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RECORDS OF THE OREGON SUPERINTENDENCY OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, 1848–1873

On the 29 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced 28 volumes and most of the unbound records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1848–73. Not filmed were a small quantity of accounts and miscellaneous records, many of which are duplicates of documents included in the publication. It should be noted that the rolls of this publication are numbered from 2 to 30. Roll 1 of the publication was reserved for a general introduction and a detailed analysis of the records. Because this editorial material was never prepared, roll 1 was never filmed.

From 1789 to 1824 Indian affairs were administered in the Office of the Secretary of War. In 1824 a separate agency, the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA), was created in the War Department. In 1849 OIA was transferred to the Department of the Interior, and in 1947 it was renamed the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

During the 19th century, superintendencies and agencies were the two principal field jurisdictions of OIA. Superintendents had general responsibility for Indian affairs in a specific geographic area. Their duties included supervision of relations among the tribes in their jurisdiction and between the tribes and non-Indians, supervision of the conduct and accounts of agents responsible to them, communication of instructions from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to agents, and granting leaves of absence to subordinates. It was also common practice for them to receive contract bids, enter into contracts, and issue annuities to the Indians. Agents usually were responsible for the affairs of one tribe or reservation. Until about 1878 most agents were accountable to a superintendent, although some reported directly to OIA in Washington, DC.

The Oregon Superintendency was established in 1848 when Oregon Territory was organized. The superintendency was preceded by a subagency for the “country West of the Rocky mountains,” which was established in 1842 and located in the Willamette Valley. The superintendency originally included all of the area west of the Rocky Mountains and north of the 42d parallel. In 1853 the region north of the Columbia River and the 46th parallel was organized as Washington Territory, and the Washington Superintendency was established. With Statehood in 1859, Oregon Territory was reduced to the present boundaries of the State, and the remainder of the Territory was made part of Washington Territory. Between 1857 and 1861 the Oregon and Washington Superintendencies were combined. Correspondence for this period is filed with that relating to the Oregon Superintendency.

The Territorial Governor acted as *ex officio* superintendent of Indian Affairs until 1850 when a separate superintendent was appointed. The superintendency headquarters originally was at Oregon City, but it was moved in 1851 to Milwaukie [sic]. In 1853 it was moved to Dayton; in 1856 back to Oregon City; in 1857 to Salem; in 1859 to Portland; and in 1862 it was returned to Salem. The Oregon Superintendency was abolished in 1873; thereafter the agents in Oregon reported directly to OIA in Washington, DC.

Many groups of Indians resided in Oregon Territory. These included the Bannock, Cayuse, Chastacosta, Chetco, Clackamas, Joshua, Kalapuya, Klamath, Modoc, Molala, Nez Percé, Paiute, Rogue River, Shasta, Shoshoni (Snake), Shoshoni, Sixes (Kwatami), Tenino, Umatilla, Umpqua, Wallawalla, Warm Springs,

Wasco, and Yamel.

When the Oregon Superintendency was organized in 1848, three subagents were appointed for assignment by the superintendent wherever they might be needed. The first full agents were appointed in 1850, and they also were assigned at the discretion of the superintendent. Permanent agencies were gradually established, usually on a geographic basis rather than on a tribal basis. The agencies in Oregon were Rogue River, Warm Springs, Puget Sound District, Port Orford, Southeastern District, Grand Ronde, Siletz, Umatilla, Klamath, Malheur, and the Washington agencies—namely Yakima and its predecessors, and Flathead.

Rogue River Agency

In 1850 an agent was assigned to the Southwestern or Southern District of Oregon, which included the Umpqua and Rogue River Valleys. The following year the agent was specifically assigned to the Rogue River Valley, and the agency was usually called the Rogue River or Rogue River Valley Agency. By 1856 most of the Rogue River and Umpqua Indians had been removed to the Coast Reservation, and the agent was transferred to Grand Ronde.

