

**RIGHTING HISTORY: REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION AT BATTLE ROCK**

by

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## ABSTRACT

Changes to commemorative signage in Port Orford, Oregon, United States, during 1998 and 1999 represent an emerging public acknowledgement of the removal by force of most of the indigenous peoples of Southwestern Oregon in the 1850s. A wide range of participants, including local area residents and nonresident members of Native American First Nations, negotiated changes to signage within a context of controversy. Hegemonic social memory institutionalized as local history and publicly displayed as text on a historical marker was challenged by an alternate version of the event commemorated: a conflict between Athapaskans and Euro-Americans in 1851 at the site now known as "Battle Rock." The alternate version is supported by oral tradition which is marginalized as a source of knowledge about the past while the official history has been privileged by repetitious inscription and incorporated commemorative ritual. Discussion includes the selectivity of public history and the creation of public memory through commemorative activity in which official and vernacular interests compete. A parallel is drawn between the remembrance and acknowledgement of events once suppressed and the remembrance and acknowledgement of marginalized indigenous American First Nations "forgotten" by the United States federal government. The Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue, building support for legislative acknowledgement of their tribal status, contributed positively to the production of signage text, an activity which enhanced both their visibility and the visibility and remembrance of their Athapaskan forebears.

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## INTRODUCTION

"We stand here today upon ground consecrated, not only in association of tenderest pioneer memories, but upon one of the most historic spots in our great state, if not in the nation. The story of Port Orford goes back far beyond the discovery of the Columbia River by Captain Gray. It is blended with fiction, with romance and with all the stern realities of human life."

--Opening sentences of "Address by Honorable  
Binger Hermann at Port Orford Homecoming and Pioneer  
Reunion," 1924

In southwest coastal Oregon, the American policy known as "Indian removal" contributed to the rapid dispossession of groups that had remained geographically isolated from colonization attempts before the 1850s [1]. Almost all the indigenous people who endured the violent impact of colonization were forced to move north, leaving their homeplaces to be renamed and reoccupied by those who began to resettle these green and rugged places as American expansion pushed into areas peripheral to the centers of gold mining in California and the Oregon interior. Taken by ship or marched overland, almost 2500 surviving refugees—most of them Athapaskan-speaking members of groups devastated from depredation and warfare—were to re-establish lives on land set aside along the Siletz River (Beckham 1996b: 137). The Coast Reservation, established in 1855 and later known as Siletz, was to provide sustenance through agriculture to a population that included speakers of many other languages as well as the predominating Athapaskan dialects (Zucker et al. 1983: 113; Viles 1991: 105).

The ensuing absence of indigenous peoples on the southwestern Oregon coast—a seeming disappearance from memory as well as landscape—has been reflected in a dearth of present-day public remembering and acknowledgement of the existence and experiences of these diverse peoples. However, during 1998 and 1999 significant changes were made to commemorative signage in and adjacent to a public park in the small coastal community of Port Orford, Oregon. A commemorative sign describing the founding of this town now includes a dedication "in memory of the Ancient People (Dene Tsut Dah)." This new phrase both acknowledges the Athapaskan language and recognizes the length of its speakers' presence on the land.

This change and others represent a shift in the public commemoration of historical events in southwestern Oregon. In this paper, I examine this shift and the tumultuous context in which it was made, highlighting the contribution of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue (CTLR) to the new signage. This contemporary group has Athapaskan ancestry and describes its members as consisting of "Native people who are Chetco, Tututin and other groups whose aboriginal territory is along the Lower Rogue River on the southern coast of Oregon" (CTLR 2000:1) [2]. I begin by commenting on the impact of American federal policy on the indigenous peoples in southwest Oregon and elsewhere and describe their efforts towards reinstatement of sovereignty. After introducing and discussing the

narrative that has underpinned the history of Port Orford's founding and formed the basis for the sign text that was, until recently, exhibited in Port Orford, I present a contradictory version of events that was used to challenge accepted local history. This challenge to historical re-presentation was embedded in another controversy, and to understand their interrelationship, I place both within a local political context. Narrowing my focus, I examine the background circumstances precipitating the removal of the existing commemorative sign in Port Orford and the plans for its replacement, pointing to the involvement of members of Native American First Nations. Looking even closer, I elaborate the complexities of production for each of four signs and their texts. Each was produced for commemorative public display and interprets historical events that occurred in Port Orford and elsewhere in southwestern Oregon in the 1850s. My discussion explores how knowledge of the past can be transferred not only by written means but also by ceremonial commemoration and an oral tradition of remembrance. I conclude that the changes in commemoration at this site and the process of change itself have enhanced recognition of the indigenous peoples of the past and of their descendents in the present.

The members of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue are among these descendents. This group is representative of many other tribal groups in the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere in the United States that have been politically, socially and economically marginalized by not being federally recognized as tribes [3]. Without legal recognition of their status, they are denied a government-to-government relationship with the United States. While the sovereignty of tribes was recognized in the 1832 Supreme Court ruling, *Worcester v. Georgia*, American federal policies of removal and assimilation ignored this legal precedent (Zucker et al. 1983: 69-71). In the Dawes Act of 1877, the assimilationist allotment policy provided for the division of reservations into family-held parcels (Carlson 1996: 27) [4]. The Coast Reservation had already been reduced in size and broken into two parts, one which was returned to the public domain and the other which became known as the Siletz Reservation; allotment further reduced land held in a federal trust relationship (Confederated Tribes of Siletz 1999: 4).

Assimilationist federal policy reached an extreme with the passage of legislation by the United States Congress in 1954 that attempted to extinguish the federal trust relationship altogether. This relationship had been defined and upheld by the Supreme Court in 1831 in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, which acknowledged the federal responsibility to assist tribes while still recognizing their sovereign rights (Zucker et al. 1983: 70). Although all western Oregon tribes were legislatively terminated in 1954, several tribes, including the amalgam now known as the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, have since had their legal status as tribes and their trust relationship with the United States federal government restored by congressional legislation [5].

Members of the CTLR are presently building support for the introduction of a bill in Congress, the "Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue Recognition Act" (CTLR n.d.c). This act provides for the recognition of the trust relationship between the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue and the United States government and would thus bestow legal status as a recognized tribal entity as well as eligibility to receive services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (United States 1996: 58211). During the spring and summer of 1999, members of the CTLR traveled up and down the Oregon coast seeking support from south coast communities and organizations for their bill.

One community from which members of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue requested support was the City of Port Orford, where they had participated in the drafting of the historical texts being produced for public display. During the lengthy and contentious process of text production, the visibility of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue was increased by newspaper reporting of meetings that they attended. During this time, tribal members also established social relationships with townspeople, and through working with Port Orford community members, the CTLR became known in the community. Their request in 1999 for support for their efforts toward federal recognition was granted in a letter signed by the City Administrator, who further supported them with this statement of local recognition: "The Port Orford Council applauds your efforts to preserve the Lower Rogue's culture and history, and recognizes the Tribes' influence within Southern Oregon's Coastal area" (Alexander 1999). While the subject of my investigation is the emerging public commemoration of the "removed" peoples of southernmost coastal Oregon, the emergence of this public recognition is coupled with an emerging public awareness that descendants of these people have not only survived but continue to exist in identifiable social and political units. Their non-recognized status represents a special case of non-remembering, one that is shared by other non-recognized tribal groups across the United States that are also struggling to assert their autonomous identities.

