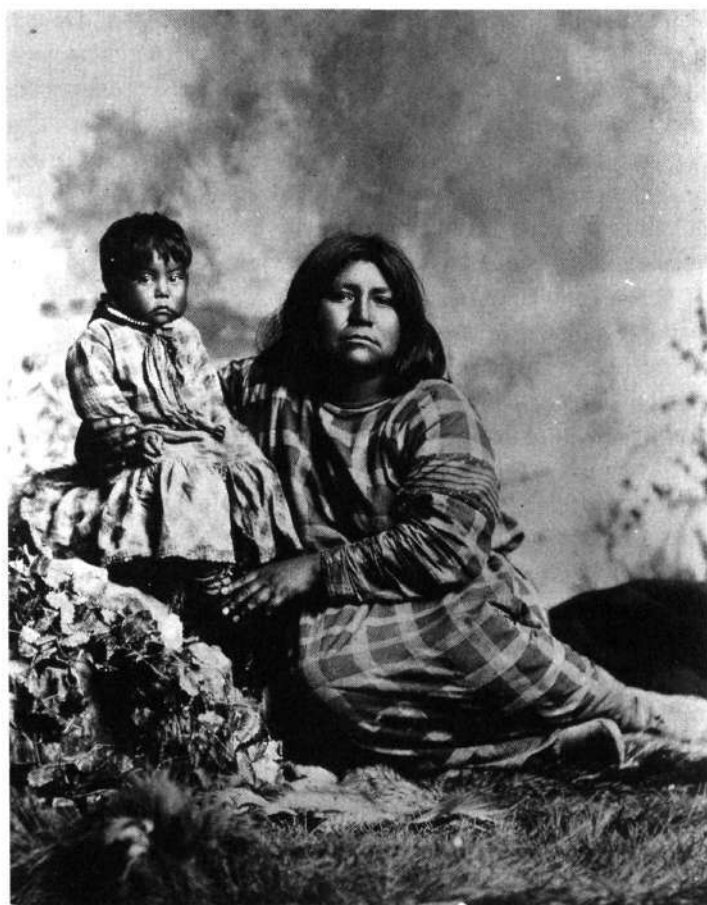
They begin by digging a hole, ten or twelve feet in diameter by four or five feet; then, armed with long branches ..., they surround a field of four or five acres, more or less, according to the number of persons who are engaged in it. They stand about twenty feet apart, and their whole work is to beat the ground, so as to frighten up the grasshoppers and make them bound forward. They chase them toward the center by degrees—that is, into the hole prepared for their reception. Their number is so considerable that frequently three or four acres furnish grasshoppers sufficient to fill the reservoir or hole.<sup>14</sup>

Because of its geographic location, the Goshute culture has long been recognized as the least complex of any to be found in the Great Basin region. They generally lived at a minimal subsistence level, with no economic surplus on which a more elaborate socio-political structure could be built. Their isolation also contributed to the lack of cultural diversity, because they were removed from other centers of American Indian civilization. The Goshutes were not located in an area where they could acquire ideas outside their own domain as readily as did many other Indian groups in North America.<sup>15</sup>

The Goshutes exemplify the historic Great Basin desert way of life perhaps better than any other group because of the condition of their territory. An example of their exploitative skill is found in the use of wild vegetable foods—the Goshutes knew and used at least eighty-one species. From forty-seven species they took seeds, twelve yielded berries, eight provided roots, and twelve were used for greens.<sup>16</sup> Grass seeds were gathered in flat tray-like baskets by knocking or raking them with beaters, and, if there were surpluses, they were stored near the harvest area. One of the most important foods in the entire desert region was the nut from the pinyon pine. Although the crops were not always an annual occurrence, a good crop assured the bands of a good winter, and winter camps were made near the harvest and storage places. If there was a crop failure, the Goshutes were forced to move to other locations or faced starvation.<sup>17</sup>

When their stored surpluses were exhausted, the Goshutes were forced to leave their winter camps in search of food. With the arrival of spring they were able to eat the new plants as greens, and by early summer they collected the available seeds and fruits in the valleys and flatlands. By the end of summer, roots and tubers had matured. Surpluses were always hidden in storage as a precaution against other food source failure. Then, in the fall, all the bands moved to nearby mountains to harvest pine nuts; and, if the usual area did not produce a crop, the family groups moved on in search of other areas where trees were bearing the nuts.<sup>18</sup>

The day-to-day economic activities of the Goshute Indians were organized on efficient lines, with the family being the basic economic unit. All work was divided on the basis of sex, and the family was virtually self-sufficient. Women and girls gathered seeds, prepared foods, and made clothing, baskets, and some pottery, while the men hunted larger game, made tools, wove blankets, built shelters, and helped women in rodent catching, burden bearing, and in collecting raw materials. The family was highly mobile. Larger groups did assemble briefly several times a



A Goshute mother and her child. (USHS)

year when food sources such as rabbits or pronghorn were available in quantities enough to be hunted. The pattern of life made any strong central tribal development impossible, and there was a limited feeling of solidarity. The Goshute had no hereditary chiefs. Instead, the bands chose a local wise man as leader, but he possessed little tangible political power.<sup>19</sup>

The scarcity of resources in the arid Goshute homeland was a primary contributor to scarcity in other areas of Goshute life. There were few ceremonies in comparison with those of many other Indian groups. The round dance was known, however, and was primarily used to obtain assistance in making seeds grow; much less often it was used as a social

dance. The kinship system of the Goshute was not complex. Descent was determined by both lines of both the father and mother. Marriage rules were just as simple, allowing an individual to marry a cross cousin. The marriages were informal, usually being arranged at a festival. Children were named after events, their birthplace, other favored locations, animals, or any characteristics the infant displayed. For example, it was told that a Goshute man received the name of Blackbear because even as a newborn he had an unusually dark complexion.

Just about everyone had some knowledge of medicinal herbs and compounds. Shamans were responsible for special medicinal treatment and the use of the sweat bath or sweat lodge. The Goshute sweat bath was done without water; hot rocks and coals were covered with earth and the patient would lie on top. The shaman was considered to have the power to heal and was able to treat serious illnesses. A man could receive these healing powers as a gift given by the "Little People" or "Little Man," or he could receive this power through dreams. These healing powers did not have to be sought, they could be a gift if one chose to keep them. Religion before the present Native American Church or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which many present-day tribal members belong to, consisted of shamans who were able to heal the sick, foresee coming events, give protection against curses from one's enemies, and give personal guidance throughout life.<sup>20</sup>

The nature of their environment required that the Goshutes have few material possessions. The Goshutes had no horses, and only those tools and utensils necessary for food acquisition were made. These tools had to be light and durable because they were carried on all moves. Because of this requirement for mobility, Goshute material possessions consisted of baskets, pots, simple clothing, a grinding stone, flint knives and scrapers, and personal items such as ornaments. Personal dress consisted of an apron, a basketry hat, sometimes moccasins, and a woven rabbitskin robe in winter. Housing was also uncomplicated. If shelter was needed, a small, round sagebrush bower called a wickiup was constructed. More permanent houses, if built, were usually larger, sturdier versions of the wickiup.<sup>21</sup>

The family was not always the maximum economic unit in hunting. When taking game such as pronghorn, rabbit, deer, mountain sheep, and, under certain conditions, waterfowl, fish, and even insects, collective effort increased what an individual hunter could acquire. The length of these hunts and the number of people involved varied. For the Goshute and their neighbors the Western Shoshone, game generally was so scarce



that these cooperative hunts lasted only one to two weeks, at maximum six weeks. The participants rarely comprised more than two dozen families.

Hunting complemented gathering. Game provided not only essential foods but skins for clothing and materials for implements. With smaller game, such as rodents or insects, hunting was organized along family lines, with both men and women participating. Large game was usually taken by men, while women gathered vegetable foods. A hunter shared large game with other members of the village, but the family unit usually was able to provide most of its needs without assistance. Pronghorn and deer were driven into corrals or towards waiting hunters, while rabbits were driven into woven nets.<sup>22</sup>

Several plant and animal species occurred in such abundance during short periods of time that even when they were not taken cooperatively, numbers of families were attracted to their locations. The most important of these species were pine nuts, which, as mentioned, often played a major role in the Goshutes' choice of winter campsites. Crickets and grasshoppers, which were sometimes taken cooperatively as well as by single families, could also bring a number of family groups together.

These ecological factors varied in different parts of the area, but plant harvesting was the main subsistence activity for the Goshutes and Western Shoshones, game being relatively scarce. For the greater part of the year, families had to travel alone or in small groups and harvest a large area. They commonly ranged twenty miles or more in each direction from their winter village, and their itinerary, though usually repeated each year, was not always fixed. Seasonal variation in rainfall, and consequently in crop growth, frequently required that they alter their foraging routes.<sup>23</sup>

The most permanent association of families was at winter encampments. These were sites where certain families habitually remained during the months when vegetable foods could not be obtained. Necessary conditions for such winter campsites included accessibility to stored seeds (especially pine nuts) and water, sufficient wood for house building and fuel, and the absence of extremely low winter temperatures. These conditions were most often fulfilled in the mouths of canyons or within the pinyon pine and juniper belt in the mountains, although sometimes broad valleys near fishing streams were chosen. Whether they were scattered at intervals of several hundred yards to a mile along streams, were situated at springs on mountainsides, or were clustered in more dense colonies depended upon the quantity of foods which could be gathered and stored



The remains of a fence built by the Goshute Indians as an antelope corral. (Vyrie Grey Collection, Marriott Library, University of Utah—U of U)

within convenient distance of each camp. In some places, families had to camp alone; elsewhere as many as fifteen to twenty could congregate.

