

**INTERVIEW #2: PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN
TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN, NORTHWESTERN BAND OF THE SHOSHONE
NATION, CULTURAL RESOURCE DIRECTOR (Interviewed at Washakie,
Utah)**

NANCY GREEN:

What was the relationship between the LDS church and the Northwestern Shoshone?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

Well I think that maybe the church people knew that this land did belong to someone before they came and I think the efforts to try to, instead of having them leave is to, work with them and then try to, bring them into the fold and to teach them how to become farmers. And I think that was their main goal.

NANCY GREEN:

And on the Shoshone side, what do you think drew them into the church?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

I think what they experienced after the Bear River Massacre had a lot to do with really how their lives ended up. I think some of their options were either go to a reservation or to stay here and become part of the community and that meant you know living amongst and joining the church. So you know with those options, either that or possibly dying? So there, they didn't want to leave their homelands and I think they really felt that the church itself was good and I think they began to embrace that.

NANCY GREEN:

And after they joined the church, what happened to them?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

Well I think you know the first place they ended up was after the massacre was around the Corinne area. And I think that was the first attempt to turn them into farmers. George W. Hill was the gentleman sent by Brigham Young to gather the people to start teaching them the farming skills and so Corinne was, being established. The railroad was coming through and they really didn't favor to have the Indians in the town, they, I believe they thought of them more as a nuisance and they became fruitful there. They did have hundreds of acres of, of food. And so at that point I think the Corinne people felt more threatened. I believe the people of Corinne realized how successful they were and I think what they began to learn was that the Indians were becoming more a permanent fixture in the area and they didn't want that. I know there were several incidences where some of the Indians were chased outta town for whatever reason, if it was just loitering or someone had given them alcohol and they became a little wild I guess [chuckles] so times like that were very disturbing, especially when, when the

railroad was coming through and to have people see that type of behavior I think they didn't want that in their town.

NANCY GREEN:

We're in Washakie, you used to visit here as a young girl. What was that like?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

Well, my grandfather had a farm here and this where, this was the place that my father grew up and my grandfather and grandmother lived and raised their family and his father was here and his father was here. I spent my summers here. It was our responsibility to help my father on the farm. The girls would be the cooks and the boys would be out in the fields. My father was a dry farmer so it was wheat that they were harvesting.

I think at one time there was probably about three hundred people living here. During World War II the population did drastically change. Most of the men folk who were eligible to go into the service left and went into the service. The women, they ended up in the defense depot out in Ogden and so it pretty much just left the town pretty empty. But you know this was their home, they always came back.

NANCY GREEN:

And what happened to the town? Why did it disappear?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

I think a lot of it had to do with, with the way people farmed. There wasn't the need for the manual labor really anymore. Technology changed that and so they had to move forward and, and try to establish themselves in other places and it wasn't happening here, at Washakie.

NANCY GREEN:

Around 1960 much of the town was burned down. Describe what happened.

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

Well, it started with the sale of the farm. And with that sale was all the homes that belonged to the Indian people, and so they were told that they had to leave because the place was being sold. And a lot of the people, their understanding was; we thought we could live here forever. You know, we were good people and this is our home. But when they sold it, some of the people did leave but they only left to go harvest up in Idaho, some of 'em worked up in the potato fields up that way. So they left but they would eventually come back. Well some of those came back and they had already started burning the houses down because they needed to clear it out for the new owner who was coming in. One family did stay. My grandparents left and so it was a difficult time.

NANCY GREEN:

Who ordered the burn?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

Well it was the church that sold the farm and someone had given the orders to start burning the houses down. And I guess that's who you can say, you know, why the houses were burned. It was due to the orders of the church.

NANCY GREEN:

Was that hard for the people because they relied on the church in a way or they were part of the church and then...?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

I think a lot of 'em became disillusioned by that act; certainly not the doctrine or the teachings of the church but that act. You know they became displaced again. And where were they to go, because really there was no place to go. People did have relatives in other places and some of 'em did go to those relatives that were living elsewhere. My grandparents probably around the age of seventy were forced to relocate and find another home and with no money to do that, there was a gentleman by the name of Keith Lamb who had given money to them to buy their home, at least put a down payment on the home and then eventually my grandfather paid him back for the money that he gave him.

I think for those members that went to Salt Lake to give testimony about the burning --as to their feelings--it left a lot of scars in a lot of the people that had to go through that. And understanding that, that they wanted the church to make it right and they did, maybe not in way that, that bringing back the homes or whatever that, that didn't happen but they gave them land. But I still think that hurt is still there. Some of those people that went through that are still alive today. And some of them you can still hear that bitterness and not understanding or whatever reason they have, you know, to hold that grudge.