### THE BATTLE OF BATTLE ROCK

Before the enforcement of removal policy in southwest Oregon, there was an influx of Euro-American migrants in search of economic gain from gold mining and land acquisition. Even before treaties began to be negotiated by the federal government in the newly established Oregon Territory, the United States Congress passed the Donation Land Act in 1850, which offered generous land grants to Oregon settlers [6]. Conflict between these new *arrivées* and the indigenous inhabitants is recorded in the 19th century historical publication by Frances Fuller Victor, *The Early Indian Wars of Oregon* (1894). More recently, popular as well as scholarly accounts and interpretations of the "Rogue River Indian War" have also been published (Booth 1997, Beckham 1996a [1971], Schwartz 1997).

These accounts include the depiction of relations between members of established autonomous nations and members of an expanding new nation and are fraught with meaning and significance. Narratives of encounter, conflict and conquest may contain powerful symbols, such as the “pioneer” or the “Indians,” as Elizabeth Furniss (1999) has demonstrated in the context of a Canadian “frontier.” These stories may themselves become public symbols of the past and continue to inform the present. As such, historical narratives may commemorate the memories of some groups at the expense of “forgetting” those of others.

One such narrative is an account by one of nine men brought by steamship in June of 1851 to a site chosen for its promising location as a seaport with easy access to the Oregon interior’s gold country. The men were left to establish a camp while the steamship captain, who was behind the venture, went to get supplies. Although the captain, who had already visited this site, assured the men that the “Indians” were not dangerous, the men dragged a small cannon up to the top of a large rock where they had set up their camp. They were attacked the next morning, and successfully defended themselves with the help of the cannon. Hostilities continued, but the men escaped and eventually made their way to safety. This partial outline of the narrative of “the battle of Battle Rock” will be presented in more detail below. The full account, attributed to one of the nine men, John Kirkpatrick, describes the circumstances of their arrival, the details of the conflict, their successful escape and later events [7].

Kirkpatrick’s narrative of the 1851 landing and the ensuing conflict near the place now known as “Battle Rock” has become widely accepted as recording the beginning of settlement at Port Orford. The present-day community of about one thousand residents is centered along U.S. Highway 101, which runs through the business district [Appendix I]. Battle Rock is located at the southern end of the town—a rocky offshore ridge that becomes an island when the tide comes in [Appendix II]. The importance of this place to local residents is reflected by its preservation as the centerpiece of Battle Rock City Park. Since the 1851 arrival of the nine men at this place, the events that followed have constituted not only a recurring narrative but also a significant body of shared social memory that continues to be collectively formed and re-formed [8].

The narrative about the nine men left by the captain of the steamer *Sea Gull*, William Tichenor, has come to symbolize the founding of Port Orford. These events have been publicly re-presented in a short text inscribed on a massive wooden sign that stood at Battle Rock Park from the early 1950s until 1998 when it was removed during renovations adjacent to the park. The sign, constructed of thick planks and supporting posts, was similar to over one hundred official Oregon historical markers—dubbed “beaver boards” because of the beaver motif present on many. My focus in this paper is the recent change in the public display of local history at the site of the city park and the addition of a new historical display at an adjacent area, the “Wayfinding Point,” which was constructed in early 1998.

The Wayfinding Point, or "Wayfinder Point" as it is also referred to, is an architect-designed modification of an existing highway turn-out in Port Orford that also serves as the parking area for visitors to Battle Rock Park. The design, which resembles that of other Wayfinding Points constructed at similar scenic turn-outs along Oregon highways, includes a low, rock-faced wall along the common boundary with Battle Rock Park and a circular plaza that features several interpretive panels. Some of these signs provide maps of the area and describe local activities; others interpret natural or cultural history.

In 1998, the plan to include a sign at the Wayfinding Point that would interpret local history became a contentious issue in Port Orford complicated by the sudden removal of the wooden historical marker. Changes to the wording of the texts to appear on these two signs were negotiated in a context of intense controversy and challenge before the signs were finally installed in 1999. The contentious issues included change within the community, change adjacent to the site of Battle Rock Park, and change to the text itself. Those involved in rewording this text included members of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue.

Besides being displayed for nearly fifty years on the sign placed near the site of the "battle of Battle Rock," the narrative of the nine men left to establish the settlement that became Port Orford also persists in innumerable written accounts. Contemporary publications range from ubiquitous tourist brochures to a recent anthology of Oregon autobiography (Port Orford Chamber of Commerce n.d.; Beckham 1993). This anthology presents a portion of the account by John Kirkpatrick and notes that his story first appeared in the *Oregon Statesman* in 1851 (Beckham 1993:117). The story has been incorporated into many early and contemporary histories, both state and local (e.g., Walling 1884; Bancroft 1888; Victor 1894; Gaston 1912; Carey 1936; Peterson and Powers 1977; Masterson 1994; Schroeder 1999). An oft-quoted source is Orvil Dodge's 1898 *Pioneer History of Coos and Curry Counties*, which includes the perspectives of both John Kirkpatrick and William Tichenor, the captain of the ship which transported the men (1969: 22-50).

Dodge also edited and published a booklet in 1904 devoted to the story, adding information about a gold mine of which he had just become manager and secretary (Webber and Webber 1992:7). The title page reads

*The Heroes of Battle Rock, or The Miners' Reward. A Short Story of Thrilling Interest. How a Small Canon [sic] Done its Work. Port Orford, the Scene of the Great Tragedy. A Desperate Encounter of Nine White Men with Three Hundred Indians. Miraculous Escape After Untold Hardships. HISTORICALLY TRUE. Savages Subdued and Rich Gold Mines Discovered. . . .* (reprinted in Webber and Webber 1992:22)

The Oregon authors of a self-published annotated reprint, Bert Webber and Margie Webber, assert that Dodge "brought out the booklet as a promotional piece to attract attention to this mining

venture" (1992:7). In their intriguing but insufficiently referenced publication, Webber and Webber present a few minor differences of details between versions, including the one printed in the *Oregon Statesman* that appeared almost immediately after the events occurred. However, there was extensive coverage of these events in other newspapers, one of which incorporated excerpts from a journal found near the landing site and another which referred to a letter, also found near the site, written by one of the nine men [9]. Webber and Webber remark that,

[n]ow over one hundred and forty years later, accounts of the incident at Battle Rock have appeared in many books, magazines and newspapers. It depends upon the 'thrust' the particular writer has in mind for his story, as well as how much red pencil an editor takes to it, as to how much of the original detail survives. (1992:13)

The "thrust" of early narrators appears to have been to establish the historical veracity and importance of their experiences. Kirkpatrick's account in Dodge's 1898 history states, "When I look back over this whole affair I think you will agree with me that, take it all in all, the history of the Port Orford expedition is worthy of a place in the history of the early settlements" (Dodge 1969: 49). Kirkpatrick's account concludes, "My task is done, and I claim no other merit for these recollections than that of truth. J.M. Kirkpatrick, Oro Blanco, Arizona, Nov. 29, 1897" (Dodge 1969: 50). Indeed, red pencil aside, these events by virtue of their continual repetition in print have become institutionalized as the official history of the founding of Port Orford.

