

WE SHALL REMAIN
THE UTE
FINAL SCRIPT
1/21/09

ON CAMERA

FORREST CUCH
LONG BEFORE SPANISH
CONQUISTADORS CROSSED THE
LANDSCAPE... BEFORE TRAPPERS
FOLLOWED THE RIVERS AND
STREAMS... LONG BEFORE
PIONEERING SETTLEMENTS DOTTED
THIS REGION... BEFORE ANYONE
ELSE WOULD TRY TO WRITE THEIR
HISTORY, FIVE PRINCIPLE NATIONS
OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE CALLED THE
GREAT BASIN THEIR HOMELAND.
THEIRS IS THE FIRST STORY OF THE
PEOPLE IN THIS PLACE. I'M FORREST
CUCH, JOIN ME AS WE STEP INTO THE
EXTRAORDINARY WORLD OF THE
UTE.

CLIFFORD DUNCAN
Native Americans do not forget where they
came from. What direction they're going,
and who they're going to answer to.

GWEN CANTSEE
Our native traditions, our culture will be
here for generations to come.

LOYA ARRUM
You know, if our ancestors weren't strong,
we would have died a long time ago.

UNDERWRITER:

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SHOW OPEN: 20

**GRAPHIC:
UTE BEAR DANCE,
FT. DUCHESNE, UT**

MARIAH CUCH, BEARDANCER

Uh the bear's the one who gave the Utes the the dance itself. It's part of the umm waking up the spring, the way the bears hibernate. He's the one that sleeps through winter. And when the first thunder comes, like that sound? That's the thunder; it represents uh waking up the bear and umm the coming of better times.

But the true simplicity and joy of what I -- I understand from my belief is what brings the rules and the formulas for our way of life are for the people. That it's a matter of -- of healing, of being together. And that, in fact, the most important thing about all of those things we do in -- is for each other.

FORREST CUCH/NARRATOR

THE UTES, HAVE CELEBRATED THE BEAR DANCE FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS. IT'S A TRADITION THAT PREDATES MORMON PIONEERS AND SPANISH CONQUISTADORS WHO CALLED US "YUTAS" OR UTE.

IT GOES BACK TO A TIME WHEN WE CALLED OURSELVES “*NUCHE*”, THE PEOPLE.

A TIME WHEN WE LIVED IN SMALL FAMILY GROUPS, TRAVELING ON FOOT-- WHEN MEN HUNTED AND FISHED, WHILE WOMEN GATHERED ROOTS, BERRIES AND SEEDS. THEY MENDED CLOTHING AND SHELTERS, AND CARED FOR THE CHILDREN.

THEN, IN THE SIXTEEN-HUNDREDS, THE *NUCHE* ENCOUNTERED THE SPANISH. THEY INTRODUCED US TO THE HORSE AND TO A NEW CONCEPT—SLAVERY. SOON OUR LIFEWAYS CHANGED.

LARRY CESSPOOCH, STORYTELLER

Before the Spanish brought the horse, we call it “kava”. Before the horse, we were on foot and we could only go so far as our feet would carry us.

What we learned from the Spaniards were how to use that horse to conquer other people... so it made our people very powerful. We were a feared people, nation.

CLIFFORD DUNCAN, ELDER

They pushed the other tribes out. The strongest held their place, that’s why Utes were never removed from the mountains because they were solid. That’s why we’re still mountain people.

I think the Utes as a whole were really a strong tribe. So they didn't remove us, we're still here.

FORREST CUCH:
WE ARE STILL HERE, TODAY OVER SIX THOUSAND UTE LIVE IN THE MOUNTAINS, DESERTS AND CITIES THROUGHOUT THE WEST. WE HAVE THREE TRIBAL RESERVATIONS: THE NORTHERN UTE HEADQUARTERED IN FT. DUCHESNE UTAH; THE SOUTHERN UTE IN IGNACIO, COLORADO; AND THE UTE MOUNTAIN UTE IN THE FOUR CORNERS REGION INCLUDING THE WHITE MESSA COMMUNITY IN UTAH.

BUT THERE WAS A TIME WHEN MUCH OF THE BASIN AND PLAINS—THE LANDS THAT WOULD BECOME UTAH AND COLORADO--WERE OUR HOME. BEFORE SETTLERS ENTERED OUR HOMELAND, THERE WERE BANDS OF UTE RANGING ACROSS MOST OF COLORADO AND UTAH AND PARTS OF WYOMING AND NEW MEXICO.

FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS THE UTE NEGOTIATED OR BARTERED WITH EUROPEAN OUTSIDERS IN OUR TERRITORY, BUT IN 1847 EVERYTHING

CHANGED WHEN RELIGIOUS LEADER, BRIGHAM YOUNG LED A GROUP OF MORMON SETTLERS INTO THE SALT LAKE VALLEY.

CLIFFORD DUNCAN

He said, "This is the place." But the question that always uh, is there from the Indian point of view is where was the Indian that was supposed to be standing there and says, "This is yours." Huh.

Interviewer: [chuckles].

It's gone. The man just went there and said, "This is the place" without inquiring about who lives there.

LARRY CESSPOOCH

Well when the settlers came, they were they were different than other people that came through Ute country where they stayed. They took the best hunting lands, they killed all the game to feed them, and everything that we praised or held, held uh worth anything, they ate it up. And our people kept getting pushed and pushed till we were just in the way.

So they killed all the game that we used to get there and our people said well, you kill ours, we're going to kill your cows.

And that's what they started to do. But the way that settlers felt was that was that everything was here for them and it's completely different thinking is for native people.

CLIFFORD DUNCAN

Remember, uh, that we're not all speaking the same language—Ute and English—and they cannot communicate to each

other and say “Here’s what I’m doing.” So the difference was there. So uh, one treated it as a war; the other one treated it as a trade.

FORREST CUCH
BETWEEN 1858 AND 1872, WE
RESISTED MORMON SETTLEMENT IN
A SERIES OF SKIRMISHES KNOWN AS
THE WALKER AND BLACKHAWK
WARS. BUT THE STEADY STREAM OF
SETTLERS WAS TOO GREAT, AND WE
CONTINUED GETTING PUSHED OFF
OF OUR TRADITIONAL LANDS.
PIONEER LEADERS TURNED TO
WASHINGTON FOR A SOLUTION.

LARRY CESSPOOCH
And they eventually petitioned Abraham
Lincoln to set up a reservation.

CURTIS CESSPOOCH, CHAIRMAN
NORTHER UTE TRIBE
They sent scouts out here, to this area, to
look for a colony for them. And they
couldn't find anything any land that was
suitable for farming. And one of them
went back and reported to Brigham
Young, that the only reason for this place
to be here was to hold the world together.
So, to them, it was worthless. So that's
why they generally placed -- put Indian
reservations.

FORREST: THE *NUCHE* WAY OF LIFE
WAS QUICKLY DISAPPEARING.
GOVERNMENT POLICY MARGINALIZED
US ONTO RESERVATIONS AND
FORCED US TO STOP HUNTING AND
BECOME FARMERS. IT WAS A HUGE

TRANSITION FOR THE UTE, AND ONCE AGAIN, THE TWO CULTURES CLASHED. THE LAST MAJOR UTE UPRISING OCCURRED IN 1879, ON THE WHITE RIVER RESERVATION IN WESTERN COLORADO. AT THE HEART OF THE CONFLICT WAS INDIAN AGENT NATHANIEL MEEKER.

LARRY CESSPOOCH

He wanted to make us farmers. And uh we weren't that way; we weren't farmers. We were hunters and gatherers and, and uh we just listened to him until he started having his workers plow up our race track. And then the Indian people, *Nuche*, they got mad! And uh that was it. Weren't going to take it anymore. And uh the army was sent in and the Ute people had to decide—we gonna live this way rest of our life or are we going to fight? And we've been pushed so much. We were told this was yours and they took more and more and more. So we decided to fight and uh, the result of that fight, we defeated the army but the result of the fight meant the removal of our people over from Colorado to this reservation here today.

FORREST: OVER FIFTEEN-HUNDRED MEN WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE ORDERED TO LEAVE. THEY WERE MARCHED FROM THEIR HOMELAND TO UTAH'S UINTAH AND OURAY RESERVATION... CONVENIENTLY OPENING UP THOUSANDS OF ACRES OF PRIME MINING AND FARMING LAND FOR WHITE SETTLERS.

CLIFFORD DUNCAN

The Meek, Meeker incident uh, is actually part of a bigger movement. ...the state of Colorado was wanting the Indians to be removed. One way or another, they would exterminate 'em.

FORREST: ONCE AGAIN THE *NUCHE* WERE FORCED OFF OF ANCESTRAL LAND, LAND THAT WAS INTEGRAL TO OUR SPIRITUALITY AND WAY OF LIFE. IT WAS AN ALL TOO FAMILIAR STORY-- A STORY SHARED THROUGHOUT GENERATIONS.