Warm Springs Agency

In 1851 an agency was established for the Indians east of the Cascade Mountains. This agency was known by many names, including Uvilla (Umatilla), Eastern Oregon, Northeastern Oregon, Middle Oregon, The Dalles, and finally, the Warm Springs Agency. The agency was originally located at the lower crossing of the Umatilla River and was primarily responsible for the Cayuse, Nez Percé, and Shoshoni Indians. In 1854 the agency was moved to The Dalles, at which time the principal tribes in eastern Oregon were the Cayuse, Shoshoni, Umatilla, Wallawalla, and Wasco. Reductions in the boundaries of Oregon in 1853 and 1859 diminished the jurisdiction of the agency. Between 1854 and 1856, that part of Oregon south of the 44th parallel was assigned to a separate agency for the Southeastern District. Beginning in 1860 the agent spent much of his time at the Warm Springs Reservation, which had been established in 1856; and in 1861 the superintendent specifically assigned the agent to the Warm Springs Agency. By this time the principal Indian bands under its charge were Tenino, Warm Springs, and Wasco.

Puget Sound District Agency

An agent was assigned to the Puget Sound area and located at Steilacoom in 1851. The agency became part of the new Washington Superintendency in 1853. From 1857 to 1861 the agency, then located at Olympia, was under the combined Oregon and Washington Superintendency.

Port Orford Agency

The Indians in the Port Orford area were usually assigned to a subagent. In 1854 and again in 1856, when the Indians were to be moved to the Coast Reservation, a full agent was stationed at Port Orford.

Southeastern District Agency

This agency, established in 1854 with headquarters at The Dalles, was in charge of the Indians east of the Cascade Mountains and south of the 44th parallel. In 1856 the agent was transferred to Port Orford and was not replaced.

Grand Ronde Agency

An agent was assigned to the eastern part of the Coast Reservation in 1856. The agency there had charge of remnants of various bands, mainly from the Willamette and Rogue River Valleys, including the Clackamas, Kalapuya, Molala, Rogue River, Shasta, Umpqua, and Yamel Indians.

Siletz Agency

In 1856 the Siletz Agency was established on the Siletz River on the Coast Reservation near Toledo. The agency had charge of Indians who had been removed from along the coast, from the Rogue River area, and from other parts of Oregon. The principal tribes were the Chastacosta, Chetco, Joshua, Klamath, Rogue River, and Sixes (Kwatami).

Umatilla Agency

The Umatilla Agency on the Umatilla Reservation in northeastern Oregon was transferred from the Washington Superintendency in 1862. There had been a subagency under the Oregon and Washington Superintendency on the reservation in 1860, but in 1861 it was made an agency of the Washington Superintendency. The agency was responsible for the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Wallawalla Indians.

Klamath Agency

The Klamath Agency was established for the Klamath, Modoc, and Shoshoni Indians who had moved into southern Oregon after the Rogue River, Umpqua, and other groups had been removed to the Coast Reservation. A special agent was appointed for the Klamath Lake area in 1861; a subagent, who resided in Jacksonville, was appointed in 1862. In 1867 the subagency was moved to the Klamath Reservation, and in 1872 it was made a full agency. (The Klamath Agency in Oregon should not be confused with the earlier Klamath Agency in California.)

Malheur Agency

The Malheur Agency for the Bannock, Paiute, and Shoshoni (Snake) Indians in eastern Oregon was established in 1873. It was abolished in 1882 after most of the Indians had been removed to the Yakima Agency in Washington.

Washington Agencies, 1857–61

In addition to the Puget Sound District Agency discussed above, there were two regular agencies in Washington during the period of the combined Oregon and Washington Superintendency. At Vancouver there was an agency for the Indians of the Columbia River District, which extended from the mouth of the Columbia River to The Dalles. In 1858 the agency was moved to White Salmon. It was moved to Fort Simcoe in 1859, after which it was known as the Yakima Agency.

The other of the two regular agencies, originally established in 1854, was known as the Flathead Agency. The superintendent discontinued this agency in 1857. The agent was designated agent for Washington east of the Cascades and stationed at The Dalles. He was in charge of the Coeur d'Alene, Flathead, and Nez Percé Indians. In 1859 the agent was assigned to the Walla Walla Valley, where he was in charge of Cayuse, Nez Percé, Paloos, and at times, Coeur d'Alene and Spokane Indians. After 1861 the agent usually stayed at Lapwai on the Nez Percé Reservation in present Idaho.