The entire narrative as related by Kirkpatrick in Dodge's *Pioneer History of Coos and Curry Counties* is complex, and the Battle Rock story is but one episode. Kirkpatrick recorded how he had heard while in Portland of Captain Tichenor's plan to make a settlement at a place to the south named Port Orford. Kirkpatrick was so "infatuated with the prospect" that he gathered together eight other men for the landing party (Dodge 1969: 33). Despite repeated assurances from the Captain that there was no danger from the "Indians," Kirkpatrick insisted on being provided with arms. The nine men were subsequently left by Captain Tichenor at their destination with the assurance of the captain that, in fourteen days, the steamship would return with "a better supply of arms and more men to aid him in his enterprise" of "mak[ing] a settlement, lay[ing] out a town and build[ing] a road into the gold diggings in Southern Oregon" (Dodge 1969: 35, 33). The men made their camp on the top of the rock that was to be named "Battle Rock," hauling a cannon up with them. The "Indians," while appearing to be friendly at first, attacked the men the next morning and a battle ensued in which the cannon was discharged; altogether there were twenty counted as killed. The nine men survived, although two were injured. A talk took place with "the big chief" in which he was "made to understand that in fourteen days more the steamer would return" and take the men away (Dodge 1969: 39). Hostilities again erupted when the ship did not return on schedule, but the group of nine were able to safely leave, eventually making their way to a pioneer settlement to the north.

The following details, also from Kirkpatrick's account as presented in Dodge (1969), are often omitted from shortened versions of the events. The ship's captain had been unable to return as promised, and a concerned friend of Kirkpatrick arranged for the steamer *Columbia* to stop in at Port Orford to bring the men back to Portland [10]. The ship arrived the day after the nine men had left Battle Rock, and those who went ashore found what they believed were the human remains of Captain Tichenor's men. They also found the writings left behind by Kirkpatrick and were convinced all the men had been killed. The steamer left with Kirkpatrick's account, which was published in an Oregon newspaper immediately upon the arrival of the ship in Portland [11].

In 1997 a vastly different version of these events came to light in written form in a scholarly and meticulously researched history, *The Rogue River Indian War and Its Aftermath, 1850-1980* by historian E. A. Schwartz. Schwartz cites a startling letter that was later used by those in Port Orford wanting to change the signage in the town's park. The letter was written by Anson Dart, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Oregon Territory in 1851 until his resignation in 1853. Although the letter was printed in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1873, it is dated October 22, 1871 and addressed to the Chairman of the Board of Indian Commissioners in Washington. In the letter, Dart described how he was dispatched to Port Orford in June of 1851 to "settle the difficulties arising from an 'Indian massacre of an entire white settlement' " (Dart 1873). Instead, he learned after his arrival at Port Orford that "it was an atrocious massacre of peaceable and friendly Indians" (Dart 1873). Dart's letter reports his findings, most of which he stated were obtained from two unnamed members of the "exploring party" taken prisoner but released upon news of his arrival. Dart presumably obtained the rest of his information with the help of the interpreters he mentioned as accompanying him.

According to Dart, about thirty "Indians" arrived the day a ship landed sixty or more men from California and helped to unload it, even assisting in taking one of two cannons up "to the top of a large rock, standing three sides in the water." After unloading the ship the "Indians" were "ordered" to go up the rock later to be paid, instead they were fired upon by the cannon, with twenty-two killed. The next morning, more than two hundred "Indians" appeared and "exhibited unmistakable signs of hostilities"; the alarmed "Californian adventurers" departed, leaving behind a party of eight men who had been dispatched to find a way to the interior when the ship first landed (Dart 1873). Dart's letter continues with a description of the activities of the eight men, who, unsuccessful in finding an inland pass, instead became embroiled in a violent confrontation with people on the Coquille River while trying to make their way back to the coast. According to Dart, this confrontation was precipitated by the helpful gesture of a chief which "was construed by one of the white men as unfriendly." The two men Dart interviewed had escaped with their lives and later been captured six miles from Port Orford.

Schwartz draws attention to the differences in Dart's and Kirkpatrick's versions of events following the arrival of Captain Tichenor and his party:

[g]arbled though his account was, [Dart] was clear about the heart of the matter concerning the "battle" of what would soon be known as Battle Rock; the cause was not an Indian effort to drive off the foreigners, . . . but rather a deliberate and unprovoked attack by the foreigners. (1997: 35)

As well as noting that Dart's account was "somewhat garbled" and written more than twenty years after the events, Schwartz points out that Dart had confused the travels of the men who left Battle Rock with those on a later expedition (1997: 35). Schwartz nonetheless asserts there is support for Dart's version of events despite problems with the account itself. Kirkpatrick described in his narrative how Captain Tichenor had insisted that there was no danger from the local indigenous people, " 'that he had been ashore among them many times and they were perfectly friendly' " (Schwartz 1997: 35). According to Schwartz, "[t]he experienced Captain Tichenor did not expect the people at Port Orford to oppose his town-building scheme" (1997: 43). By using Dart's letter as a credible historical document and by juxtaposing it to Kirkpatrick's story, Schwartz was introducing a new and provocative ingredient to the accepted history of the establishment of Port Orford.

Once the conflicting version was presented to the populace of Port Orford in 1998, competition over notions of historical truth contributed to a deep rift between the townspeople, who were at that time also engaged in a struggle over renovation of the parking area overlooking Battle Rock—the construction of the "Wayfinder Point." The ensuing competition between versions of the Battle Rock story represents a struggle to maintain a hegemonic domination of social memory by the public representation and commemoration of pioneer bravery and conquest. In this struggle, competing versions were championed by segments of the populace in competition not only over the veracity of a particular version, but also for what that version symbolized. All of these struggles were publicly exacerbated by the removal of the imposing historical marker that had solidly stood in the park at Battle Rock since the early 1950s.

## METHODS

My interpretation of the process and significance of changes in the public representation of history associated with Battle Rock is based on two research techniques. To answer the question, what are the changes being made in signage at Battle Rock Park and how can they be understood, I combined archival research and interviews. I also stayed in Port Orford on several occasions during July and August 1999 and used my life-long experience as a part-time resident of Curry County, Oregon, where Port Orford is located [12]. I began with little knowledge of Port Orford other than as a place I drove

through when taking the coastal route to my usual destination further south near Brookings, where my grandparents built a tiny cabin in the late 1920s and where I was based during my field research [13].

For this thesis, I reviewed newspaper coverage of local and metropolitan newspapers which printed letters to the editor, editorials and articles about the controversy over the building of the Wayfinding Point adjacent to Battle Rock City Park and the changes to sign text [14]. I also reviewed early and contemporary historical works to ascertain how events at Battle Rock have been incorporated into written history. I was not able to examine certain materials, such as videotaped and audiotaped meetings and news coverage.