NANCY GREEN:

How about your family?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

It was my grandparents on my father's side that were affected. I think for my grandparents to leave this place was difficult because I had so many memories here that for the most part were good memories. I think for me it kind of took them away from us because being able to come and spend the summers with them, this wasn't the setting that would happen for us anymore. And they were getting older. Sometimes when you start talking about them, it's like they're here and to be able to do them justice. But to me it's always like you're not forgotten, and I think sometimes if I feel like that stirs them, because they know that we didn't forget.

NANCY GREEN:

Does it seem to you that generation after generation, that the Northwestern Shoshone are a people that are constantly being displaced? Is that something that happens?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

I've never thought of it like that but when you think about it, yes. When they created reservations they were places where people were more permanent. I think our people thought that we were permanent in Washakie. They did go through obtaining land through the Homestead Act but never realizing that you were supposed to pay taxes, they began to lose that land. There were families that maybe had eighty acres, a hundred and sixty acres and there were only a few people at the very end who still had land. But most of 'em, it was lost.

NANCY GREEN:

What are some of your fondest memories of this place?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

I think the times I remember is being with my grandmother. She was the first one who gave me a piece of buckskin and needle and thread and some beads and sat me down and showed me a stitch and then just to sit and practice it. I think the fascination of her cooking on a stove and having to go out and cut wood and cook on that stove. The fascination of people still using an outhouse was you know, you live in the city and you don't see that and you come here and that's part of their life. Or no running water in your house and you have to outside and get the water. I think my grandmother had the most immaculate garden I have ever seen. I mean the lines; there were no weeds and very fruitful, very good.

In remembering it when I was a little girl everything seemed so big. And then to come back today it just isn't the same. You still see the trees that surrounded my grandparent's house but no house there. The church house that was beautiful at one time is you know, you couldn't feel safe going inside of it or staying there for very long. The schoolhouse, I think of the school house even though it wasn't usable when I was little but the joy and the laughter and what was taught there for those children back in the thirties and the forties, what their life was like. I think of my mom and some of the stories she would tell us and wonder you know, could we have survived living in that time period then.

NANCY GREEN:

Was it one of the last times that the Northwestern Shoshone were together in a place as a people?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

They were close, living that close because now all of up and down the Wasatch front, southeastern Idaho it takes a lot to gather us together like that. But before they had a community building that they used to gather in and have dances and

stuff. They don't do that much anymore, very seldom. Now we have an office in Brigham City, that community-ness is not there; the struggle that we go through now trying to preserve or continue some of the culture with our children is more difficult. You're fortunate if you have somebody in that family who's willing to pass that on, other children will go without and I think part is the saddest part of not being in that community setting. Being able to learn from an elder or having your grandparent's right there with you.

I think having a community setting like they did at Washakie gave them a chance to practice more of their culture - the setting that we have now where everybody up and down the Wasatch front, southeastern Idaho makes it more difficult. Those that have elders in their homes, they're able to practice some of the culture, makes it easier but right now it's just too difficult.

NANCY GREEN:

A major event in the tribe's history was the Bear River Massacre, were you told stories about it growing up?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

For me, there wasn't, I didn't hear a lot of stories. It wasn't until I got older, I mean even now today I struggle with at what point do you tell a child a story like that? Trying to teach a child that there isn't a reason to hate somebody for what has happened in the past you know. I have seen and heard of some, some of the tribal members still bitter about it and how do you teach them not to be bitter? And that to me they can change, they change their life and they can live and to me to teach them that it's their responsibility to tell that story so it's not forgotten. But I there, you go through a period of, of trying to understand and I think you go through a period of resentment but then you have to put it in its place because it doesn't do you any good. And so to be able to teach in the next generation who will now become our storytellers not to forget, but don't hold that bitterness in your heart because it does nobody no good.

NANCY GREEN:

What's the basic story that people need to know about the Bear River massacre?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

I think that the incident did take place and that there are two sides to the story. I think we've all grown up you know with the school books and whatnot telling their stories, and I think that it's time for the tribe to tell their side of the story. And I see more of it happening because I think people, I think when you move away from that incident, when you're not so close to it, it's, it's easier to handle. And I think that you don't put that fear in the future generation's minds or hearts that you know, who knows. Is it possible that an incident like that could happen again? You know certainly maybe not with us, but it does in other countries. So you know, learn from that. I think if you, you were to tell somebody about the story, you have to tell a little bit of the other side to, to give that their reasoning

behind what had taken place and that protection of the overland mail to see what the Mormons were doing and also to control the situation with the Indians of the area. And for our part, you know, there were skirmishes in the beginning and they were handled in a way that, that if an Indian went in and caused some ruckus, that individual was given to the authorities.