CLIFFORD DUNCAN

My grandmother's story -- She would talk to us about...When they walked you from uh, Meeker to here they told them "Don't take anything, only what you can pack on your back." So they left a lot of their belongings there; they just left. Many people cried and we came here as poor people. And I think that uh too, that we are still attached to uh Meeker in such a way that the sacred sites are still there. You go to the uh mountains, the flattop, you find the teepee rings; you find the vision quest sites. We own the spirit or the spirit owns us. That like uh, you can remove a person from a country but you can never remove a country from a person.

FORREST: OUR LAND IS IMPORTANT TO THE NOOCH. PLACE AND SPIRIT GO HAND IN HAND.

CONNECTING TO NATURE IS INTIGRAL TO OUR SPIRITUALITY. CEREMONIES CENTER ON THE SUN, ON LIGHT. MOUNTAINS, ROCK AND SACRED SITES GROUND US. AS DO EVERYDAY PRAYERS AND RITUALS.

THIS MOMENT-TO-MOMENT CONNECTION TO PLACE AND SPIRIT IS ONE WAY NUCHE BELIEF OFTEN DIFFERS FROM OTHER RELIGIONS.

CLIFFORD DUNCAN

And too, prophets seem to control groups like uh, far East we have the Buddhas and Christianity have theirs and other have theirs too. Whereas Indian, Native American is puttin' that in nature.

FORREST CUCH

So nature is our religion and mountains are our steeples?

CLIFFORD DUNCAN

Our prophet is the light, the sun is our prophet you know it's something that we didn't lose.

FORREST CUCH

Mmmmm...

CLIFFORD DUNCAN

It's embedded into an Indian's thinking.

NATSOT: CLIFFORD DUNCAN AT
POWWOW

Each one of you have a way to connect to nature and the spirit. I ask of you to use that this evening and with that a short prayer for all of us.

(Clifford speaking Ute)

CLIFFORD DUNCAN

The language that we speak, we use that to uh communicate. But uh, the other part to that, it contains words which has a spiritual connection to uh, nature or to higher level spirit, words that we cannot put into like English. That's why it's important. The language itself at this point is uh, deteriorating. With that, kinda gives it a feeling we are losing our identity. Once a language is gone, there will be no more Ute tribe.

NATSOT VENITA TEACHING KIDS IN
CLASSROOM:

VENITA: Everyone, "Mique"

CLASS: "Mique"

VENITA: This is how it looks. When I write it. That means "hello." Everyone, "Mique."

CLASS: "Mique."

VENITA: "Mique."

CLASS: "Mique."

FORRST CUCH

VENITA TAVEAPONT TEACHES UTE TRADITIONS AT UINTAH RIVER HIGH SCHOOL. SHE IS BATTLING CANCER WHILE FIGHTING TO KEEP UTE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ALIVE...

VENITA TAVEAPONT, TEACHER

They need to learn how to be Ute. And I see too many of the students coming into this high school now, that have little knowledge or no knowledge of being Ute. And what I mean by saying being Ute is being able to communicate. Being able to have knowledge of -- of Ute cultural practices it's not just beads and feathers. It's how your family is -The values that your family has.

And if you're not secure in your in your own identity and secure in knowing your language and culture, then you are going to have a problem anywhere you go.

NATSOT: VENITA

That's gonna be pretty...

FORREST CUCH

WITHOUT A STRONG CULTURAL IDENTITY IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE IN SCHOOL. IN UTAH, AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO DROP OUT COMPARED TO THE STATE AVERAGE

VENITA TAVEAPONT

One of the things that we need to realize, that they're in competition with the non-Indian student in the local high school. To be competitive, it means you have to speak out. You have to be the first one to raise your hand. You have to be, you know, quite vocal. We're not taught to be quite vocal. And so if you're competing, and your -- you're not from a culture that emphasizes competition, then you're not going to do as well.

VENITA TAVEAPONT

Some people say that they walk in two worlds. You know the non-Indian world and the Indian world. But one of the things that I've found, as an Indian person, is that I think you have to be strong in your own language, in your own culture, in your own identity, knowing where you come from, and in knowing where you're going and to be able to do that. And I think the students today, or young people today, have a hard time, because they don't have that knowledge, or that being able to move easily between the two. And umm sometimes I -- I see them hurting because of that.

my grandfather had told me that you take the good from our culture, and what we do, and you take the good from the non-Indian culture, and you put it together, and -- to be successful. And if I want them to have success, I want them to be strong in their own language, their own culture, their own traditional practices. I want them to be strong in that.

NATSOT VENITA IN CLASSROOM

Hey, Cool! You guys...