My second method of research was to conduct interviews. Potential interviewees were identified from names in newspaper reports of the Battle Rock controversy [15]. Names of other potential interview subjects were obtained by asking interviewees if they knew of others who might be interested in participating. Interviews were unstructured and conversational, and I generally asked participants to talk about their involvement in the replacement or rewording of various signs or about their local knowledge as residents of Port Orford. I spoke with twenty-eight persons, sixteen men and twelve women [16]. Interview subjects included persons representing various levels of government or group action [17]. I also included persons from both federally recognized and unrecognized tribes: the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue. In this thesis, when I have used quotations without a citation, the person quoted was a participant in my study.

## CONTROVERSY

"I bet you wouldn't get one person who'd lived here  
all our lives to agree to any new version."

--Comment made at Port Orford Parks  
Commission Meeting, June 23, 1998

Battle Rock City Park, formerly known as Battle Rock State Park before being transferred to city jurisdiction, boasts a few picnic tables and benches nestled into spots protected from incessant winds or perched on the rolling bluff that descends, rather steeply in some places, to the beach. The park entrance is directly off U.S. Highway 101, which spans the American West from north to south linking small Oregonian coastal and inland settlements with larger metropolitan centers. Before the removal of the historical marker in 1998, travelers, perhaps attracted to this impressively massive wooden sign visible from the highway, could park their vehicles, visit the Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center at the far end of the generous parking lot, or simply take in the dramatic view. From the park, there extends a panorama of water, land and sky, with Battle Rock the most prominent among a scattering of jagged rocks.

The sign exhibited a short text routed into it in large capital letters [Appendix III a]. This text dedicated Battle Rock Park to the explorers and pioneers “who prepared the way for the settlement of the southern Oregon coast,” explained the naming of the town, and presented the story of the conflict at “Battle Rock”: the landing of nine men by sea; attack and besiegement by “Indians”; escape; and the later return with reinforcements by the ship’s captain to establish the settlement. This public presentation of local history stood unchallenged as part of the park landscape for decades before it was chain-sawed down and removed during the 1998 dispute over renovation of the parking area to accommodate the Wayfinding Point. Plans for the park called for removal of the sign, and, according to a person interviewed for this study, the sign was taken down by the project contractor with the help of a volunteer. The words were later obliterated by being routed over and planed away.

One outcome of the struggle over competing versions of local history in Port Orford is the refurbished sign that eventually replaced the original historical marker in 1999. While closely resembling it in form, size and placement, this new marker is inscribed with a re-worded text that most notably dedicates the park in memory of the “Ancient People (Dene Tsut Dah) and the Pioneer Founders” of the townsite [Appendix III b]. Another outcome is a completely new sign installed in December 1999 at the renovated area adjacent to Battle Rock Park, the “Wayfinder Point” [Appendix III c]. This sign, or “interpretive panel,” is smaller but more elaborate than the other, being constructed of a more complex and detailed text printed over a graphic image. While acknowledging the landing of the nine men, the conflict between them and the local residents, and the establishment of a town, this sign also presents information about the forced relocation of the aboriginal peoples.

The removal of the original historical marker further provoked some members of the public already furious that changes to the parking and viewing area were being made by construction of a wall along the shared boundary of Battle Rock Park and the new Wayfinding Point. Many had assumed the site was protected from such change by the halting a few years earlier of another project that would have altered the view. Some residents seem to have been caught off guard when construction began for the Wayfinding Point even though it had been the subject of newspaper stories and local meetings since early 1997.

On February 12, 1997, the front page of the *Port Orford News* had announced, “Wayfinding Point coming in Port Orford.” The article describes “wayfinding points” as

places where travelers on Highway 101 can pull off to get information on things to see and do in the local area and attractions coming up on the way to the next wayfinding point. It offers a panoramic view of the ocean and attractive, low rock walls and interpretive signs that do not obstruct the view.

The large parking area adjacent to Battle Rock City Park was the favored location for such a place. This was also the area used by local residents for parking to watch the breakers and where older people “used

to go . . . and open their mail and look out at the ocean” while sitting in their cars. As one resident described, people “enjoyed just parking and watching from that viewpoint [what] you can see—a little bit of the dock, you know, you can’t see the port, but you can see the jetty, and you can see the boats going out from the dock. And you can see the surf and everything.” Another resident described a Sunday routine of coming in to town, going to Battle Rock, sitting in the car reading the newspaper and having a cup of coffee.

The groundbreaking for the construction of a wall defining the Wayfinder Point had been on February 18, 1998. By the end of March, letters to the editor both for and against the wall began to appear in the local primary newspaper, and a free weekly newspaper identified the Wayfinder site construction as the “number one controversy in Port Orford” (Kramer 1998a: 1). Opponents initiated an action against the City over the changed use of the site (Kramer 1998c: 1). The *Port Orford News* on April 1, 1999 printed a front-page article reporting that a casual remark “that some one should just bomb the wall” resulted in a bomb scare at the Visitor Center, albeit two weeks after the remark was actually made. Paint was thrown on part of the unfinished wall in early April, and more vandalism occurred in May.

Within a month after the start of construction, the original historic marker was removed. The first question asked at a public meeting soon after and reported on in the *Port Orford News* of March 25, 1998 was what was to happen to the sign from Battle Rock City Park. The project manager for the Wayfinder, a member of a local community group, the “Community Resource Team,” was reported as saying that it “would be recycled and put back when the project was completed.” On May 26, 1998, the proposed text for a new Battle Rock historical marker was read out at a Parks Commission meeting. According to front-page newspaper coverage of this meeting in the *Port Orford News* on June 3, 1998, when asked what had happened to the old sign, the Parks Chair responded that it had been taken to a city storage yard and the engraved lettering had been “routed and or [sic] planed off.” He then read from a “plan of action for the parks” that called for the replacement of the old sign by “several smaller plaque type signs.”

The text proposed for the new historical marker incorporated the information published in 1997 by E.A. Schwartz in *The Rogue River Indian War and Its Aftermath*. Two conflicting versions of the “battle” of Battle Rock were to be presented—one based on Indian Superintendent Anson Dart’s letter and the other based on, but with some noticeable change to, the version on the removed sign. As the June 3, 1998 *Port Orford News* coverage of the meeting reported, the Chair explained that with two versions “the reader is left to make up their own mind.” The next speaker at the meeting responded that “the historical wording had been around for forty years” and asserted, “Most people have accepted that as the towns [sic] history.” Shouting and other outbursts from the audience punctuated the meeting. One

person spoke out, saying that "many tourists had asked her why there were no relics or monuments to the original Native Americans in the area" and that she "set out to research the history and came up with a different story" from a *San Francisco Chronicle* from the 1870s. This was the same source that Schwartz had cited. Her statement about another version provoked further outbursts as members of the public attending the meeting "got embroiled in the difference between the two versions of the Battle Rock Story" (*Port Orford News* June 3, 1998: 1).

A one-page document, "Interpretive Signs at Battle Rock Park – an Update" dated May 27, 1998, the day after the meeting of the Parks Commission, was issued by the Port Orford Area Community Resource Team (CRT) and presumably circulated to the public. It explained that replacement of the old sign was always part of the Wayfinder project and that new signs would tell a "historically more accurate version of what happened in 1851 at Battle Rock." According to the CRT update,

[i]nvestigation into the historical accounts of Battle Rock has turned up two versions of the "battle". [sic] One of course is the well known story on the old sign.