The cooperative hunts of the Goshutes did not permit permanent associations of families for several reasons. First, these hunts lasted only while the quantity of meat taken was sufficient to feed the assembled crowd, possibly a few weeks. Second, alignment of families for hunting was often different for each species of game. Pronghorn and rabbit were the most important species in the area occupied by the Goshute, but they often were found in different parts of a valley. Moreover, the important hunts were held only where there was an antelope (pronghorn) shaman or rabbit-drive director; not every valley had such men. Therefore, for communal hunts, families traveled from their village or from where they happened to be gathering seeds to the most convenient location and often cooperated with other groups of people on successive hunts. They might join families from across their valley for a rabbit drive, go to a neighboring valley to hunt with its residents in a pronghorn drive, and associate with immediate neighbors to hunt deer in their own mountains. If their local pine nut crop failed, the next year they might be thrown into association with still other people for such hunts. Because the territory exploited by different families was variable as well as overlapping, ownership of a food area would have been impractical. Individual ownership of land was not found among the Goshutes.<sup>24</sup>

Another important event which took place during the winter months was the gathering of Goshutes to share their myths and stories.<sup>25</sup> Myths could not be told in the summer; in fact, it was considered dangerous to do so. Hawks and coyotes played many of the main roles in Goshute mythology. The coyote was feared, and even if the Goshutes were starving, they would not eat its flesh. One tale relates that an argument between Coyote and Hawk was responsible for creating the Deep Creek Mountains.

It was Hawk who made the Deep Creek Mountains. Hawk was angry. It must have been because someone [Coyote] was fooling around with his wife. He flew up high, then dashed himself against the mountain (Mt. Wheeler) and broke it all up. It made all these mountains around here.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to animal myths, the Goshute told stories of *pa'ohmaa*, "Water Baby," who could be heard crying at night but disappeared when the sun rose, and *toyaneweneen*, "Little Man," who gave shamans power. Games also were played in the winter and included a hoop-and-pole game, hand game, and races.

The Goshute Indians were able to utilize almost everything that their limited environment could offer. The efficient manner in which they were able to take what they needed without upsetting the delicate balance of the desert helped ensure their survival. Although there were periods of drought when sufficient food sources were sometimes scarce, the Goshutes survived. It was not until white people began to encroach upon their lands and disrupt their lives that this natural balance was destroyed.

### First White Contacts

The harsh desert conditions of the Goshute homeland provided an effective barrier against white encroachment until the middle of the nineteenth century. Direct white contact was rather sporadic until about 1850, but the Goshutes were in constant contact with their native neighbors. The period from 1827 to 1846 can be broken into three divisions, based on the people encountered: slave traders, trappers, and early immigrants.

Before 1827, Goshutes had probably never seen a white man, but they certainly knew of their existence from information and some trade goods received from their closely related neighbors, the Western Shoshone. The first indirect contact with whites came through other Indian peoples bordering the Goshute homeland. The Indian group to the



A coiled water jug made by an unknown Deep Creek Goshute. (U of U)

east and south was the Utes, and they made occasional forays into the desert for the purpose of capturing slaves to be taken south and sold in New Mexico.<sup>27</sup> These early slave raids, however, were only a prelude to what the Goshute Indians faced in the period between 1830 and 1859.

With the beginning of the 1830s, American and British fur-trapping companies were nearing their zenith in the Rocky Mountains, so there is little wonder that a group of these trappers is given the credit of being the first white men to enter into the Goshute homeland. The first recorded white men to actually see the Goshute Indians were three trappers, a group led by Jedediah S. Smith.

Smith and his company of men spent the winter of 1826–27 in the vicinity of the San Jose Mission, California, and in the spring of 1827 Smith tried to cross the Sierra Nevada in the area of the Stanislaus River as he returned east. On his first attempt to cross the mountains, Smith and his party were stopped by mountain snow. On his second try, Smith was accompanied by only two men, Robert Evans and Silas Gobel, seven horses, and two mules. This small group was successful in crossing the mountains, after losing two horses and a mule.<sup>28</sup>



A coiled basket with bead design woven into it, made by a Deep Creek Goshute in 1939. (U of U)

Once the barrier of the Sierra Nevada was overcome, Smith and his two companions headed for the shores of Bear Lake for the trappers' rendezvous of 1827. Smith took a direct route to Bear Lake and, because of this, he was able to provide the first written description of a trip through the heart of the Goshute homeland. His relevant journal entry of June 22, 1827, begins after they had just crossed the Utah line near present-day Gandy, moving north along the base of the Snake and Deep Creek ranges. This area was Goshute country.

Jedediah Smith's description of the area was vivid and helps illustrate the whites' belief of how barren and desolate the Indians' homeland was. Smith and his two companions crossed that inhospitable portion of the Great Basin and eventually reached Bear Lake, but their suffering was great. Lack of water and lack of game made their passage across the desert very difficult. At one point, Smith wrote, "Robert Evans laid down in the plain under the shade of a small cedar being able to proceed no further." Smith and Gobel could not help Evans, so they left him and proceeded on in hopes of finding water and returning for their exhausted friend.

They found a spring, and Smith noted; "Just before we arrived at the spring I saw two Indians traveling in the direction in which Evans was left, and soon after the report of two guns was heard in quick succession." Smith saw smoke coming from the direction of Evans and, becoming concerned, took a small kettle of water and returned to the aid of his friend. Evans was found alive, was quickly revived, and the three men continued on their trek.<sup>29</sup>

The two Indians Smith saw moving towards Evans were Goshutes, and this encounter was the first recorded contact between Goshute people and white Americans. This section of Smith's journal provided the first description of Goshute country, and it also provided a warning to the other trappers who read its description and passed that on to others—all avoided the country south and west of the Great Salt Lake. This had the effect of maintaining the state of isolation that had characterized the Goshute Indians to this point.

Whether these men were the first whites to go through Goshute country or merely the first to write about it is really not known. Charles Kelly, a Utah writer, had been told of a similar experience. Kelly quotes Isaac K. Russell in *Hidden Heros of the Rockies* that:

For years after Smith's journey, the Piute Indians of Skull Valley, Utah, repeated the tradition that the first white men they ever saw were three who staggered, almost naked, in from the western desert, and were half crazy from breathing alkali dust.<sup>30</sup>

The belief is that these three men were Smith and his companions. However, stories of this nature were common with the Goshutes, and in such a country there were doubtless many people who found themselves in a similar situation after Jedediah Smith, and perhaps even before.<sup>31</sup>

There is no reason to believe that other whites did not travel through Goshute country in this early period, but no written accounts have come to light to lend support to this statement. The next mention of the Goshute people is in the early 1840s in the journal of Osborne Russell. Russell never actually saw a Goshute Indian, but while in the area of the Great Salt Lake he stayed with some Utes, and it was from these people that he obtained his information. Russell wrote:

During my stay with these Indians [Ute] I tried to gain some information respecting the southern limits of the Salt Lake but all that I could learn was that it was a sterile barren mountain-

ous Country inhabited by a race of depraved and hostile savages who poisoned their arrows and hindered the exploring of the country.<sup>32</sup>

Although there were trappers all around the Goshute country, few apparently ever wandered into their arid homeland. Beavers were rare in Goshute country, so there was little reason to enter the area in hopes of obtaining pelts. Those trappers who did enter the Goshute country, and it seems there were only a few, had no substantial effect on the Indians.

The first Euro-Americans to have a direct effect on the actual day-to-day existence of the Goshute Indians were slave traders from New Mexico. The practice of capturing and selling Indian slaves was long established when the Goshutes began to feel the effects. Spanish colonists started taking Indian slaves as soon as they began settling portions of the New World. The descendants of these early Spanish slaveholders later extended the practice of slavery to include the Goshute Indians.

In 1821 Mexico won its independence from Spain and emerged as an independent nation. Trade restrictions with the United States ended and exchange quickly began along the Santa Fe Trail between Missouri and New Mexico. In the 1830s a regularly used trail between Santa Fe and Los Angeles was soon developed called the Old Spanish Trail.<sup>33</sup> It was this trail that brought the majority of the Mexican slave traders to Utah, where they soon interacted with and victimized the Goshutes.

The trail itself was first projected during the Spanish period. The Spanish, during their northward expansion, had established two lines of settlement: one along the northern Rio Grande in New Mexico and the other along the Pacific coast with the establishment of missions. It was believed that if these two areas of colonization, separated by some 1,200 miles, could be connected, Spain could dominate a vast land area and add substantially to her empire. This impetus gave birth to the concept of the Old Spanish Trail.<sup>34</sup> It was not until the 1830s, however, that contact of any regularity was established between Santa Fe and Los Angeles.

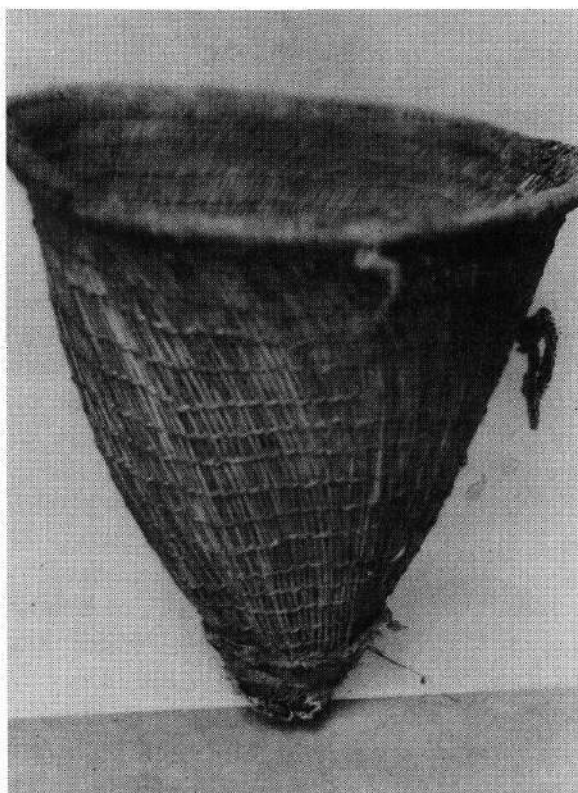
The Old Spanish Trail was used primarily for trade, and this was limited to what could be carried by a horse or mule, because wagons never crossed the full length of the trail. Horses and mules were the primary items traded; but guns, powder, blankets, knives, to name only a few of the many goods, were also bought and sold. The most pernicious aspect of the Old Spanish Trail, however, was the market it established for Indian flesh—the buying and selling of Indian slaves became an economically important aspect of the trail.



Weaving a basket preparatory to the pine-nut gathering season.  
(U of U Library)

Slaves from a large portion of the Great Basin were captured or bought and then were sent south and west into New Mexico and California. The Goshutes were no exception. Captured women and girls usually found their way into the more wealthy households as domestic servants, while men and boys were put to work on ranches and farms. The need for





A carrying basket with canvas bottom. (U of U)

labor in these areas was acute, and this was one of the primary reasons for the economic success of forced servitude.