FORREST CUCH
THE FIGHT TO KEEP LANGUAGE AND
CULTURE ALIVE ISN'T THE ONLY
CHALLENGE FACING THE UTE. WE
ALSO HAVE STRUGGLES WITH
GANGS, SUBSTANCE ABUSE,
VIOLENCE AND HEALTH CARE.
ALTHOUGH STATISTICS AND
PROBLEMS VARY FROM COMMUNITY
TO COMMUNITY, IT'S DIFFICULT TO
IGNORE THE OVERWHELMING
TRENDS. ONE IN THREE AMERICAN
INDIAN WOMEN WILL BE RAPED IN
THEIR LIFETIME. AND SUICIDE AND
EARLY DEATH RATES ARE HIGHER
THAN THE NATIONAL NORM.

MARIAH CUCH, EDITOR UTE BULLITEN
I see it around me. I know -- I have to call
my older brother constantly and tell him
who his friends passed away. He's 34.
You know?
Constantly watching the young people die.
That's -- that's not something that just
stops. And every time that comes to us,
it's difficult.

How would it be if -- if -- if we went to
prom, and within ten years half of those
boys were dead? That's the reality. How
would it be if you went to prom and half of
the girls, that were in beautiful prom
dresses, had been raped within the next
six months? How would it be if three-
fourths of them, in the next two years after
that, had babies? Those are very real
things in my world too. That's why I plead
with them, you know, as young people.
Treasure yourself.

SUPER:
SMOKING RIVER
POWWOW
MEEKER, CO

NATSOT: LOYA DRESSING HER
GRANDDAUGHTER

LOYA: There's no outfit alike. I wish
we could go to Wal-Mart for this
stuff. Wouldn't that be great?

POWWOW DANCING/ NATS

FORREST: AFTER NEARLY ONE-
HUNDRED-THIRTY YEARS THE UTE
ARE ONCE AGAIN DANCING NEAR THE
WHITE RIVER. THE PEOPLE OF
MEEKER AND A DELEGATION OF UTE
WORKED TOGETHER TO HOST THE
FIRST ANNUAL SMOKING RIVER
POWWOW. IT IS A CHANCE TO BEGIN
HEALING, A CHANCE TO REVISIT
SACRED GROUND AND BATTLE SITES.

BUT THE PAST ISN'T SO EASILY
BURRIED. HISTORY REMAINS ALIVE,
ESPECIALLY FOR A PEOPLE
CONNECTED TO THEIR ANCESTORS.
AND THE PAIN AND FEAR OF WAR
AND EXODUS FROM HOME STILL
REVERBERATE TODAY.

LOYA ARRUM, ELDER

Well our people said, "Don't tell, don't talk
about this." It was such a horrendous, had

such a horrendous effect physically, psychologically on them. We're still in that psychological trauma today when our, when I feared to drive off and come over into this valley. I had great fear of it.

Although we knew our ancestors loved this land and when they were taken out by gunpoint by the military, they cried out of this valley. They walked out crying. And so that's what I feel when I come over here. I feel that loss and that hurt.

But myself I want to tell what happened here. And that I guess would mean that I have to come back here and I'll do it for, for the children. And I guess we need to have a healing from this. And having a powwow is not really a healing. It just says we're here, we're dancing.

TO FLAG SONG

CLIFFORD DUNCAN

For hundreds of years, our people had been here. The remains of my people is here. So that's why. We find that it's always a good feeling to come back home, to our homeland. So I want to say this to my ancestors. I did not forget you. We did not forget you. We returned. We're back here. Now we're here.

LOYA ARRUM

We're still here in spite of genocide, in spite of being chased off the land, in spite of being moved by gunpoint and land being taken away. And the greater society not having any respect for our culture... We're still here...

MARIAH CUCH

We hold the blood of our families. And we are Ute. And that's us. That's us that drives a truck down the road. That's us that farms in the field. That's us that's in college. And that's what I see is a Ute, is all of the variety of life that began from our ancestral lands, from our home, began from that time, spreading out to today, and -- And we're so many things. We're everything.

VENITA TAVEAPONT

I think it encompasses a lot of things, and not just your own culture and your own traditions, but everything in this day and age is what being *Nuche* means to me. And hopefully that I have been walking in a path that my grandmothers have wanted me to do, and -- and my grandfather. And the people before them, what they wanted, or their grandchildren to do. I hope I'm walking in that path.

UNDERWRITER

We Shall Remain – A Native History of Utah is made possible by the George S. and Dolores Dore Eccles Foundation, William M. and Kerry Armstrong, WGBH, the R. Harold Burton Foundation, the Lawrence T. Dee - Janet T. Dee Foundation and the contributing members of KUED. Thank You!

CREDITS