However, a different story was told by Anson Dart, Commissioner for Indian Affairs for the whole of the Oregon territory, who arrived here shortly after the "battle" to make treaties with the local Native People. . . . This account is discussed in historian E. A. Schwartz's book *The Rogue River Indian War and Its Aftermath, 1850-1980*.

The book review was not the first time the existence of an alternate version to the accepted history had been brought to the attention of the people of Port Orford. Robert Kentta, Cultural Resources Protection Specialist for the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, had mentioned Schwartz's book and the letter by Dart in a public lecture given in Port Orford in July 1997 (Kentta 1997). He also pointed to corroboration of Dart's report by a story passed down to a member of the Coquille tribe [18]. In August, a review of Schwartz's book appeared in the *Point Orford Heritage Society News*; the reviewer noted that a letter written by Anson Dart had been discovered that "tells a different story of the 'battle' of Battle Rock" (Weaver 1997).

The next meeting of the Parks Commission on June 23, 1998 has been described in the Port Orford Parks Commission Minutes as a "free for all," with shouting, "uproar," and "rude comments." Besides commissioners, about thirty members of the public attended, including representatives from the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue and the Oregon Historical Marker Committee. The Historical Marker Committee became involved because the old wooden sign had at one time officially been part of a network of similar markers placed along Oregon State highways. Representatives from this committee had been working with members of the Community Resource Team who had initiated the creation of text for an "interpretive panel." This panel was to be installed near to but separate from a cluster of other information panels to be placed at the new Wayfinder Point and, subject to the Committee's approval,

was to be part of the Oregon Historical Marker Program. According to one person interviewed, the text of this new interpretive panel was to have provided “balance” to the text on the wooden marker already on the site [19]. An alcove in the wall bordering the Wayfinder Point had been designed to hold this new historical marker.

According to front-page newspaper coverage in the *Port Orford News* of July 1, 1998, at issue in the June 23 Parks Commission meeting was the proposed text for a new official historical marker that would display the two opposing versions of events at Battle Rock. One outspoken person at the meeting asserted that the old sign belonged back at the “old site” at the park and asked, “Why can’t we have our community sign back?” (Port Orford Parks Commission 1998a: 4, 6). Another questioned if the old sign could be reused. A person who spoke at the previous Parks Commission meeting, where she had brought up finding Dart’s story in a newspaper, stated that she was among those who had raised objections to the old sign and that there was now “an opportunity to present two sides”; she also asserted that the Fort near Battle Rock had been a “concentration camp”(Port Orford Parks Commission 1998a: 3). There were also questions asking why the Siletz Tribe had had input and been included as advisors on the new text. The meeting became so unruly that the acting secretary noted in the minutes that she was unable to record all the comments being made; responses to these questions were not recorded (Port Orford Parks Commission 1998a: 8).

In the end, the proposal for a new historical marker presenting opposing versions of events at Battle Rock proved unsuccessful. One influential voice against the incorporation of information from Anson Dart’s report into the text of the new historical marker was that of John Quick—author and descendent of Captain Tichenor—who had lived in Port Orford during his childhood [20]. Quick’s adamant and emotional opposition is expressed in a letter printed on the front page of the *Port Orford News* on June 24, 1998. In his letter, Quick aired his grievances toward the Travel Information Council, which funds the activities of the Historical Marker Committee. Pointing out inaccuracies in their “proposed text for the ‘official’ history of the founding of the town,” and presenting his own history “based on family journal records and other historical sources,” he criticized the scholarship of the members of the Historical Marker Committee and asserted that he “would resist any effort that impugned the integrity or defamed the character of Oregonian pioneer families” (Quick 1998: 5). Quick insisted that,

[a]ccording to both written records and the oral history of my family and other pioneer families, there is no way to contradict the account of the nine men who were put ashore at what was later to be called Battle Rock on the morning of June 9, 1851. (1998:5)

He further reiterated, "No record of the contradictory story by Anson Dart survives in our family or in other pioneer families" (Quick 1998: 5). Ironically, Quick is related to Anson Dart by marriage; Dart's son married Captain Tichenor's eldest daughter.

Lacking community agreement on what was a historically accurate version of the story, the Historical Marker Committee eventually stepped out of the process. The historical panel that was to be installed as part of the Wayfinder Point as an official state historical marker was eliminated. However, the community impetus behind a rewritten public presentation of local history remained undiminished. Efforts to re-present history were redirected toward a "cultural" panel planned for the Wayfinder. This sign was to provide information about the indigenous people of the area and was to be placed within the cluster of informational panels at the Wayfinder Point rather than standing alone. The wording of the text for this sign also became an issue. It was in the process of the re-crafting and replacement of the original historical marker and the creation of this "cultural interpretive panel" that public representation of history in Port Orford shifted to include acknowledgement of the dispossession of indigenous peoples.

#### LOCAL POLITICAL CONTEXT

To understand the depth of the disagreement over how history was to be re-presented to the public in Port Orford, it is necessary to elaborate larger issues within which this disagreement was embedded and to locate these issues within the context of local Port Orford political activity. When the wall began to be constructed along the periphery of the parking area for Battle Rock City Park in early 1998, the controversy I have briefly described above erupted. Although the renovations had been publicly announced and opportunities provided for community input, the planning process had not involved all community members, and an outspoken group formed that opposed the completion of the project. Many continued to object to the height of the wall even after it was lowered. City Council meetings were packed with over a hundred citizens as opinions both for and against the project were heatedly exchanged. Letters to the editor filled pages in the primary local newspaper, and the controversy was reported in the local metropolitan newspaper, the *World*, on May 19, 1998 under the headline "Battle Rock Park site for modern-day skirmish." Some proponents admired the wall's rockwork or pointed to its practicality for seating or its potential to attract tourists. Others, however, experienced the wall as an impediment to their customary enjoyment of the view. The controversy over the removal and proposed replacement of the wooden historical marker was embedded in this larger conflict about the wall. According to one interviewee who is active in the community, a city parks master plan completed in 1997 and adopted by the city council did include the removal of the old sign, which had been identified by the planner as offensive [21]. The renovations adjacent to the park provided the opportunity to remove it.

Efforts towards the construction of the Wayfinder Point in Port Orford can be placed in a broader context of an extremely focused planning effort directed toward community change. Both the Wayfinder project and the sign removal had been facilitated by a community action group, the Community Resource Team (CRT), first formed as the "Community Response Team." The scope of Community Resource Team activities was ambitious and extensive. The CRT had originated from a non-profit organization founded by the Oregon State Legislature and the Oregon Economic Development Department "to promote rural economic development in Oregon" (Port Orford Community Response Team 1996a: 1). During 1995 and 1996 the non-profit organization facilitated a "strategic planning process" in Port Orford, helping to organize a "community response team," as it did in other places throughout the state. The collaboration of people "representing a variety of business, government, and civic interests" with the Strategic Planner and Community Development Coordinator from the non-profit organization resulted in the "Port Orford, Oregon: From Vision to Action, Strategic Plan for Community and Economic Development."