It was because of the importance of the slave traffic that economic penetration northward was first undertaken by New Mexican traders. Long before the Old Spanish Trail had been blazed to California, Spanish explorers had marked out many paths to the tribes of the Great Salt Lake Basin region in hopes of obtaining furs and slaves.<sup>35</sup>

In 1852 the Utah Legislature tried to end the enslavement of Indians by enacting a law for the relief of the victims. The law's preamble noted that the practice of slave raiding was of long standing:

... from time immemorial the practice of purchasing Indian women and children of the Utah tribe of Indians by Mexican traders, has been indulged in and carried on by these respective

people, until the Indians consider it an allowable traffic, and frequently offer their prisoners or children for sale.<sup>36</sup>

The majority of Indians sold into servitude belonged to the Paiute groups that lived in the desert regions south and west of the Great Salt Lake. Like the Goshutes, they were sometimes known as "Diggers" because they dug roots and tubers and lived in what was considered a generally harsh environment that yielded little food. Their peaceful and simple mode of living made them easy prey for their Ute neighbors and New Mexican slavers. Goshutes and Western Shoshone people also were captured and sold into slavery by well-mounted Utes, who occasionally entered their country, captured women and children, and sold them along with Paiute captives.

One important result of the opening of the Old Spanish Trail was that the commerce enhanced the power and position of the Ute Indians. Different bands of Ute Indians ranged in New Mexico, Colorado, and much of Utah. Ute Indians had been on friendly terms with the Spanish for many years, and had acted as middlemen in the slave commerce. With the opening of the Old Spanish Trail their involvement increased. The Mexican slave trade flourished between 1830 and 1854, and it was during this period that the Goshutes suffered the most.

Both the Pahvant Utes, who lived to the south of the Goshutes, and the Timpanogas Utes, who lived around Utah Lake, appear to have made raids into the Goshute country to capture women and children. Children were always sought because they were more tractable and could more easily be trained as menials by their Mexican owners.<sup>37</sup> Demographic figures do not exist, but it is not difficult to understand the effect a population drain of any type could have on the already limited number of Goshute Indians. It is little wonder, then, that as late as 1859 Captain J.H. Simpson was able to record: "The fear of capture causes these people [Goshute] to live generally some distance from the water, which they bring to their 'kaut' [camp] in a sort of jug made of willow tightly plaited together and smeared with fir-gum."<sup>38</sup>

The third group of white people to contact the Goshutes were the early immigrants passing through the Goshutes' domain on their way to the West Coast. The opening of the Oregon and California Trails in the early 1840s initiated a regularly traveled trail system across the continent, and thousands of people found it possible to make their way to the fertile lands of California and Oregon. By 1846, Utah was being crossed by an increasing number of immigrants on their way to California; but

most immigrants passed far to the north of the Goshutes' country, and just a few crossed south of the Great Salt Lake and braved the forbidding desert to the west.

John C. Frémont had crossed the northern portion of Goshute country in 1845. In 1846 Lansford W. Hastings crossed in an easterly direction from California to Fort Bridger in southwestern Wyoming, later promoting this route as Hastings Cutoff. He then tried to persuade immigrants to follow this shorter route. He was able to convince some people by pointing out what seemed to be the irrationality of traveling northwest from Fort Bridger, Wyoming, to Fort Hall, Idaho, and then beyond Fort Hall turning southwest to reach the Humboldt River and then on to California. Hastings believed that a more direct wagon route could be opened south of the Great Salt Lake.

Hastings Cutoff, as it became known, went south of the Great Salt Lake and then west across the desert area to later intersect the Humboldt River in Nevada. This trail not only crossed some of the most inhospitable land in North America but also crossed the northern portion of the Goshute homeland. The first group to utilize this shortcut was the Bryant-Russell party in July and August of 1846. They were a small group, with light equipment, who passed along the cutoff with little difficulty and reached the Humboldt River safely. Shortly afterwards, the Harlan-Young company followed, the first to take wagons on the route. A journal of their crossing may one day be found, but to date their experience can only be followed through the diaries of a group which followed a short distance behind. This group was led by Heinrich Lienhard, and the journal which he wrote in German gives some insight into the crossing of the Great Salt Lake Desert by both companies. By far the most celebrated and best known of the immigrant companies which passed over the Hastings Cutoff in the summer of 1846 was the fourth group—the ill-fated Donner-Reed party.<sup>39</sup>

The effects of this initial white contact were many and varied. Two groups, the trappers and the immigrants, seemed to have had very little initial influence on the Goshutes. However, the third group, the slavers, made quite an impact upon them. The actual effect of the slave trade on the Goshute and Western Shoshone can only be speculated upon because of the lack of hard evidence. The slavers did not distinguish between Paiute "Diggers" and Shoshone "Diggers," and, because of this, much confusion exists as to what groups were being raided. Many of the Indians described as Paiutes could well have been Western Shoshone or Goshutes. In later years, as white American penetration into the Goshute

homelands increased, there was very little information recorded on this group of Indians.

To summarize the contact mentioned, in 1845 John C. Frémont and his exploring expedition passed through the northern portion of the Goshute domain on their way to California. Frémont made no mention of the Goshute people.<sup>40</sup> In 1846 Lansford Hastings crossed over the same area and made no mention of the Indians. In reading the journals of the early immigrants from the summer of 1846, there was very little discussion of the Indians. The only exception to this was an occasional reference to Indians who were pillaging wagons abandoned in the desert. Perhaps the limited Goshute population was an important factor, or it could be that, in an area where horses were never utilized due to the lack of resources, these men on horseback, white or Indian, frightened the indigenous people into avoiding all contact. Also, the people who had come into their country earlier had come to steal or buy their children, and this could have led to Goshute timidity. Lack of information can only lead to speculation, but it is quite clear that the Goshutes suffered a population loss primarily due to the traffic in Indian captives; because of this, they avoided contact with outside people whenever possible.

### **Continual White Contact**

The years between 1847 and 1874 brought the Goshute Indians into continual contact with white Americans. Many changes occurred in the Goshute portion of the Great Basin as whites moved into the region as permanent settlers. In 1847 the initial wave of Mormon settlers entered the Salt Lake Valley, and the spread of Mormons throughout the region soon had a pronounced effect on the Indians.

On February 2, 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed ending the Mexican War. As part of the terms, the United States obtained most of the present American Southwest, including Utah and Nevada—home of the Goshutes. The Goshutes came under the jurisdiction of the U.S. government, and in the late 1850s mention of them appeared in the annual report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

In the 1850s the government sponsored surveys for possible railroad and wagon roads through lands inhabited by the Goshutes. Because of these surveys, valuable information on the condition of the area's Indians was recorded. Also, a Mormon-sponsored mail route from Sacramento, California, to Salt Lake City was established that ran through the heart of Goshute country. In the early 1860s the Pony Express and the Overland Stage routes crossed the area inhabited by Goshute people.

On July 24, 1847, the vanguard of the Mormon migration entered the valley of the Great Salt Lake. The arrival of these pioneers ushered in a new era in the lives of all the Indians of the Great Basin. Cultures that had been developing for hundreds of years underwent great changes, some of which erased signs of their predecessors. The early pioneers began to try to anglicize the Indian groups as soon as they arrived in the area, attempting also to convert them to the Mormon church. After reaching the Salt Lake Valley, Mormons began to explore the surrounding area, and soon settlements were founded on likely streams and in promising valleys. A number of these settlements were on Goshute land.

The first substantial contacts the Mormons had with the Indians in the territory were with the Utes in Utah County. Relations between the Utes and the Mormons generally degenerated until in 1853 an armed conflict between the two groups broke out. Known as the Walker War, named after the Ute leader Wakara, it temporarily slowed the Mormon settlement process. The Utes were forced to retreat, however, and the Mormons claimed a victory over the hostile Indians.<sup>41</sup>

An important result of this war was the displacement of some of the Ute Indians. The Utes in the area around Utah Lake were forced out of that region and relocated in other areas of the territory. Some of these Utes went west into the desert and the traditional Goshute domain. Some Ute men married Goshute women and assumed leadership roles among the combined peoples. This fact had an important effect in the 1860s when hostilities erupted between the Goshutes and the white settlers.

Members of the hierarchy of the LDS church, including church leader Brigham Young, visited Tooele Valley only a few days after their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley. Tooele Valley is located about twenty-five miles west of Salt Lake City. Because there were no significant topographical barriers, Tooele Valley was easily accessible from Salt Lake City. On July 17, 1849, Brigham Young and a company of men again entered the Tooele region. They hoped to find an area suitable for the establishment of a community.

In October 1849 a company of men under the direction of Ezra T. Benson entered the Tooele Valley to begin the construction of a sawmill. This was the first permanent encroachment into Goshute territory. A dozen or so Mormon families spent the winter of 1849-50 in the Tooele region. To foster better communication and to help the colonization process, on January 28, 1850, the General Assembly of the provisional State of Deseret (as the Mormons first designated their claimed territory) ordered the construction of a state road from Salt Lake City to Tooele Val-

ley.<sup>42</sup> United States census records for the year 1850 for the Territory of Utah listed 152 non-Indian people as living in Tooele County.

Once settlement began in the Goshute country, it continued at a rapid pace. Soon after the first community was established in Tooele Valley, the Mormons sent people to settle the areas of Grantsville and Pine Canyon (later named Lake View). In the summer of 1851 a fort was erected to protect these pioneers from the Indians. In 1852 the town of Erda was established, which enabled Brigham Young to announce that there was a successful settlement on the west side of Tooele Valley, although the Indians had made its establishment questionable. Erda was initially settled by Ormus E. Bates and for a while was called Batesville.<sup>43</sup>

Fear of the Goshute Indians prompted the Latter-day Saints in Grantsville to write to Brigham Young in the autumn of 1852 and request his advice. They were afraid because the Indians in the immediate area outnumbered them. The settlers knew that the Indians had remained friendly, but they were not sure how long this could last, "as Indians are very treacherous," they maintained. They requested that a dozen or more families be sent to reinforce the settlement to help guarantee their security.<sup>44</sup> The request for new settlers was met, and by the time of the October general conference of the LDS church in 1853 there were 159 church members in the Grantsville area. Within two years there were 251, and, next to Tooele City, Grantsville became the leading settlement in the valley.

