

Chief Paulina

By Unknown

This photograph of Chief Paulina was likely taken in 1865 when Paulina was living on the Klamath Reservation. Paulina was a well-known war leader associated with the Hunipuitōka, a Northern Paiute group that originally inhabited portions of central Oregon along the Deschutes, Crooked, and John Day rivers.

Prior to the influx of settlers, miners, and ranchers in central and eastern Oregon in the 1850s and early 1860s, the Northern Paiute indigenous to these regions lived in relatively small kin-related groups, ranging over large areas on their traditional subsistence rounds. In contrast to the Northern Shoshone of Idaho who had adopted the equestrian culture of the Plains Indians, the Paiute of Oregon were generally unmounted. Social authority within Northern Paiute communities was vested in group task leaders serving specific functions, such as shamans, dance leaders, and hunting leaders. Following the social, economic, and ecological changes brought on by Euro American colonization, a new type of leadership emerged among the Northern Paiute. These new leaders, whose authority was largely based on their personal capabilities, were either advocates of accommodation, like Chief Winnemucca, or war leaders, like Chief Paulina. During this time, several Paiute groups also acquired horses, which aided the development of predatory bands under the command of leaders such as Chief Paulina.

From the late 1850s through the late 1860s, Northern Paiute predatory bands attacked both settler communities and Indian reservations in central and eastern Oregon and the Klamath Basin. Paulina became the most notorious war leader, well known for the swiftness of his attacks and his ability to evade capture by both volunteer regiments and U.S. Army detachments. His band would raid and steal livestock and horses, engendering fear in Euro American and rival Indian communities throughout the region. While predatory bands such as Paulina's certainly profited from these attacks, they ultimately contributed to the climate of hostility that increased the level of violence and the death toll in the region. All the resident groups—settlers, Native communities at Warm Springs and Umatilla, and the Northern Paiute—engaged in retaliatory actions that resulted in the deaths of dozens of people, including women and children.

Paulina and the other headmen of the Hunipuitōka Paiute agreed to sign a treaty in the spring of 1865 after U.S. Army forces captured a group of Paiute hostages in the fall of 1864. Paulina's wife and son were among those captured. Despite the treaty agreement, Paulina and his group left the Klamath Reservation in April 1866. One year later, he was killed during a retaliatory attack led by settlers James Clark and Howard Maupin. Paulina's last engagement took place at a cove later named Paulina Basin, located in northeastern Jefferson County.

Further Reading: Fowler, Catherine S. and Sven Liljebld. "Northern Paiute." In *Handbook of North American Indians. Vol. 11. Great Basin*. Edited by Warren L. D'Azevedo. Washington D.C., 1986: 435-465.

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