NANCY GREEN:

What were the stories you heard about the Bear River Massacre when you were older?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

When I think about that I think bits and pieces of all different kinds of stories I think one in particular was my mom told me a story about this one old lady that after the massacre was over and as she got elderly, this lady would jump on a, I guess it was a pot belly stove type thing and it was like she was whipping it and riding and telling the people you know, "Run! Run!" and I don't know how often she would do that, but she would continually as she got older, continue to jump on that stove and ride away like she was on her horse, fleeing for her life. And the thought of her, how it affected her life that she would continually live that until she passed away and people in the community would say, "There she goes again, riding her horse." But I think that story hurts because she couldn't let go. I think certainly some of the stories of the mothers; the mothers that drowned their children and the choice that they made to do that. I can't even fathom doing something like that [crying]. You know being a grandmother and having my grandchildren.

NANCY GREEN:

What was that story?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

One of the ladies had their baby and floated down the river, kinda went where the the overhanging of the, of the side of the bank and so she wouldn't give away where she was at and her baby was crying. And she chose to drown her baby rather than someone else take its life. I think that had to be very difficult. You know I think of Grandpa Jaeger and as a young man having that gun pointed at him. And for whatever reason, the soldier didn't pull the trigger, that his life was saved. That was hard; I think hard for a child that age to go through something like that.

NANCY GREEN:

Tell me that story--what happened?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

Well I think he was probably between twelve and fourteen years old and he was with his grandmother and they were kind of in a, understanding was in a wickiup. He and his grandmother ran into the wickiup, and there wasn't enough room

because it was full of people. And so they left there and the grandmother told him, lay down and play like you're dead and don't move. Curious little boy looked up and when he opened his eyes, there was a soldier standing over him and the soldier pointed his gun at him but he couldn't pull the trigger. And did it again and he still couldn't pull the trigger, and did it again and after that time, he just let the boy lay there and he didn't take his life. Sometimes you think there's a reason why stuff like that happens. There are survivors and they have to tell their stories.

I think of the two young girls who fled the area and came back over towards Promontory because there was people who didn't go to the Warm Dance that year. And they went and told the people, "This is what happened to our people" and the girls began to cut their legs and cut their hair as a gesture of mourning for the people that had died. I don't know, just little things like that.

Sometimes it's like trying to understand and trying to put it all together, trying to understand the other side. And then I think it was what, a hundred and forty years later, and when my Aunt May began to tell the story, it was almost like people didn't believe or didn't wanna believe. And then the appearance of um, diaries that were found by soldiers that their writings supported what my Aunt May had said. And I think for a long time...that was difficult to try to get over, that we would tell our story but I think it was a story nobody really wanted to hear. But when the diaries came out, then people began to believe that yes, maybe it did happen that way.

NANCY GREEN:

What was the effect of the massacre at Bear River on the Northwestern Shoshone people?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

You know I can speak for some of those who have, who have told their story. My father's side of the family, there were several that lived through it. Sagwitch himself, his son Jaeger who is the line that I come from and then Sogwitch, who was Sagwitch's oldest son and then Frank Timbimboo-Warner who was the youngest. And we come from a family that gathered those stories and my father's sister May Perry documented a lot of that. And through her, that's where we got the stories. I think through those documentations you, you felt what some of those from our family did go through were more fortunate than others that had completely lost families or families that line no longer exists anymore. Having Frank Timbimboo-Warner survived as a child through that. I mean for children to be in a situation like that, a massacre, how devastating is that? But then you look at his end life and all that he experienced and all that he had accomplished. I look at Jaeger at what his accomplishes, accomplishments were through his life but I think I look at 'em all and it was the church that held them together. And I think if it wasn't, sometimes I feel if it wasn't for the church we would have scattered and I think the fact that we were tied to the land and didn't wanna leave

our homelands, that we got to stay. And sometimes I think that we became the good Indians that they wanted us to be and survived. So there was good and bad in that.

NANCY GREEN:

What do you mean by “being the good Indians that they wanted you to be”?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

Well, we had to give up our culture. We weren't allowed to practice you know, some of the religious stuff. They certainly cut off the hunter and gathering aspects of our life. They talked about that we were beggars—well, beggars are not born, you know? They're created and what could do but become that when all your resources were now taken away from you by the fences going up and the ownership of property. I think that was hard for them. So how survive, except for accepting the way of life that was being dealt to you? And they made the most of it and I think people saw that we were successful and what made them successful, I think the need to survive.