The records of the Oregon Superintendency concern almost all aspects of Indian administration within its jurisdiction. There are documents relating to negotiation and enforcement of treaties, land matters, Indian removal and subsistence, intrusions on Indian lands, law and order, annuity and other payments, Indian hostilities, military operations, traders and licenses, missionaries and schools, location of agencies, construction and repair of buildings, purchase and transportation of goods and supplies, employees, and accounts. Most of the correspondence of the superintendency was conducted with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, agents, subagents, and other employees of the superintendency. There was also correspondence with employees of the General Land Office, Army officers, Treasury Department officials, traders, contractors, Indians, newspaper editors, and others.

The records reproduced in this microfilm publication consist of 17 series of records of the Oregon Superintendency. For the most part, the series descriptions furnished below are in the order in which the records are reproduced in the publication, but in some cases parts of a single series are filmed on non-consecutive rolls. The appropriate roll numbers are provided in each series description.

1. Indexes to Letters Sent and Registers of Letters Received, 1848–72. Two volumes, one for the period 1848–66 and the other for the period 1866–72. Each volume is divided into an index to letters sent (referred to as a register on the microfilm) and a register of letters received.

Each entry in the indexes to letters sent gives volume and page reference for the record copy, name of addressee, and date and subject of letter. Entries are arranged alphabetically by initial letter of surname or position and thereunder by volume and page numbers. Letters to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs are indexed under “C.” The index parts of both volumes are reproduced on roll 2; the index of the second volume is reproduced again on roll 10 preceeding the letters to which it pertains.

Each entry in the registers of letters received gives file number and date of letter, name of writer, subject of letter, and date of receipt. Entries are arranged chronologically by date of receipt with file numbers assigned consecutively by year or other period of time. The register parts of both volumes are reproduced on roll 12.

2. Letters Sent, 9 volumes, 1848–72. Handwritten copies., chiefly of letters sent. Until 1856, however, there also are copies of letters received. The letters are arranged chronologically, but in the early volumes the order is imperfect. Alphabetical name indexes have been prepared and inserted in several of the volumes. At the beginning of the sixth volume (1857–59) there are some 1853 reports that are similar to those described in series 3. Copies of a few letters sent are found in series 13. The letters sent, series 2, are filmed on rolls 2–10.
3. Instructions and Reports, 1850–55. One volume of handwritten copies of instructions from OIA, instructions from the superintendent to agents, and annual and other narrative reports prepared by the superintendent and agents. The records are arranged chronologically. An alphabetical name index has been prepared and inserted in this volume. (Roll 11)
4. Letters Received, 1848–73. This series of seven volumes and a considerable quantity of unbound papers consists of incoming correspondence, including some financial and other related records. The letters are arranged, for the most part, chronologically by date of receipt.

Through June 28, 1863, most letters were registered and numbered consecutively

during each year but were not bound into volumes. These registered, unbound letters are reproduced on rolls 12–20. Unbound letters that were not registered are filmed with the miscellaneous records on roll 30.

Beginning July 1, 1863, the letters received were bound in volumes designated by letters “A” through “K.” The letters in each volume were numbered in order. Four entire volumes and parts of other volumes are missing. The first volume includes an index to names of correspondents. These volumes are reproduced on rolls 21–27.