Besides business, workforce and infrastructure goals, the "action agenda" included "quality of life goals." The Strategic Plan for July 1996, for example, included a "Youth Quality of Life Goal" and a "Beautification Quality of Life Goal" (Port Orford Oregon Community Response Team 1996 b: 1). Aesthetic improvement was a significant concern of the Community Resource Team. Beautification projects included obtaining the Wayfinder Point, administering a grant for improvements along Highway 101 aimed at slowing traffic speed through the town, and working with the state Department of Transportation towards having Highway 101 awarded status as a "National Scenic Byway" (Port Orford Area Community Resource Team 1997: 2).

Judging by the Port Orford Area Community Resource Team Annual Report for July 1996 to July 1997, members of the CRT were actively forging political relationships at county, regional, state and federal levels [22]. At the city level, the CRT reported regularly to the city council. At the council meeting on July 7, 1997, a member of the CRT reported the following as "some of the important projects in the works" for the year: the Wayfinding Point, entrance signs to the city, Highway 101 beautification project, municipal building landscaping, urban forest plan, National Scenic Byway, Battle Rock Park, and community building project (Port Orford City Council 1997: n.p.).

The Port Orford, Oregon, Community Response Team's detailed plan, "Port Orford, Oregon, From Vision to Action, Strategic Action Plan for Community and Economic Development" (1996a) included a comprehensive "Community Vision" for the year 2010. The following excerpts are from this plan:

Port Orford in the year 2010 is a community that is progressive, while at the same time maintaining its rich sense of history and culture. The community is environmentally aware and protects its view scape and watershed. It has achieved a balance of economic growth and prosperity without major growth in population, enabling young people to stay and enjoy fulfilling work. It is a place where people are responsible and proud of themselves and of their town . . . .

Many successful location-independent entrepreneurs, artists, small businesses (including consultants) have set up their studios and shops in the community. The Port Orford area is established as a center for artists and artisans working in many media . . . .

The town has attractive, clean residential areas, with a range of affordable housing. It is a place where pride in property means owners maintain their own property, and help the neighbors as well. Neighborhoods not up to par are being cleaned up and the quality of housing is being upgraded, with most substandard homes eliminated or improved . . . .

Some Port Orford citizens took umbrage with this vision for their community. The passage concerning elimination of substandard housing, for example, was interpreted to mean, as one interviewee expressed, that “poor people would be thrown out of their houses.” When some citizens became aware of the vision plan, they were shocked at what had been planned by a recently created group—one that may have bypassed long-standing established networks of community action. It appears that many residents who may have been accustomed to wielding power within the community were not among those intensively involved in the CRT. According to an interviewee who was active in the CRT, “a lot of people that did a lot of the work” did live out of town. Growing opposition to the Community Resource Team and the projects they advocated is reflected in letters to the editor and newspaper coverage of various public meetings. Criticisms included CRT reliance on government grants with unknown strings attached, increased involvement with government bureaucracy, irregularities in decision making at CRT meetings, and decision making by people not living in Port Orford or who did not come from there—“outsiders” and “newcomers.”

Membership in the Community Resource Team was open to anyone living in a region that extended both north and south of Port Orford. The June 11, 1998 CRT meeting was attended by over 100 persons, among them disgruntled opponents. With open membership, these opponents were able to assert their dissatisfaction by calling for a vote to dissolve the CRT; with 55 votes against 20, the Community Resource Team was effectively disbanded. As one person commented in the discussion prior to voting, Port Orford “already had many diverse civic groups that good work could be done through” (*Port Orford News* June 17, 1998:1).

In a newspaper editorial following the CRT meeting, the editor of the *Port Orford News* included among his reflections that he had arrived at a place of community respect:

[t]his was a community trying to iron out its' [sic] problems and conflicts not a loud and noisy mob at a sporting event. Respect for the CRT core people who I believe, just like everyone else, had only positive intentions and then found themselves embroiled in the middle of a raging turmoil. I also have respect for the citizens who didn't want to have to attend a lot of meetings but found out that community is an experience that you have to show up for if you want to have any chance of guiding your own destiny. (Stoler 1998)

Indeed, the structure of the Community Resource Team re-routed the making of community from simply being somewhere in the community to being somewhere where you had to "show up." An unstated, but perhaps underlying, discomfiture that opponents to the Community Response Team may have experienced is that "community-making" was being resituated away from day-to-day social encounters based on generations of shared knowledge and beliefs. Stripped of their accustomed social and political relations, these citizens would have had to reestablish their positions of power within what was disparaged as a government-facilitated, bureaucratically-structured organization that required attendance at meetings and participation in committees.

It appears that a number of these citizens who had not been significantly involved with the CRT coalesced in adamant opposition to the Wayfinder construction and to the changes being proposed for the new historical marker that included Dart's version of events at Battle Rock, both project being promoted by the CRT. Restoration of the site and the return of the old wooden sign were thus conflated and embraced by those expressing opposition to an agenda of planned community change. But more than just changes to their landmark and to their history were at stake. Dependence on government grants with unknown strings attached would surely threaten their prized independence and local autonomy. The struggle was not only over a version of the past that was acceptable to the community; it erupted over an acceptable version of the future. The controversy over Battle Rock was not just about the signs, as one person explained to me, "It was much more complex than that. I wish it was about the signs."

## INVOLVEMENT OF AMERICAN FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

In October of 1996, the Port Orford City Council had adopted the Community Resource Teams's Strategic Plan as the Community and Economic Development Plan for the City (Port Orford Area Community Resource Team 1997: 1). The CRT 1996-1997 Annual Report listed four projects of "Highest Priority." Highway 101 "Beautification," which specified the Wayfinding Point, was listed third. An entire page of the four-page report listed beautification projects. One project reported on is Battle Rock Park, where new benches and tables were installed by a work party from the "Beautification Project Committee" working with Parks Commission volunteers. A second project was the Wayfinding Point:

[t]he Beautification Project Committee discovered the possibility of persuading the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to site their south coast Wayfinding Point in Port Orford. The committee mobilized the City and organizations to write 14 letters to ODOT in support of a Port Orford Wayfinding Point. ODOT has committed approximately \$200,000 to building the Wayfinding Point in Battle Rock Park. Several community meetings have been held to give ample opportunity for community input on the design. Work is continuing on developing interpretive signs with community input. (Port Orford Area Community Resource Team 1997: 2)

One of the fourteen groups contacted for a letter of support was the Confederated Tribes of Siletz. This tribal group of over two thousand members is centered about one hundred and fifty miles to the north of Port Orford and includes members who are the descendants of those who survived expulsion from southwest Oregon. Siletz, after being administratively terminated as a tribe by federal legislation in 1954, was the second tribe in the United States to regain its legal status as a tribe, re-establishing a government-to-government relationship. Since restoration in 1977, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz have had a land base of 3,660 acres re-established as a reservation (Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians n.d.). They are now engaged in various economic ventures including a casino and convention center, and have offices in Portland, Salem, and Springfield, Oregon as well as a central office at Siletz (Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians n.d.). Besides directly administering Department of Interior and Indian Health Service programs, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz sponsor a number of public events and celebrations (Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians n.d.). They are also active in protecting cultural resources.