NANCY GREEN

Is there a tension with more the traditional Shoshone because of that?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN

In my twenties did experience that. But at that time, I felt that you don't have to like me and it was my own Indian people who were saying, “You're too white.” And I thought, I couldn't understand what is “too white.” This is the way that I was raised and what makes you so different? Not really understanding reservation life and we certainly did go visit the reservation. We had relatives up there. But I think I didn't let it bother me because I think it was something that was just totally ridiculous you know, like me or don't like me, but I'm not gonna let it bother me. Um, you know being I a community where, and having the church there and us being part of that opened many doors, especially with my grandparents being the people that they were. My grandparents being known up and down the valley, you know, this is who you are and you come from good people and in a way that opened the doors too.

People talk about people being traditional and if you pick that word apart I ask what is traditional? If we lived traditional, we'd all still be living in teepees and that's not gonna happen. You look at the evolution of what the powwow has become and I look back at the tribe and think of what was tradition then. The medicine people, knowledge of plant life, there are certain things that you can hold onto. You know there was a great belief of respecting your elders um and that you listened to them. I think they're moving away from that. They talk about ownership and you talk about how there really was no concept of ownership, especially of the land. Everybody had an equal responsibility within that group in order for that group to survive. And so there really wasn't anybody better than somebody else because if you removed one of those individuals then you lose

that skill. So it was difficult and I saw that after the massacre, you know, those people that had skills were lost. And how many people other people knew those skills? And I look at the medicine people. You know, who had those skills? You know? Because right now, there's nobody in our tribe that has that gift and to me it is a gift. Have we gone so far away from our beliefs that we will never be able to recapture that back again. I look at our, our children of the tribe now and language is very, very important to me because it, it defines how these people saw the world, through their language, how they expressed themselves. And I think that is the basis of who these people were, where they lived and the food sources that they had to obtain as hunter and gatherers and trying to teach the children now just a minute piece of that, to try to give them an understanding that your people were knowledgeable people and to be proud of them. It doesn't mean that you can't learn. You might not be able to, to use those resources as they did but you can be knowledgeable of them. You know stories. You don't hear very many stories anymore because all those, seems like those people are gone that used to tell them. We do still have elders in our tribe but I think that we talked about community, and having that atmosphere of closeness. That isn't there. So at times it is difficult to have that part in your life. Our children, our blood has changed. But I've never really felt that the amount of blood that you have really has anything to do with what's in your heart and what you're being taught or the color of your skin. The color of your skin, to me, didn't make me an Indian. I just can't put my mind around thoughts like that because they don't make sense to me. That blood will always flow there. And you look at the next generation or two or three generations, they're going to be our storytellers but if we cut that tie, who will then tell our stories? It will be lost.

NANCY GREEN:

What does make you Indian?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

Well, you go back to when Columbus came to the Americas and labeled us Indians because that's where he thought he was. To me that was just a label. You know we certainly had our own identity and we were *Newe*, we were the people. And it had nothing to do with color. So I think the idea of color is somebody else's label and not ours. To me it just doesn't make sense.

NANCY GREEN:

So what is the aspect of you consider a Northwestern Shoshone?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

I think that because my ancestors lived here that continuous connection of the family is what makes me *Newe*. And if people call it Indian or Northwestern Shoshone, to me, that's their label. That's not my label for me. And that has nothing to do with the color of my skin.

NANCY GREEN:

Earlier, you mentioned that you lost so much of your culture after the massacre. Explain that to me.

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

I think I've always wondered, what, you know right after it happened, I mean in the dead of winter, and I think for any incident that has happened in that way, what goes through those individuals' minds? Where do you run? Do you dare take that chance of walking away and maybe not surviving, or shall I stay where I'm at and hopefully they'll go away and I'll be ok. To walk through those that had survived, to walk through that mess of bloodshed and the impact that it had on their lives, and for the rest of their lives. How do you, and they did see people go through it and get through it. And I look at what the tribe is now and all their accomplishments. And they've had setbacks too but still willing to move forward. I don't know, I still believe they, they still have a fight in 'em if one comes.

NANCY GREEN:

Is there anything else you want to add?

PATTY TIMBIMBOO-MADSEN:

For the future, I hope that one day it will become a memorial park. I hope that we will change the history books. I know that's really a hope of my mother's but, I think when I was going to school and to see that, I think you just accepted that, but you wondered and pondered you know. And I think the time is okay that the story be told. But what I think I still struggle with - at what point, at what age do you tell a child those stories. I mean, what's acceptable? Because I would like to see a children's book written about it, one day.