

At the time and long before this country was proclaimed the property and future homes of the Shoshones, it was a wild wilderness, which but few white people, aside from the veteran frontiersmen, Bonneville and "Jim Bridger," had ever beheld, and was so full of hostile Indians that even the Shoshones themselves could maintain their stay here but a portion of each year, spending the summers in Utah and Idaho, far removed from their enemies, the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes, returning late in the fall, when they could do so with safety, to hunt the buffalo during the winter. Conflicts were frequent between the said tribes. The Sioux, Shoshones, and Cheyennes were hereditary enemies. The Arapahoes and Shoshones were at times on terms of peace, but soon after the treaty of 1868 peace was broken again, and all these tribes became engaged in a very bitter and long-continued war. Murder and stealing horses from each other were frequent occurrences, and constituted the mode of warfare adopted,—the three tribes against one. They made incursions into each other's country constantly for the purposes of theft and murder, when during this period many a Shoshone brave found his death in his own lodge or within the precincts of the village, at the hands of their active and vigilant foes. Finally, the Shoshones held a grand council and decided that they would strike their enemies a blow that would create consternation in their own homes. Volunteers were called for to go into ~~the enemy's country for the purpose of stealing the major portion of their herd.~~ the enemy's country for the purpose of stealing the major portion of their herd. Forty-five young Shoshones, as fearless of danger as any men that ever trod the earth, stepped forward and offered themselves for the undertaking. Arrangements were hastily concluded, and the expedition made a cautious reconnaissance of the enemy's situation, and hovered about until a good opportunity presented, when they succeeded in surrounding and driving off several hundred head of horses, starting for home to hight spirits, everything at first seeming to work to the advantage of the Shoshones; but they did not know how soon they were to be caught in the terrible meshes of the web which had been weaving. The enemy soon learned of their terrible loss, and, hastily collecting, gave pursuit, and the Shoshones were destined to suffer a sad defeat, even the elements seeming to favor their foes. A storm setting in, the trail could be followed without difficulty, and the fleeing Indians were soon surrounded, but for a whole day defended themselves bravely. Being armed with the old-style Army revolvers, they soon became useless in the wet, drifting storm. Their enemies closing in, shot the last man of them, using the bow and arrow, and leaving every Shoshone on the field for dead. Three of them revived again, and ultimately reached camp, one of them crawling 18 miles on his hands and knees through the snow to get assistance. The Shoshones still speak of this as one of the saddest affairs that ever occurred in the tribe.

In 1871, the provisions of the treaty began to be actively supplied to the Shoshones. Houses for the employes and the agent were erected and put in order for occupancy. A saw, grist, and shingle mill and steam-engine were purchased and built ready for work. And now for the first time the Indians, seeing the helping hand of the government stretched forth to them, began to think seriously of settling down and remaining permanently on their reservation and at the agency built for them; but the still frequent incursions from hostile tribes, and the inadequacy of government troops sent here for their protection while they were learning to work, prevented to a great extent their reaping the full benefit of the expenditure made for them. The reservation at this time was also besieged by a most ungodly set of squaw-men, who attempted to set themselves up as guardians of the Indians' rights (?), and by abusing their minds came very near creating insubordination and distrust of the government among them; but the agent was equal to the emergency, and these bad citizens were forced to leave the reservation, order, peace, and confidence being restored.