Tooele continued to grow and became the focal point for the settled area around it. By 1853 there were 602 LDS church members in Tooele City. With the growth of the white population came the establishment of another settlement. The community of Lake Point came into existence in 1854. The settlement was first named E.T. City after Mormon leader Ezra Taft Benson, but it was later given its present name. Initial indications were that the community could prosper; however, continued farming and irrigation raised the level of alkali in the soil, making farming difficult if not impossible. Another problem was the Great Salt Lake. In times of high water the lake could cover some of the fields of the settlers, ruining their crops. When this high water occurred, many people moved to Tooele.

Livestock were introduced into the area early in its settlement, as local valleys were used as herd grounds. By the winter of 1854-55, cattle were wintering in the north end of Rush Valley, which lies south of Tooele. During this same period a cabin was built west of Rush Valley Lake. Other cabins were built there in 1855, and a few settlers spent the winter in



This young Goshute Indian was photographed in the family's well-cared-for garden. (USHS)

them. In early 1856 the threat of Indian attack forced these people back to Tooele, but by April they had returned. The settlement first was called Johnson, then Shambip, then Clover, and was finally given its present name of Rush Valley.<sup>45</sup>

Up to this point all the settlements had been established in Tooele, Rush, and Skull Valleys bordering the eastern edge of Tooele County and the Goshute homeland. The Mormons wished to remain in rather close proximity to their settlements in Salt Lake and Utah Counties. By 1860

the census figures showed that the population in Tooele County had grown to 1,008 non-Indians.

The last major Mormon settlement in the region was at Ibapah, or Deep Creek, in 1860. With the establishment of this community, the last of the favored regions in the Goshute homeland had been invaded. The Deep Creek region runs in a north-south direction and is approximately sixty miles south of Wendover, Utah. The primary geological feature is the Deep Creek Mountains, which catch the winter snow and deliver an adequate water supply throughout the summer months. The same years this community was established, the Pony Express began operation and one of its stations was located at Ibapah. Pony Express stations employed many of the first white inhabitants of the Deep Creek region.<sup>46</sup>

The settlement of Faust in 1860, Vernon in 1862, Center (later called Ajax), and then Stockton in 1864 filled in the valleys of the eastern portion of the Goshute homeland. These settlements, located south of Rush Valley, helped to solidify the Mormon occupation of the eastern portion of the Goshute homeland.<sup>47</sup>

Other incidents occurred during the mid-nineteenth century that helped bring permanent white contact to the Goshutes. In 1850 Utah had gained territorial status, and Brigham Young was appointed territorial superintendent of Indian Affairs. From this time on, the Goshutes were placed under the jurisdiction of the federal government. In 1853 the Mormons began to send missionaries to the neighboring Indians in hopes of converting them; however, early efforts were not directed toward the Goshutes. The Mormon settlers felt it was their duty to bring the word of God to the Indians. Settlers like Howard Egan gave the Goshute instructions in farming, and, after some initial difficulty, they became adept at it. The Deep Creek region is one of the most fertile areas on the western fringe of the Goshute domain, and it was here that a farm was set up by the Mormons to help the Indians become "Americanized."<sup>48</sup>

In the summer of 1854 a private mail route was opened that went through Deep Creek and then on to California. This route preceded the Overland Stage route, which soon led to the building of stations at some of the most important watering springs in the Goshute homeland. These stations eventually deprived the area Goshutes of water, herbs, seeds, fish, and waterfowl.<sup>49</sup>

As relations between the Mormons and federal authorities degenerated, plans were made in 1857 to send an army to crush the reported Utah rebellion. The Indians in the territory were obviously interested in the forthcoming war between the Mormons and the United States; how-



ever, they did not realize the effect its outcome could have upon them. A large group of Indians gathered in the mountainous region east of Ogden, where it appeared the battle between the Mormon militia and federal troops would take place. Daniel Jones stated that while camping at Echo Canyon, waiting for the federal troops, large groups of "Weber and Goshutes" were in the same general area.<sup>50</sup>

Negotiations took place during the winter of 1857-58 and a compromise settlement was finally reached. The federal army entered Salt Lake City, and a military post was established about forty miles to the south in Cedar Valley. The post was named Camp Floyd and was located on the eastern fringe of the Goshute homeland, where it played a brief but important role in Indian-white relations in the area.<sup>51</sup> The successful negotiation of the so-called Utah War can also be seen as the beginning of a shift of power, lasting approximately twenty years, where non-Mormon whites replaced the Mormons as the dominant white influence among the Goshute Indians.

The decade of the 1850s brought many changes to the Goshutes, and by the end of this ten-year period the non-Indian population in the Goshute homeland had reached approximately 1,000 people, exceeding that of the Indians. This large non-Indian population placed the Goshutes in a desperate situation. The Indians had long been accustomed to placing their camps near streams and canyons to take advantage of the water and food supply there. As the whites increasingly encroached into Goshute homelands, they established permanent settlements and began building sawmills and gristmills. These white settlers brought with them the idea of exclusive use of natural resources and robbed the Goshutes of many of the things they needed to survive.<sup>52</sup>

The Indians retaliated to this encroachment by raiding the settlements and stealing the settlers' stock. Unlike the conflict between the Mormons and the Utes in other portions of the Utah Territory, these raids never evolved into open warfare between the people of Tooele County and the Goshute Indians. The conflict with the Goshutes basically was a war of attrition, and it continued into the 1860s.

The Goshute raids began as soon as the Mormons upset the natural balance of the area. As early as 1851 it was estimated that the Indians had stolen approximately \$5,000 in livestock from the Mormon inhabitants of the Tooele region.<sup>53</sup> The Mormon settlers reacted to this violence in a like manner and raided the Goshute encampments to retrieve stolen merchandise and to discourage the Indians from further "depredations." Jacob Hamblin, an early pioneer in the Tooele region, related that he and

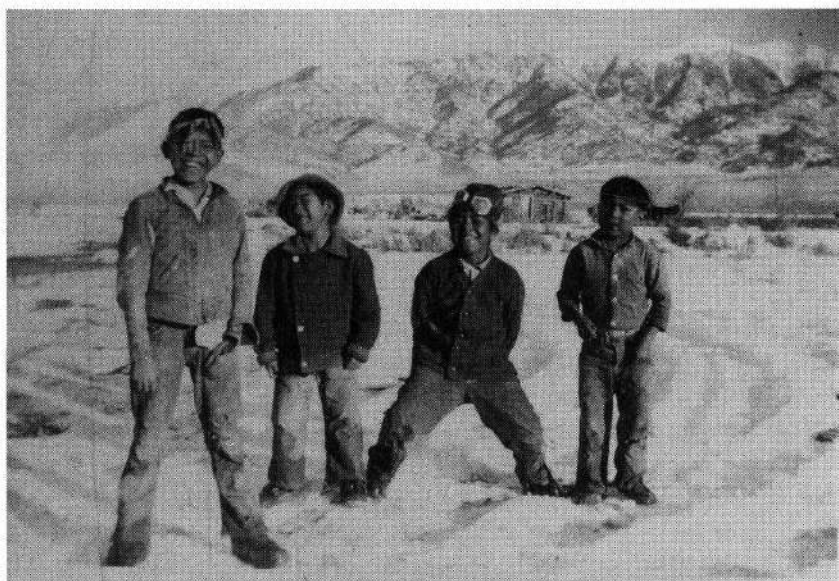
some men were directed to go into the field and kill all the Indians they contacted. However, after an attempted ambush of a Goshute village failed, Hamblin and his men returned to Tooele and noted that neither whites nor Indians had sustained any casualties.<sup>54</sup>

An incident in 1851 revolved around the stealing of a small herd of cattle belonging to one Charles White. The animals were taken from the area around Black Rock at the south end of the Great Salt Lake. The Indians herded the cattle past Grantsville and into Skull Valley, where they killed the beef to dry the meat and prepare it for storage. Initially, the Indians were pursued by fourteen men from Salt Lake City under the command of Captain William McBride. The force of Indians was deemed too large to be dealt with by so few men, so a runner was sent to Salt Lake City for reinforcements. A force of forty men under the command of General James Ferguson and Colonels George D. Grant and William H. Kimball responded. After picking up ten additional men in Tooele, they proceeded to Skull Valley where the Indians had been located. The camp was attacked and nine Indians lost their lives. The white force sustained no casualties.<sup>55</sup>

The hostility increased as non-Mormons entered the Goshute country. At the conclusion of the Utah War, Brigham Young was replaced as territorial superintendent of Indian Affairs by a non-Mormon named Jacob Forney. In 1858 Forney recorded the first official account of the Goshute Indians who lived in the area around Skull Valley, writing: "I have visited a small tribe called the Go-sha-utes, who live about forty miles west of this city [Salt Lake]." He was struck by the harshness of the arid region and by what he considered to be the destitute conditions of the Indians in the region and their lack of material possessions. He continued, "I gave them some clothing and provisions. They have heretofore subsisted principally on snakes, lizards, roots etc. I made considerable effort to procure a small quantity of land for them, but could not find any with water to irrigate it."<sup>56</sup>

The following year, Forney had more to add relating to the Goshute Indians:

This band is a mixture of Snake and Ute, the former prepondering. A few years ago the Go-sha-utes were a considerable tribe. Their principal and only chief died about four years ago, since which they have remained broken and subdivided into small fragments, except about sixty, who have organized into a



Four Goshute boys, with the Deep Creek Mountains in the background. (Vyrie Grey Collection, U of U)

band, and have a quiet and well disposed chief to control them. This band is now permanently located on the Deep Creek Indian farm. The remainder roam over a region of country from forty to two hundred miles west of this city [Salt Lake]. A concentration of them all into Deep Creek is in progress.<sup>57</sup>

The Goshutes caused the Overland Mail service problems by stealing stock and attacking drivers as they passed through the country. This was one of the reasons that Superintendent Forney wanted the Goshutes concentrated on a farm at Deep Creek. To this end, Forney instructed Robert B. Jarvis to go to Deep Creek and then on to Ruby Valley, Nevada, to try to restrain the Indians from committing depredations. Jarvis found that the primary barriers to relocating the Goshutes at Deep Creek had already been reduced because of the Mormon ranchers who had settled in the area. The Mormons were interested in the Indians and had been working with them for a few years.