5. Records Concerning the Negotiation of Treaties, 1851–55. The two volumes consist of proceedings of councils and copies of treaties. The records are arranged chronologically and are filmed on roll 28.
6. Record Book Concerning the Rogue River Commission, 1854–55. The Commission was appointed by the superintendent under provisions of article 3 of the treaty of September 3, 1853, to decide upon claims for property destroyed by the Indians during the Rogue River War and to assess the value of permanent improvements on land set apart as a reservation for the Indians. The record book (containing copies of instructions to the Commissioners, oaths of office, reports, testimony, and findings on individual claims) is arranged in rough chronological order except that the records concerning individual claims are arranged by claim number. There is an alphabetical name index. Reproduced with the volume are a few loose records, 1852–56, concerning claims. The volume and loose records are filmed on roll 28.
7. Ledger, 1850–54. A record of financial transactions arranged by accounts, mainly for agents and subagents, and thereunder chronologically. There are page references to the daybook (series 9) and the journal (series 10). An alphabetical name index is included in the volume, which is filmed on roll 29.
8. Ledger of Agents’ Accounts, 1850–55. Identified as a journal in the microfilm publication, this volume is a record of financial transactions arranged by accounts for individual agents and thereunder in rough chronological order by date of first transaction. Many of the same transactions are recorded also in the ledger described as series 7. (Roll 29)
9. Daybook, 1850–55. A chronological record of financial transactions made at the time of the transactions. (Roll 29)
10. Journal, 1850–54. A revised chronological record of financial transactions. Included are references to entries in the daybook described in series 9 and the ledger in series 7. (Roll 29)
11. Record of Vouchers, 1853–55. An account of money expended as certified by vouchers. Arranged by voucher number, which was assigned in rough chronological order. (Roll 29)
12. Ledger, 1861–72. A record of financial transactions arranged by accounts for tribes, persons, and kinds of expenditures. The accounts are in rough chronological order by date of first transaction; the entries in individual accounts are arranged chronologically. There is an alphabetical subject index. (Roll 29)
13. Letters Received by James B. Condon, Agent at Grand Ronde, 1861–64. The letters are arranged chronologically. (Roll 30)
14. Letters Received by Persons other than the Superintendent, 1850–73. These letters were received mainly by agents. Included are a few copies of letters sent by the superintendent. (Roll 30)
15. Contracts, 1850–67. These contracts, chiefly for goods to be delivered, are arranged chronologically and are filmed on roll 30. Some contracts also are found among the letters received.
16. Bonds of Agents, 1856–62. These bonds are arranged chronologically and are filmed on

roll 30.

17. Letters Received by Editors of the *Oregon Statesman*, 1860–64. The letters are arranged chronologically and are filmed on roll 30. Superintendent J. W. Perit Huntington was an owner of the newspaper; this may account for these records being among those of the Oregon Superintendency.

Related Records

The records reproduced in this microfilm publication are part of the records in the National Archives of the United States designated as Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75. Related records in the same record group have been reproduced as National Archives and Records Service (NARS) Microfilm Publications M18, *Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Registers of Letters Received, 1824–1880*; M234, *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824–1881*; M21, *Letters Sent by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824–1881*; M348, *Report Books of the Office of Indian Affairs, 1838–1885*; T494, *Documents Relating to the Negotiation of Ratified and Unratified Treaties With Various Tribes of Indians, 1801–1869*; and M574, *Special Files of the Office of Indian Affairs, 1807–1904*.

Records of other superintendencies available on NARS microfilm are: M734, Arizona, 1863–73; M832, Idaho, 1863–70; M1, Michigan, 1814–51; M842, Minnesota, 1849–56; M833, Montana, 1867–73; M837, Nevada, 1869–70; T21, New Mexico, 1849–80; M834, Utah, 1853–70; M5, Washington, 1853–74; M951, Wisconsin, 1836–48; M856, Central Superintendency, 1813–78; and M640, Southern Superintendency, 1832–70.

APPENDIX

Lists of Officials for the Period 1848–73

Commissioners of Indian Affairs

Name; Date of Appointment

William Medill; Oct. 28, 1845

Orlando Brown; June 30, 1849

Luke Lea; July 1, 1850

George W. Manypenny; Mar. 24, 1853

James W. Denver; Apr. 17, 1857

Charles E. Mix; June 14, 1858

James W. Denver; Nov. 8, 1858

Alfred B. Greenwood; May 4, 1859

William P. Dole; Mar. 13, 1861

Dennis N. Cooley; July 10, 1865

Lewis V. Bogy; Nov. 1, 1866

Nathaniel G. Taylor; Mar. 29, 1867

Ely S. Parker; Apr. 21, 1869

Francis A. Walker; Nov. 21, 1871

Edward P. Smith; Mar. 20, 1873

Governors and Ex-Officio Superintendents

Joseph Lane; Aug. 18, 1848
John P. Gaines; Oct. 2, 1849

Superintendents

Anson Dart; June 21, 1850
Joel Palmer; Mar. 17, 1853
Absalom F. Hedges; Notified June 21, 1856
James W. Nesmith; Mar. 12, 1857
Edward R. Geary; Mar. 22, 1859
William H. Rector; June 13, 1861
J. W. Perit Huntington; Jan. 19, 1863
Alfred B. Meacham; Mar. 29, 1869
T. B. Odeneal; Jan. 8, 1872