In the early 1990s, Siletz had been contacted by a resident of Port Orford concerned that an effort was mobilizing to reconstruct Fort Orford—just north of Battle Rock—as a tourist attraction. This fort had been built in 1851 for the protection of the new colony. The concerned resident asked for the name of someone to come to Port Orford and talk to the people in town, explaining that she didn't think rebuilding the fort was a good idea, that it was "just memorializing more . . . of the conflict story." She was given the name of Agnes Pilgrim, a Takelma elder then living in California. Mrs. Pilgrim agreed to speak, and a lecture series—the first of two—was organized.

With established relations between Siletz and members of the Port Orford community, the tribe was also contacted by the planner hired by the City of Port Orford to develop a master plan for the City's parks and recreation areas. According to an interviewee who is a member of the Siletz Tribe, a discussion was held between him and the planner about "different ways the tribe could help with interpretation in the area and possibly be a presence there." The tribal member was again contacted soon after and informed that funding was approved for citing a Wayfinder Point at Pistol River, south of Port Orford; he was asked to write a letter of support for the project to be moved to Port Orford. The letter

was subsequently drafted, approved by the Tribal Council, and sent to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), which was funding the project.

The company that was awarded the contract from ODOT to craft the various interpretive panels to be installed at the Wayfinder Point subsequently contacted the same Siletz tribal member. He did not respond immediately with draft text. As he said,

The next thing I knew there was all these public meetings going on in the city there, and I was just hearing rumors. . . . I did attend one city meeting down there. It wasn't one of the hot, heated ones, but I heard about some [meetings where] people were being brutal to each other, not being very kind or respectful. So, what I did at that point was pretty much just back away. I said, these people need to figure out what they want, what they're going to promote, before I'm involved. . . . I'm not going to force my opinion in there. If they're ready to accept the Tribe's perspective, and then we're here to give it. But I'm not going to insist, force my way in there and have all kinds of more bitter feelings about it. So I pretty much backed away at that point.

While the Siletz tribal member may have been reluctant to enter the fray, members of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue were not. The CTRLR is presently seeking federal recognition and actively approaching community and political organizations for support in this endeavor [23]. They are descended from people who lived along the lower Rogue River watershed, and while most of these aboriginal people were relocated to Siletz or Grand Ronde reservations in the 1850s, members of the CTRLR include descendants of aboriginal women who were married to soldiers and settlers and thus did not go to the reservations (CTRLR n.d a) [24]. They have approximately 150 members, many of whom are scattered throughout Oregon. Without federal acknowledgement, they cannot have land held in trust by the federal government as a reservation, nor are they eligible for health and housing benefits provided to members of recognized tribes.

Early in the controversy over the construction of the Wayfinder Point, members of the CTRLR were contacted by opponents to changes in the site who brought it to their attention that there were middens that might be disturbed by excavation. One interviewee remarked that people "found themselves in really odd positions." It may be that people opposed to the Wayfinder, who may also have been opposed to removal of the sign, used efforts to protect the midden as a tactic to stall or halt construction. By involving Native Americans and asserting support for protection of middens, they were not in a position to support signage publicly criticized as offensive to Native Americans.

Members of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue seem to have recognized their involvement as an opportunity to raise their profile in an area where the Siletz Tribe has had considerable influence. The public lecture series organized for Port Orford had included a talk by Siletz member Robert Kentta, who also spoke on Siletz history at a second lecture series in Port Orford in 1997, part of Southwestern Oregon Community College's Native American Presence Series. The Confederated Tribes

of Siletz Indians, as a partner in a cooperating agreement with state and federal agencies and the Coquille Indian Tribe, have also established a presence at the Cape Blanco Lighthouse, north of Port Orford.

During the 1998 Wayfinder controversy, members of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue attended Parks Commission meetings and initiated relationships with City officials. They became actively involved in the drafting of acceptable text for the new interpretive panel. Through this involvement, they gained significant prominence from local newspaper coverage. A photograph taken at the August 26, 1998 Parks Commission meeting, for example, appeared on the front page of the *Port Orford News* on September 2, 1998 and shows three persons identified as members of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue holding the graphic that they requested be included with the text of the "historical marker." Newspaper reports publicized their new name, recently changed from the United Chetco-Toootoney Tribes, and presented them as authoritative and active participants in resolving a community struggle.

#### RESOLUTION OF THE SIGN TEXTS

On August 3, 1998, the Parks Commission Chair reported to the City Council that the Historical Marker Committee was going to meet on August 7 and needed to know what the City was going to do about the sign (Kramer 1998b: 16). The proposed version incorporating Indian Superintendent Dart's version of events at Battle Rock was too controversial within the community of Port Orford for approval as an official Oregon Historical Marker. It was decided to advertise for volunteers to serve on a committee to advise City Council on wording. This committee was to "use the assistance of a variety of resources including Native Americans, historians, local historians and local citizens" (Kramer 1998b: 16). A motion was also passed to continue working with the Oregon Travel Information Council to create the marker. The actual advertisement, printed in the *Port Orford News* on August 12, 1998, called for volunteers for a committee "for research and wording of the new Battle Rock Historical Sign to be located in Battle Rock Park."

Before the next meeting of the Port Orford Parks Commission on August 26, 1998, the dispute between opponents of the Wayfinder construction and the City of Port Orford came to a decisive point when a mediated settlement was reached on August 21. As explained in an article in *Port Orford Today!* dated August 27, 1998, the settlement included restoration of the parking area to a state acceptable to those against the project—raising the level of asphalt to provide an unimpeded view over the new wall (Kramer 1998c: 1). Another part of this mediation provided for one of the major opponents to be included on the committee set up to work on the wording of the new cultural sign. He and two others on this committee were to "work on the wording of both the historical wooden sign as well as the cultural sign, which will be located in the plaza area of the wayfinder" (Kramer 1998c: 1).

By August 26, text for both signs had been produced. According to the Parks Commission minutes, the wording for the historical marker had been submitted by the “Indian Confederations”(Port Orford Parks Commission 1998b: 1). It is not clear in the minutes if the Indian Confederations referred to were the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue; however, they were the only tribal group noted as having members attending the meeting. A member of the CTLR pointed out that approval by their board was needed for both the text and an accompanying graphic. The Commissioners decided to send the wording and the picture to City Council for approval, subject to CTLR approval. The Commission also decided to accept the wording for the refurbished “old beaver board sign at Battle Rock,” and to forward it to City Council (Port Orford Parks Commission Minutes 1998b: 1).

On September 14, the Parks Commission Chair reported to City Council that the sign committee had approved the wording for two separate signs: the “historical sign” that was to replace the old wooden marker; and the “historical marker sign” which would go in the wayfinder site plaza” (Kramer 1998d: 1). The proposed text for the “historical marker sign” still needed to be forwarded to the Historical Marker Committee for its approval. According to the report in *Port Orford Today!* on September 17, the “historical beaverboard sign was part of the mediation agreement and was not voted on” (Kramer 1998d: 1). Later, at the standing room only meeting, the council voted to discontinue the mediation process; Council had been barraged with letters against the implementation of further changes to the parking area. While the changes were not carried out and the Wayfinder parking area renovation was not altered further, new text for the old sign was facilitated by the committee struck by the City Council. With a measure of approval granted by the Parks Commission, an acceptable re-wording of the sign had been constructed by a committee that included two of the most outspoken, anti-Wayfinder, old-timer family descendents working with the kin of people displaced a hundred and fifty years earlier.