On his way to Deep Creek, Jarvis stopped at Simpson's Springs, and while he was there a party of fourteen Goshutes visited his camp. They talked briefly, and then the Indians were given a few presents. Jarvis in-

structed these Indians to inform the rest of their people that he wanted to meet with them in a few days in Pleasant Valley.<sup>58</sup>

Jarvis was understandably disappointed when he reached Pleasant Valley and only about one hundred Indians had gathered for the meeting. He was told that the other Indians believed this meeting was a trap to kill them because they had been stealing stock from the mail company. Jarvis sent messengers to convince the other Indians to come to the meeting. Those attempts failed, however, so the conference began without them.

The election of a tribal chief and subchief was the first order of business. After this was accomplished, Jarvis told the Indians that he was sent there by the "great father," who wanted to treat the Native Americans as his children and give them a farm so they could provide for themselves. The "great father" wanted to help his Goshute children, but only if they did what he wanted them to do. Jarvis continued by asking the assembled Indians if they were willing to work like the white men and raise grain to make bread. Evidently the Goshutes found this acceptable and agreed. He also told them he had heard of many cattle being stolen and that mail riders had been attacked. Jarvis assured them that the "great father" would forgive them this time but, if depredations continued, an army would descend to destroy all of them. The newly elected chief stated that his people were friendly to the whites and would do nothing to harm them.<sup>59</sup>

A government farm was finally established for the Goshutes at Deep Creek and crops were planted. Almost twenty-five acres of wheat and some potatoes, beets, onions, and melons were cultivated. Things initially went well for the Indian farms in Utah Territory. In 1859 Forney reported: "The farms are well located, on rich soil, and some of the Indians have worked well, and many more manifest a desire to do so as soon as they can be fed."<sup>60</sup>

Unfortunately for the Goshutes, Agent Jarvis resigned shortly afterwards and the farm at Deep Creek soon was abandoned. This was just one of many incidents that frustrated the Goshutes. Most of these people were interested in agriculture, but the frequent changes in government personnel delayed the permanent establishment of the farms.

Benjamin Davies, who replaced Jarvis as the Goshute agent, reported in 1860 that "Scarcely a vestige of the improvements once existing ... was visible." He also noted that the Indians "had lost confidence in the government and the people of the United States."<sup>61</sup>

Other federal officials also were active in Goshute country at this time. In 1859 Captain J.H. Simpson of the U.S. Army Corps of Topo-

graphical Engineers undertook the exploration of a direct wagon route from Camp Floyd to Genoa in western Nevada. Simpson recorded many valuable observations regarding the everyday life of the Goshutes.<sup>62</sup>

In 1858 the route for the Overland Stage had been organized and incorporated the earlier private company. This was followed in 1860 by the Pony Express, which was abandoned the following year when the first transcontinental stage line was established. With the establishment of the Pony Express and the Overland Stage, the Indians of the Goshute country raided the area stations and stole their stock. In some instances, they killed some of the drivers and stationmasters. The stage line existed until the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869. The railroad ran through northern Utah, but the tracks were north of the Goshute homeland. Before the railroad was completed, however, the lands of the Goshutes had been crossed by the main lines of communication between the eastern United States and the West Coast. The stage line constructed twenty-two stations on Goshute land, and the loss of resources to the Indians was appalling.<sup>63</sup> Benjamin Davies indicated the effects of the stage stations upon the Goshutes:

At some of these springs were immense quantities of dark-colored fish called "the chub," about four inches in length, which the Indians used to eat in winter, but the overland California mail company has built stations for their convenience, and located men and quartered stock about those spots, and the Indians no longer visit them.<sup>64</sup>

Davies recommended that the Goshutes should be protected from further white encroachments, but no action was taken on this recommendation. Also, there were no further attempts to reestablish the Deep Creek farm. Because the farms were abandoned, the Indians became disenchanted and some remarked that the whites were trying to take over all their land.<sup>65</sup>

One of the many travelers to cross the desert on the Overland Stage was the young humorist Samuel Clemens (later famous as Mark Twain). His description of the Goshute epitomizes the attitudes of most of the whites who came in contact with them. Twain wrote:

We came across the wretchedest type of mankind.... I refer to the Goshoot Indians.... [They] have no villages, and no gatherings together into strictly defined tribal communities—a people

whose only shelter is a rag cast on a bush to keep off a portion of the snow, and yet who inhabit one of the most rocky, wintry, repulsive wastes that our country or any other can exhibit.<sup>66</sup>

The Goshutes could expect little help or understanding from people who held them in such disdain.

The transcontinental telegraph had little effect on the Goshutes. The Indians occasionally were hired as unskilled labor to aid in erecting poles and transporting materials. The nature of the telegraph was such that it did not need much maintenance, so the Indians saw few whites working on the line.

By early 1860 Indian-white relations in the western portion of the Great Basin were at a critical point. The Overland Stage was constantly harassed, and some of the permanent settlements were threatened. In May of that year a detachment of federal troops was sent to the area from Camp Floyd. The commander of this unit was a Lieutenant Weed, and it later was said that the unit had "done good service against the Gosh-Yuta."<sup>67</sup> Many whites in the area, however, were still apprehensive due to the Indian discontent.

Goshutes attacked the mail station at Deep Creek on May 8, 1860, stealing several horses and killing one man. The next month, the station at Willow Springs, just east of Deep Creek, was also attacked. No whites were killed, but three Indians died in their attempt to overrun the station. That June the station at Antelope Springs, about twenty miles west of Deep Creek, was also attacked and burned, although its occupants escaped with their lives.<sup>68</sup>

The military reacted to this situation and troops were sent to quell the Indians. Lieutenant Weed and seventeen mounted men rescued a man and a boy in Egan Canyon in August 1860. The two were being held by Goshutes. When the troops attacked, seventeen Indians were killed. The Indians retaliated. Express riders were attacked, several while crossing the desert, and some ranchers reported being attacked in their camps. It was also noted that a small emigrant train was attacked in the vicinity of Egan Canyon, with all but two of the travelers being killed.<sup>69</sup>

With the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, Camp Floyd was abandoned by the U.S. Army. The defense of the stage and mail stations was placed in the hands of Mormons who were hired for that purpose. There are no reports of further raiding until U.S. troops returned in May 1862, a detachment of California Volunteers under the command of Colonel Patrick Edward Connor.

After Connor's troops annihilated a group of almost 300 Shoshones in southern Idaho in early 1863, he turned his attention to ending the hostile actions of the Indians along the transcontinental stage and mail route. This route had gained importance because of the gold from California and the silver from Nevada that traveled the route to help finance the Civil War. Soldiers were detached to each coach to provide protection, while others were located at stations along the route. One group at Simpson's Springs decided to undertake an expedition to kill Indians. They persuaded William Riley, one of the station workers at Simpson's Springs, to guide them six miles to the south to an Indian camp located at Coyote Springs.

The camp which was attacked was one whose leader was an important, but friendly, Pahvant Ute named Peahnamp, who was married to a Goshute woman from Deep Creek. At the time of the attack he was not at the encampment. Upon his return he found that the soldiers had been there and had killed many of his people. In response to this unprovoked attack, Peahnamp attacked a mail station and killed five or six white men. One of the dead men was William Riley, the man who had served as guide for the troops. Goshute sources state that one man escaped; other sources disagree.<sup>70</sup>

The situation of the Goshute at this time was best described by Amos Reed. In a letter dated December 1862, Reed reported to the U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs that the largest portion of tillable land in the Goshute country had been occupied by whites and that the game had been killed or driven off. In response to this loss of resources the Indians had turned to raiding the Overland Mail and stage stations. Reed was convinced that unless the Goshutes received assistance they would either steal what they needed or starve. The government reacted by giving the mail company provisions to distribute among the Indians along its route. The mail company supplied an additional \$12,000 for the same purpose. It was believed that the distribution of the provisions would reduce the Indian problems on the route between Salt Lake City and Carson City.<sup>71</sup>

Indian attacks continued, however; during the winter of 1862-63, Goshutes continued to harass the mail stations. Three stations were attacked and three men were killed and one wounded. The stage company lost a total of seventeen stations, 150 horses, and sixteen men in this "Gosh Ute War."<sup>72</sup> Utah Indian Superintendent James Doty responded to these depredations by stating that they were "without the slightest provocation," and requested an increase in federal appropriations to pacify the Indians.<sup>73</sup>

Many of the attacks that were committed seem to have been under the leadership of Pahvant Ute Indians. The Goshutes were divided as to their preferred course of action. Some joined with the Ute leaders in raiding the stage and mail companies and ranches in the area. Others remained neutral, anticipating that the Mormons or the government would help them establish farms. A dichotomy existed, with the army reporting hostile engagements with Goshutes while the agents related stories of their peaceful disposition. One noted in 1863: "I am satisfied that not one-half the depredations committed are the work of the Goshutes, although they have the name and the blame."<sup>74</sup>

The government responded to the continued hostilities by concluding a series of treaties with the Indians of Utah and Nevada in 1863. In their treaty the Goshutes agreed to end all hostile actions against the whites and to allow several routes of travel to pass through their country which would not be subject to depredations. The Goshutes also agreed to the construction of military posts and station houses wherever necessary and that stage lines, telegraph lines, and railways could be built throughout their domain. Also, mines, mills, and ranches would be permitted and timber could be cut. The federal government agreed to pay the Goshutes \$1,000 a year for the next twenty years as compensation for the destruction of their game. The Goshutes also agreed to give up their nomadic ways and remove to a reservation. The treaty was signed on October 12, 1863, ratified in 1864, and announced by President Abraham Lincoln on January 17, 1865.<sup>75</sup>

The treaty was not one of land cession; rather, it was an agreement of peace and amity—the Goshutes did not give up sovereignty over their land.<sup>76</sup> Although the treaty provided for the ultimate removal of the Goshutes, it did nothing to secure a specified area for their removal. The Goshute continued to live on their land like nothing had happened, but their hostilities toward whites ceased.