AGENTS

Rogue River Agency

Henry H. Spaulding; June 28, 1850
Alonzo A. Skinner; July 10, 1851
Samuel H. Culver; Apr. 28, 1853
George H. Ambrose; Nov. 2, 1854
John F. Miller; Aug. 13, 1856

Warm Springs Agency

At Umatilla

Elias Wampole; Sept. 24, 1850

At The Dalles

Robert R. Thompson; Apr. 28, 1853
Ami P. Dennison; Feb. 3, 1857

At Warm Springs

William Logan; June 13, 1861
John Smith; Nov. 4, 1865
Bvt. Capt. W.W. Mitchell; June 21, 1869
John Smith; Reinstated, Oct. 4

Puget Sound District Agency

Edmund A. Starling; July 10, 1851
Joseph M. Garrison; Mar. 22, 1853 (1853–57 under Washington Superintendency)
Michael T. Simmons; Feb. 27, 1856
Wesley B. Gosnell; Nov. 21, 1860

Port Orford Agency

Josiah M. Parrish; Jan. 11, 1854

Nathan Olney; Transferred from Southeastern District Mar. 14, 1856

Southeastern District

Nathan Olney; Nov. 2, 1854

Grand Ronde

John F. Miller; Transferred from Rogue River, Nov. 22, 1856

James B. Condon; July 16, 1861

Amos Harvey; May 18, 1864

Charles Lafollett; Mar. 31, 1869

Patrick B. Sinnott; Jan. 8, 1872

Siletz

Robert B. Metcalf; Aug. 13, 1856

Daniel Newcomb; Sept. 30, 1859

Benjamin R. Biddle; July 16, 1861

Benjamin Simpson; Jan. 19, 1863

Joel Palmer; Mar. 2, 1871

James H. Fairchild; Dec. 20, 1872

Umatilla Agency

William H. Barnhart; July 16, 1861

Lt. W. H. Boyle; July 14, 1869

Narcisse A. Cornoyer; Mar. 2, 1871

Klamath Agency Subagents

Amos E. Rogers; Jan. 21, 1862

Lindsay Applegate; June 28, 1865

Bvt. Col. Edmund Rice; June 23, 1869

Capt. O. C. Knapp; July 26, 1869

Johnson High; Mar. 27, 1871

Leroy S. Dyar; Dec. 29, 1871

AGENTS

Leroy S. Dyar; July 23, 1872

Malheur Agency

Harrison Linville (special); Sept. 20, 1873

Columbia River District-Yakima Agency

John Cain; Jan. 4, 1855

Richard H. Lansdale; Transferred from Washington East of Cascades, Apr. 1, 1858

Washington East of Cascades–Nez Percé Agency

Richard H. Landsdale; Appointed for Flathead Agency, Aug. 4, 1854. Transferred, June 2, 1857
Andrew J. Cain; Aug. 19, 1858

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1	Canceled
2	Register of letters sent, 1849–72; copies of letters received, 1848–50; and copies of letters sent, 1849–50 and 1852–53
3	Copies of letters received and sent July 1850–Dec. 1853
4	Nov. 1853–Aug 1854
5	1854–Jan. 1856
6	Copies of letters sent, Jan. 1856–Sept. 1857
7	Annual reports, 1853–54; reports of subordinates, 1853–55; and copies of letters sent, Sept. 1857–Sept. 1859
8	Copies of letters sent Sept. 1859–July 1861
9	Aug. 1861–Mar. 1866
10	Register of letters sent, Apr. 1866–Dec. 1872; and copies of letters sent, Apr. 1866–Dec. 1872
11	Copies of instructions and reports, 1850–55
12	Register of letters received, Sept. 30, 1848–Jan. 1873; and letters received, Sept. 30, 1848–Dec. 25, 1852
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29	Financial records, 1850–55 and 1861–72
30	Miscellaneous records, 1850–73