Before the treaty of 1863 had been announced, the federal government had endeavored to remove all of the Utah Indian tribes to one large reservation. On May 5, 1864, President Lincoln approved "An Act to vacate and sell the present Indians reservations in Utah Territory, and to settle the Indians of said Territory in the Uintah Valley."<sup>77</sup> The Uintah Reservation was established, yet, while many of the Indian groups in Utah eventually accepted removal to it, the Goshutes never did.

The treaty with the Goshutes made no arrangements for placing them on farms; however, in 1864 Superintendent Doty noted that members of the tribe were working farms at Deep Creek and at Grantsville. Because





A Goshute farmer. (USHS)

of this, he concluded that, if the government would help, the area Goshutes could become self-sufficient in farming and ranching. He believed that they wanted to settle because, "More than a hundred of them have been killed by the soldiers, and the survivors beg for peace."<sup>78</sup>

In 1864 the first annuity goods were due, but the goods received proved to be only a fraction of what the Goshutes actually needed. The new territorial Indian superintendent, O.H. Irish, believed the Goshute annuity should be increased to \$5,000. Irish found the Goshutes peaceful, but the mail company still believed they were dangerous. If the pine nut crop failed, the Goshutes would be forced to raid the stations for needed supplies or starve. Irish believed that the federal government should give the Indians supplies which would conciliate them and protect the mail.<sup>79</sup>



Goshute Day School at Ibapah. (Vyrie Grey Collection, U of U)

Irish also believed that the Indians could no longer exist in their native lands. This added fuel to the government's efforts to concentrate all Utah Indians on reservations. In February 1865 the U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs was informed by the Secretary of the Interior that any Indian group that did not move in compliance with the Act of 1864 would not receive their treaty benefits. Later that same month, Congress passed a law that extinguished the Indian title to land in Utah Territory in order that it could be used by whites for farming and mining purposes.<sup>80</sup>

The government moved quickly to extinguish the Goshutes' title. Commissioner William P. Dole wrote Superintendent Irish reminding him of Article 6 of the Goshute treaty, whereby the Indians had agreed to settle on a reservation whenever the president of the United States deemed it expedient. The president now deemed it expedient, and Irish was instructed to work to that end.<sup>81</sup>

Irish met with members of the various Utah tribes in June 1865. At this meeting Irish negotiated a treaty whereby the Indians relinquished all rights of possession to lands in Utah Territory. It was decided that after the Indians ceded their land title they would move to the Uinta Basin. This move was to take place one year after the ratification of the treaty. The government agreed to spend \$25,000 annually in annuities to aid the Goshutes for ten years after ratification. After the first ten-year period, the government agreed to pay the Indians \$20,000 for each of the



The Goshute Day School at Ibapah, in the center of the photograph. (Vyrle Grey Collection, U of U)

next ten years, and then \$15,000 annually for an additional thirty years. The Goshutes were told that their “reservation” at Deep Creek would be sold for not less than sixty-two and one-half cents per acre and that the money would be used for their benefit.<sup>82</sup> The Senate never ratified the treaty, however, and the Goshutes remained on their lands. In 1867 Superintendent F.H. Head reported that the Goshutes did not fully understand that the Senate had to ratify their treaty, and the Indians were discouraged because it had not been implemented.<sup>83</sup>

By 1869 the lifestyle and culture of the Goshutes had undergone a significant change. They no longer roamed the desert as they once had, although hunting and gathering were still practiced. Most of the people had settled on farms at Deep Creek and Skull Valley and were trying to sustain a living. The federal authorities promoted this new lifestyle and did much to help the Goshutes in this undertaking. In 1869, Goshutes had put about thirty acres under cultivation at Deep Creek, and the people at Skull Valley had received the aid of a Mormon farmer named William Lee. Area Goshutes received the necessary farming implements and harvested around one thousand bushels of potatoes, beets, and carrots. However, grasshoppers destroyed the majority of their wheat crop.<sup>84</sup>

While this movement toward settlement was taking place, efforts also continued to relocate all the Goshutes on a permanent reservation. Perhaps the most important problem to be resolved before this relocation

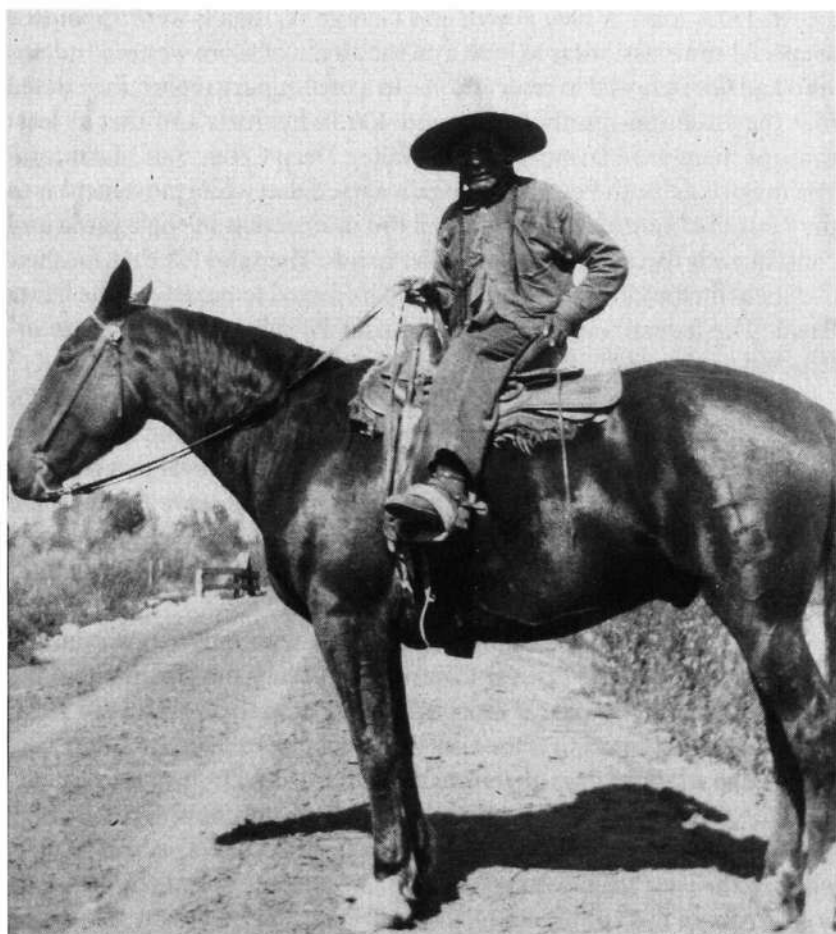
could take place was the Goshutes' fear of other Indian groups. Because of this fear, in 1869 Superintendent J.E. Tourtellotte suggested that the Goshutes have a separate reservation.<sup>85</sup>

In the spring of 1870, Superintendent Tourtellotte noted that the Goshute Indians in Skull Valley showed a predilection toward farming. He also noted that whites were disrupting Indian attempts at agriculture as they encroached on the Indian farms and tried to obtain the land for themselves. Tourtellotte recommended to Washington that at least a quarter section of land be made available to the Goshute Indians until a permanent decision about them was made.<sup>86</sup> The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Ely Parker, reminded Tourtellotte that the Goshute Indians were to be moved to the Uinta Basin and that he should accomplish this as soon as possible. Tourtellotte wrote a letter to Parker attempting to explain that the Goshutes were not culturally related to the Utes and that they refused to go and live with them in the Uinta Basin; if they had to be moved, Tourtellotte recommended that they be moved to a reservation with Shoshone Indians.<sup>87</sup>

The year 1870 saw the Western Shoshones being attached bureaucratically to the jurisdiction of the Nevada Indian superintendent, and Tourtellotte was interested in learning more about them. He found that a group of Goshutes were trying to farm near Egan Canyon on land belonging to John V. Dougherty. Superintendent H. Douglas reported that the government had done nothing to help these Indians and it seemed that their existence had been ignored. Dougherty allowed the Indians to work a portion of his farmland, and in 1871 they harvested a few crops. However, they remained rather destitute, and in October 1870 Dougherty appealed to the Utah superintendent to provide some supplies.<sup>88</sup>

Early in 1871 both Tourtellotte and William Lee were relieved of their positions. The Goshutes of Skull Valley were confused and were not sure of receiving continued assistance. Because of their respect for and confidence in Lee, they asked him to be their spokesman to the government. Lee assumed the role and wrote to the new agent, Colonel J.J. Critchlow, and tried to persuade him not to end government aid to these people. Lee articulated his fear that if aid was cut off the Goshutes would be forced to steal and hostilities might begin anew. He also informed Agent Critchlow that the Indians wanted to remain in their homelands and did not want to move to the Uinta Basin.<sup>89</sup>

In the latter part of 1871 the government sent George W. Dodge, with the status of Special Agent, to look into Utah Indian affairs. A meeting with the Goshutes was scheduled for January 9, 1872, and William



A mounted Goshute Indian near Ibapah in 1924. (USHS)

Lee volunteered the use of his ranch. Dodge was evidently impressed with the condition of the Goshute people, because he asked that more than \$2,500 worth of supplies be sent to them. Dodge also believed, however, that the only hope for the survival of the Goshutes was in their removal to another area. He recommended that the Goshutes be sent to the Shoshone Reservation at Fort Hall, Idaho; but later he amended this request and recommended instead that all the Shoshone Indians in Utah and Nevada be sent to the Indian Territory—present-day Oklahoma.<sup>90</sup> The Goshute people were not interested in moving to either Fort Hall or the Indian Territory, and they remained in their homelands.

In 1873, John Wesley Powell and George W. Ingalls were appointed as special commissioners to look into the affairs of those western Indians who had not removed to reservations. In a preliminary report, they stated that the Goshutes numbered around 400 individuals and that at least some of them were farming at Skull Valley, Deep Creek, Salt Marsh, and Warm Springs. Both Powell and Ingalls agreed that white movement into the Goshutes' homeland had caused the destruction of their game and consequently forced them into smaller bands. They also felt that, for their own benefit, the Goshute people should be forced to remove to the Uinta Basin. The federal authorities agreed, and Powell and Ingalls were instructed to proceed with the removal of the Goshutes.<sup>91</sup>

Powell and Ingalls submitted their final report in December 1873. They concluded that there were 256 Goshutes in Utah and 204 in Nevada. The commissioners also concluded that the removal to a reservation was the best way the federal government could serve the Goshute Indians. They urged the repeal of the 1864 law that stipulated that existing "reservations" were to be sold, and that the area be opened to whites in the usual manner.<sup>92</sup>

The Goshute people did not remove to a reservation, however, despite the report of the Special Commission. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs asked Powell for more information on the Goshutes in 1875, and again he reported that the Indians should be removed.<sup>93</sup>

Due to a lack of firm government purpose, direction, and organization, the Goshute people remained in their homeland and did not remove to any reservation. The eastern groups remained in Skull Valley, while to the west the Goshutes at Deep Creek farmed on their "reservation." William Lee continued to write letters trying to obtain aid for the Indians, with the intention of helping them become self-sufficient.<sup>94</sup> The annuities promised in the treaty of 1863 stopped, while whites invaded the choice areas of land. The Indians were destitute and it seemed that few white people actually knew of their existence.

This condition continued on through the remainder of the nineteenth century and into the first two decades of the twentieth century. In examining the reports and correspondence of the Office of Indian Affairs, the Goshute Indians practically disappeared as far as the bureaucracy was concerned. The number of 256 Goshutes in Utah offered by Powell and Ingalls in 1873 was reported in the annual reports for every year to 1895; after this date mention of them disappears entirely. It was as if the Goshute Indians had disappeared without a trace. One reason for this is that reports from the Uintah Indian Agency listed the Goshutes

as one of the tribes inhabiting that reservation. It may have been that a few Goshutes did eventually relocate in the Uinta Basin, but the number must have been small. For the most part, the Goshutes remained at Skull Valley and Deep Creek.

For more than thirty years the whites had been filtering into the Goshutes' domain and appropriating the land. The Indians maintained their free-roving lifestyle, but towns, farms, stage and mail stations, and a military post were established at the favored locations in the desert. The Indians' food resources dwindled as the white population increased. Some Goshutes tried farming, but even with the aid of well-intentioned whites, the results were far from spectacular. As years passed, the Goshutes became more and more dependent upon the whites for many of the everyday necessities of life; and, by the mid-1870s, they were unable to reverse this dependence.

The decades between 1880 and 1920 saw an increase of white encroachment into the Goshute homeland. Miners explored the area and mining communities grew as precious metals were discovered and exploited. Ranching activities also increased, taking more land and water from the Goshute people. The most essential element in the establishment of settlements in the desert was water, vital to both the native and white people. The Goshutes had been able to camp at favorable sites in the desert whenever they chose. They had harvested seeds from plants that grew around the springs as well as the fish and waterfowl that inhabited the marshier areas. In an area where there was a comparatively small amount of water, what water existed was critical to the Goshutes' existence. With the establishment of ranches at favorable locations in the desert, the Indians were denied the essentials these areas had provided.

The ranchers affected the Goshute people in other ways, most notably in their efforts to convert the people to Mormonism. The Deep Creek region was important because it was free from federal control. Colonel Patrick Connor, a devout Mormon hater, worked to keep interaction between Mormons and Indians to a minimum. The Goshute "reservation" at Deep Creek was established by the Mormons to teach the people farming. The federal government had no jurisdiction at this "reservation" because it had played no part in its establishment. Because of this, the Mormons used the Deep Creek region as a concentration area for Indians in the surrounding country. Groups like the Western Shoshone, Ute, Northern Shoshone, and even Crow were reported congregating in the Deep Creek region to obtain instruction in the Mormon faith.

During the decade of the 1870s, the LDS church expanded its mis-

sionary activities among the various Indian groups in the territory. Missions were established among the tribes and converts were brought into the Mormon fold. William Lee, the rancher who had helped the Goshutes in Skull Valley and later served as their spokesman, was especially successful in his efforts to obtain converts. He reported that in 1874 he was able to baptize more than 1,000 Indians from the Deep Creek area. Certainly, not all these Indians were Goshutes, but a rather large number of Goshutes did convert to Mormonism.<sup>95</sup>

On June 2, 1874, the *Desert Evening News* described one of these baptismal services at Deep Creek. The paper stated:

One hundred [Indians] were submerged and confirmed into the "Mormon" faith here yesterday, by Indian Interpreter [William] Lee, from Grantsville, and three others whom he deputized as assistants. Sixty minutes were consumed in the operation, a heavy rain prevailing at the time.<sup>96</sup>

Howard Egan stated that during the 1870s there was a general religious movement among the Goshutes in western Utah. He also reported that while his father was working a mining claim, he was involved in missionary work among the Goshute people. Egan's father may not have been as successful as Lee, but he evidently encouraged many of the Goshute people to become farmers. Egan claimed that many of the converted Indians were employed as farm laborers on the white ranches around the Deep Creek area.<sup>97</sup>

Mormon missionaries continued to circumvent the orders of the commanders at Fort Douglas, Utah, which prevented the Mormons from proselytizing on federal Indian reservations. The military and civilian authorities distrusted the Mormons and feared their influence among the Indians. The army had no jurisdiction over the Deep Creek "reservation," so the Mormons continued to use this region as a concentration area for their missionary activities. Native people came from other areas of the Intermountain West, from Wyoming, Idaho, and eastern Nevada. This explains why 1,000 Indians could be baptized in an area where only about 250 Goshutes lived.<sup>98</sup>

The missionary activity continued into the 1880s, but then it appears that the Mormons lost interest in their concentration of Indian groups at Deep Creek. Federal authorities no longer restricted Mormons from proselytizing on reservations, so there was no need to gather the Indians. In March 1883 the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



placed the Goshute Indians remaining around the Deep Creek area on a 1,000-acre farm that became the approximate site of the present Goshute reservation. The church held the property title for a few years and then deeded it to the Indians.<sup>99</sup>

After the 1880s Mormon missionary activities among the Goshutes decreased. The government failed to fill the void left by the LDS church, and the Indians were left to deal with the non-Mormon whites who began to invade their land. These non-Mormon whites came into the region for many reasons but primarily to ranch and mine in the suitable areas remaining in the Goshute domain. After the Mormon church deeded the land to the Goshute people they became vulnerable to their greedy and selfish neighbors.<sup>100</sup> By the time the mining boom ended in the late 1880s, the Goshute people had been effectively concentrated in Deep Creek and in Skull Valley. The Goshutes remained in these areas, eking out a living and attempting to withstand the onslaught of their white neighbors, while looking to Washington, D.C., for recognition and assistance. Ignored and forgotten, no removal policy was enforced upon the Goshutes and during the nineteenth century no federally recognized reservation was established for them.

### **The Reservation Period**

After several decades of neglect, federal authorities finally realized the Goshute Indians would not willingly leave their homelands, so finally two reservations were established by executive orders within a relatively short period. On January 17, 1912, President William Howard Taft set aside eighty acres in Skull Valley for the exclusive use of the Goshute Indians residing there. Later, on September 7, 1919, this small reservation was enlarged by 17,920 acres by President Woodrow Wilson. The Deep Creek reservation in western Tooele and Juab Counties and eastern Nevada was created on March 23, 1914, when 34,560 acres in Utah was declared a reservation by the president. Several tracts of land subsequently have been added to the Deep Creek reservation, and its current total size is about 112,870 acres.<sup>101</sup>

With the establishment of these reservations by the federal government, the Goshute people were finally secure in their traditional homeland. The Goshute people now had the enormous task of establishing a way of life which included preserving elements of their traditional culture while meeting the challenges of the developing twentieth century. Along with the reservations came agents and numerous federal employees, government policies of cultural assimilation, and an attempt to or-



A Goshute hand game being played about 1930. (Vyrie Grey Collection, U of U)

der Goshute life along a white American model. As the federal government made its presence felt on the reservations, conflict occurred. Agents were not always trusted and there was a feeling among the Goshute people that some of the agents were cheating them to better their own situations. On the Deep Creek reservation, the government established a school to teach the Goshutes about white culture as well as vocational skills including carpentry, basic farming, and livestock production. Girls were instructed in basic domestic skills to be used in their own homes as well as in working for whites. Later, Goshute children were sent off the reservation to boarding schools for their primary education.

While the majority of interactions between the Goshutes and federal authorities were civil and peaceable, one incident in 1918 indicates the underlying tension between the tribe and their agent. The incident is sometimes referred to as the Goshute uprising of 1918, and it involved the refusal of a number of Goshute men on the Deep Creek reservation to comply with the Selective Service Act of May 18, 1917. That act required that all male residents of the United States between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one register for conscription and possible service in the military. Amos R. Frank was the superintendent at the Deep Creek Agency and was also appointed the local "draft board" for the Goshutes. L.A. Dorrington was appointed as a special agent for the Commissioner

of Indian Affairs and was assigned to investigate why the Goshutes refused to register for the draft. Frank evidently had explained to the Goshutes that the conscription registration was merely a census and did not mean that they would be drafted. Frank was supposed to have told the Goshutes that as Indians they had not been given citizenship and would not be called upon to serve in the military. Frank's statements evidently satisfied no one, however, and the Goshute men refused to register.<sup>102</sup>

Superintendent Frank then requested that several Goshute men be arrested for inciting this draft resistance. The Goshute men were to register for conscription in June 1917, but the month came and went with no one registering. Several men were arrested and tensions between the Goshutes and federal authorities increased. Rumors from both sides of the dispute added to the tension and distrust. The Goshutes armed themselves and reportedly bought thirty cases of ammunition from the local store. However, conflict was avoided when the Goshute prisoners were released and the men agreed to register for the draft and serve if called upon. Federal authorities wanted two Goshute men taken into custody, but the majority of the draft resisters refused to surrender one of the individuals. Finally the request was withdrawn and a tenuous peace was restored.

Tensions increased again when a number of Indians from Nevada entered the reservation, with more expected. Finally, in February 1918 Special Agent Dorrington filed an official complaint against the Goshute Indians and had warrants issued for the arrest of several of the supposed ringleaders. Army troops were called in and soldiers were sent to carry out the warrants. The troops arrived and moved onto the reservation. About 100 men were detained, with six eventually being arrested. The six men were finally set free and the Goshute uprising of 1918 came to an end. Eventually 163 Goshute men registered for conscription, as rumors of uprisings continued to flourish.<sup>103</sup>

The Goshute uprising of 1918 serves as an example of some of the problems the Goshute people faced as they settled into life on a federal Indian reservation. This specific situation seems to have resulted in a genuine misunderstanding on the part of the Goshutes as to just what was expected of them and why. Also, the local Goshutes had a basic distrust of Superintendent Frank and his role as government representative to their people.

For the next two decades the Goshute people had to struggle with a number of important and perplexing issues. One of the most difficult

issues to address was that of governance. The Goshutes had been accustomed to living primarily in family units without a strong central leader. When the federal government established the reservations for both the Deep Creek and Skull Valley bands, officials began creating a tribal "government" that mirrored the bureaucracy in which they functioned. "Chiefs," or leaders, had to be selected and "councils" had to be established. Decisions had to be funneled through a system which seemed arbitrary and was hitherto almost completely unknown to the Goshutes. Other issues also needed to be addressed. For example, did the Deep Creek Band and the Skull Valley Band wish to remain separate entities with their own council and leaders, or did it make more sense to consolidate both the reservations into one operational unit?

While the political questions continued unresolved, physical changes were occurring on the reservations. Agriculture was to be the basic economic mainstay for both reservations. To this end, fields were cleared and planted, equipment was brought in, and the Goshutes were again given instruction on how to farm. Houses, barns, sheds, and other buildings were constructed on the reservations. Roads were improved and transportation issues were addressed. Communication with the communities surrounding the reservations was considered important to help alleviate the isolation of the Goshute people and help them on the road to "civilization." The paternalistic nature of the reservation system offended and alienated many of the Goshutes, however.

On November 25, 1940, the Confederated Tribes of Goshute Reservations adopted a constitution and by-laws for the governance of the reservations. Discussions were held between the Deep Creek people and those living in Skull Valley to see if either of the groups was interested in joining together as a single political unit. The Skull Valley Band opted to remain independent, with no official ties to the Deep Creek reservation.

The constitution of 1940 detailed tribal organizations, rules for electing officials, terms of office, and much of the present organization of both reservations. On the Deep Creek reservation, the tribe elects five tribal council members to serve for three consecutive years. The tribal council then chooses one of its five members to hold the position of tribal chairman. The tribal council governs the reservation by providing leadership in the areas of education, irrigation, health, economic development, law enforcement, senior citizens' programs, tribal administration and finance, social services programs, and wildlife and parks management. The Skull Valley people did not adopt the constitution; however, they elect a tribal council and chair. Because there are so few people



A scene in front of the Goshute Day School. (Vyrie Grey Collection, U of U)

who actually live on the reservation, their organization is somewhat different than that at Deep Creek.

Over the years, the tribal governments have worked tirelessly on behalf of the Goshute people. Attempting to create an economic base on the reservations while maintaining as much of traditional life as possible has sometimes proven difficult for the Goshutes. Unemployment and the lack of personal income have created many problems on the reservations. Alcoholism is a problem that many Goshutes have not been able to escape. As is the case at many other reservations, the lack of meaningful employment or training of Indian people has added to their feelings of isolation and neglect.

The reservations were established as agrarian communities whose primary economy was to be based on farming. Although there are some very fertile areas, especially on the Deep Creek reservation, the reservations never have been self-sufficient farming communities. The jobs created by the farms were few and offered low wages. On the Deep Creek reservation, in fact, some of the lands were leased to non-Indians in the area and the rent payments were distributed to the tribe.

In 1969 a steel fabrication operation was begun on the Deep Creek reservation under the direction of Dr. Von Jarrett of Utah State University. The enterprise built steel cattle guards for road crossings, but it eventually proved unprofitable and is no longer in operation. Many of the



A Goshute couple. (USHS)

Goshute women at Deep Creek create beautiful beadcraft, necklaces, moccasins, bolo ties, earrings, buckskin gloves, belts, and headbands which are sold commercially.<sup>104</sup>

The Deep Creek Band also manages an elk herd in the Deep Creek Mountains. Money is raised by providing access to hunters on a limited basis, and the tribe also contracts with a single outfitter who has access to the reservation. Money from the sale of hunting permits is returned to the tribe.

In 1976 the Skull Valley Band built and leased a rocket motor testing facility to Hercules, Inc. That company needed a remote site away from residential areas to test rocket motors built at its Magna, Utah, facility. One of the critical issues was that the site had to be isolated, away from large residential areas, yet within commuting distance to the Salt Lake

Valley. The Skull Valley reservation satisfied the requirement. The operation is still functional and lease income from this facility provides the Skull Valley Band with 90 percent of its income. The Skull Valley Band is also majority owner in Earth Environmental Services, Inc., which sells dumpsters to various governmental agencies and private industry. In 1990, the Skull Valley Band built a convenience store with judgement funds. The tribe still operates the store, called the Pony Express Station.

The Skull Valley Band is also actively pursuing the development on their reservation of a storage facility for spent fuel rods from the country's nuclear-power plants. This is a controversial project that has created a powerful, and unlikely, coalition working towards its defeat. The governor of Utah, plus numerous environmental groups, private citizens, and even the Deep Creek Band of Goshutes have stated their opposition to the development of the waste storage facility. Citing concerns for public safety and pollution, the State of Utah will do all in its power to prevent the Goshutes from proceeding with their plans.

The Goshutes see this assault from the State of Utah as just one more in a long line of attacks on tribal sovereignty. With all the chemical weapons stored by the government at its facility at Dugway, the Goshute leadership is not impressed with the state's arguments regarding public safety. The Skull Valley Band has an opportunity to create a substantial economic base that will allow its members to increase their standard of living and make a better life for themselves. A final decision has not yet been made, but both sides are actively pursuing their stated goals.

### **The Goshutes Today**

The Skull Valley Goshute Band lives on a reservation of 17,248 tribal acres plus 160 allotted acres. Total enrollment for the Skull Valley Band is 111 members at the time of this writing, with about twenty-five living on the reservation. The majority of Skull Valley members are employed off the reservation in Salt Lake City, Grantsville, Stockton, Tooele, and Ibapah. Of the eighteen band members employed, four are earning less than \$7,000 per year. Low wage rates and unemployment have a major impact on the reservation.

The reservation has a majority of its land available for grazing, but about 160 acres is irrigable. Stream water is delivered to irrigate land from a pipeline which was constructed with funds from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 1983 a tribal community building was built with funds from tribal judgement money and a grant from the federal government through the Department of Housing and Urban Development.<sup>105</sup>

The Deep Creek Goshute Band has a total of about 70,410 acres in Nevada and 37,523 acres in Utah, with eighty allotted acres, for a total of some 108,000 acres. The Goshute people still have to contend with many of the issues that have constantly been a concern to them. Issues of self-rule, economic development of their reservations, the increase in tribal standards of living, recognition by local and state authorities of Goshute concerns, and tribal law enforcement remain as important today as they long have been. The Goshutes at the Deep Creek reservation are in the unenviable position of living on a federal reservation located in two states and three counties. The jurisdictional situation can be illustrated by examining health care issues on the Deep Creek reservation. There are no permanent clinics on the reservation. Depending upon where an individual lives on the reservation, if medical care is needed, individuals have to travel to Salt Lake City, Utah, if they live on the Utah portion of the reservation, or they must travel to Ely, Nevada, if they live on the Nevada portion of the reservation. Emergency facilities are located at Wendover, on the Utah-Nevada border, some sixty miles to the north.

The Deep Creek Band is always looking at ways to improve the lives and the economic conditions of its members. Education is viewed as an essential element to improvement on both Goshute reservations. The children of the Deep Creek Band in grades seven through twelve are currently bussed to school in Wendover, a 120-mile round-trip, which is made every weekday. Negotiations are now underway with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to build a school on the Deep Creek reservation.

Another project currently in the planning stage is the building of a fish hatchery utilizing the pristine water of the Deep Creek Mountains. The Goshute want to raise both Bonneville and Lahonton cutthroat trout, which are native to the Great Basin and are remnant populations of fish that once flourished in Lakes Bonneville and Lahonton of the Pleistocene epoch. The hope is to provide fish for planting in lakes and reservoirs to provide for recreational fishing needs of residents throughout the Intermountain West.

The Goshute people are working to keep their culture alive and active. Many of their native religious ceremonies and practices have been retained, but their language is slowly being lost. On the Deep Creek reservation, most of the youth under eighteen years of age do not speak their native language, and only about one in twenty in the age group from nineteen to twenty-six speak the language. However, most tribal members twenty-six years old and older speak the native language quite fluently.





A group of Goshute Indians, date unknown. (USHS)

In 1994 there were only about seven or eight members age seventy or older on the Deep Creek reservation. They believe that the language, customs, and beliefs of the tribe should be taught to the younger generations by their families. They are firm in their belief that their native language should not be taught in a classroom. Goshute parents still teach their children their native religious and cultural practices, a role they have always held in Goshute life.<sup>106</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The Goshute people are survivors. They have survived in a land that many see as a desert waste, with few resources or advantages. The Goshutes, however, see the land as their home, a home that has provided them in the past with everything they needed. They knew to take care of their home, never upsetting a delicate balance of resource utilization and replenishment, and the land took care of them. The Goshute people survived the invasion of whites, of slave traders, and fur hunters. They have survived the onslaught of white Americans, who have taken the best and most productive lands in the Goshute domain for their exclusive use.

The Goshutes have survived the unjust epithets, lies, and outright barbarity of the white invaders. When necessary, Goshutes have fought and given their lives in defense of their homes and families. Although outnumbered, the Goshutes have survived in ever smaller numbers in the more remote areas of their homeland. The Goshute Tribe also has survived the neglect of the federal government as well as its attempts to remove them off their native lands.

The Goshutes have survived the establishment of reservations and the attempt to "civilize" them and turn them into farmers. While their lives have been changed and altered, the Goshute people have remained Goshute. They have adopted many of the white man's ways, but they have done so in a typically Goshute fashion.

The Goshute people look forward to the future. They are working hard to provide the skills and support needed for the younger generation to be productive and prosperous in the modern world. They are exerting their independence and are making decisions based upon the needs of their people and reservations. No longer content to be ignored and forgotten, the Goshute people are active participants in planning and directing their future. Their tenacious approach to life, which has served the Goshute people so well in the past, ensures they will have a future, a future that is bright and lasting.