Although committee members and those they consulted were successful in constructing an acceptable text to be inscribed on usable planks salvaged from the old marker, the Wayfinder Point wall remained in place. Those championing the beauty or usefulness of the new wall dismissed the claims of others who insisted that their way of being in the landscape—not only viewing it—was being altered. The stone structure does alter the view; it does form a visual and physical barrier. The wall was thoughtfully designed to harmonize with existing architectural details elsewhere in the state and is undeniably attractive. It would fit gracefully into any suburban garden. However, in its location along this rough seacoast, the wall domesticates a scene that long-time residents experienced as wild and tumultuous. Some residents expressed deep disappointment that their unique park had been changed, that “it’s just like it is every place else now.” For at least one old-time inhabitant, this change was a source of sadness that was counterbalanced by the eventual return of the wooden sign to its original location, if not with its original text. As he expressed in an interview,

The wording that's going to be on the sign will not be the same as the wording that was on the sign that was taken down, but it's a compromise text that was agreed upon by the state, federal and parks people, and the county and city, and the Indian folks. We finally, through a lot of mediation, came up with a text that was acceptable to everyone. And that's what will be on the new sign. I am personally very glad and very happy to see the sign going back up. It meant a lot to me as a person growing up around here. It was one of my favorite places to go, down in the old Battle Rock Park. And I really miss seeing the sign there, and I am very glad to see it going back up.

Refurbished and re-inscribed with a rewritten text, the wooden sign again dominates the built landscape at Battle Rock City Park. The new cultural panel—which has not been designated an official state historical marker—is one of a cluster of low signs installed around the perimeter of the Wayfinder plaza. The cultural panel and the wooden marker both present authoritative statements about local history and about those who participated in making this history. However, the negotiations engaged in by those who participated in writing this history are hidden to the casual viewer. Examining changes in the versions and piecing together some of the circumstances under which changes were made to these signs and their texts show that they can be understood as outward manifestations of intense social negotiation over what could be or would not be publicly represented as history.

#### Original historical marker

What is now the Oregon Historical Marker Program originated in the 1930s as a Work Projects Administration program; it was later transferred to the Oregon Highway Division (Dawson 1994: 8). In 1991 the program was transferred to the Travel Information Council after almost two decades of inactivity (Dawson 1994: 8). Although historical markers are usually sited on roadside turn-outs that are part of the Oregon Department of Transportation jurisdiction, the Historical Marker Committee is now a separate entity. Without further research, little can be said with certainty about the exact origin of the text for the “beaver board” marker erected at Battle Rock State Park in the 1950s. However, creating text for these distinctive markers was neither a community nor a committee effort. According to one interviewee, many of the early sign texts were written by a member of the Oregon Historical Society; however, texts were reviewed and sometimes altered by the Oregon Highway Division, which erected the signs. In a 1966 publication, *Oregon's Historic Markers*, W. M. Scofield refers to the signs as “story-telling monuments”—“markers which have been designed to tell their own story.” As he writes,

[h]ewn in wood these monuments have been erected in all parts of Oregon, recreating for all time these hallowed points which mark our most recent past. Residents and visitors alike can now see and read on the spot the unfolding of Oregon History, to better understand how the Oregon territory was settled and how our part of the West was won. (Scofield 1966:3)

There is no mention of who may have authored the seventy-six historical markers included in Scofield's photographic record. Most of these markers commemorate explorers, early settlers, conflicts, or the "historic Oregon Trail." The markers "tell their own story."

#### Proposed replacement historical marker

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) contracted out the informational and interpretive panels for the Wayfinding Point to Sea Reach Limited in Rose Lodge, Oregon, a company that plans, designs, fabricates and installs interpretive exhibits. According to Sea Reach Vice President Brian O'Callaghan, an interviewee who agreed to be named, ODOT's instructions were basically to "work with the locals, come up with the stories they want to tell, help them tell them the best way you can" and to make sure the information is verifiable. The subject these "locals" wanted addressed in the cultural sign was the battle of Battle Rock; the "locals" Sea Reach worked with were members of the Community Resource Team subcommittee that formed to deal with the Wayfinder Point. Sea Reach worked closely with this six-to-eight member group to review all the panels, meeting with them in Port Orford from eight to ten times.

O'Callaghan was presented with a "package of information and reference to E. A. Schwartz's book that there was more to this story" of the "brave defenders of Battle Rock." The package came from a member of the Community Resource Team who, questioning the veracity of the accepted Battle Rock narrative, had investigated early newspaper reporting of the incident [25]. O'Callaghan immediately knew including the new information from Anson Dart's letter would be controversial:

When I got this packet and I recognized right away that this was a hot potato, a couple of things struck me. Number one, I didn't think at the time that we wanted to tackle a project like this on our own. . . . In a sense it's a major historic event and . . . would be in a sense revising or rewriting history—we've made a new discovery, in a sense. Schwartz made the discovery, but this, I mean, we're changing generations of public opinion here. . . . [W]hen I was in grade school here and we studied Oregon history, Battle Rock was one of those things that they talked about. So, . . . you've got generations of Oregon school children being taught the battle of Battle Rock story. So I knew right away this was going to be hot.

With the cultural panel being part of the Wayfinder project, which had Oregon Department of Transportation funding, O'Callaghan also recognized an opportunity to remove it from the "local context" and "give it to Oregon's Historic Marker Committee—this august group of scholars who basically have the power to commemorate—or not commemorate—historic events in the state." He recommended, again to the "locals," that they apply for the new sign to be included in the Historical Marker Program and use the expertise of the professional historians and other scholars who make up the committee. O'Callaghan already had an established working relationship with the Historical Marker

Committee, having produced new markers as well as refurbishing older ones. The old marker at Battle Rock Park had at one time been an official state historical marker. Since a replacement sign would be on the state right-of-way, not a city park, a marker at that site could again become part of the program.

The Historical Marker Committee took on the project. Dealing with controversial issues is not new to the Committee, and members are well aware of bias and gaps existing in older marker texts. Some problematic texts have been rewritten; the historical marker at Pistol River, for example, had been vandalized and defaced, with “genocide” written across it. New markers may now be constructed with the input of tribal members, and there is also a member of a Native American tribe on the Committee.

According to Brian O’Callaghan, both the Siletz and Grand Ronde tribes were involved, and, on the Siletz reservation, the unprovoked attack of people at the site of Port Orford by the newcomers was a story that had been repeated “forever.” In consultation with O’Callaghan, who regularly researches and writes text for the Committee, a decision was made to present both sides on the new marker, and they “came up with a couple of versions.” However, as O’Callaghan continued to explain in the interview,

Now maybe, in all honesty, it was the way I wrote the story, but I wasn’t the only one writing it and reviewing it at that time. We had the entire Historic Marker Committee and the local folks that were trying their best to present both sides. But the plain and simple fact was the Dart version read more believably than the one that had been repeated for so long.

Once it became known in Port Orford that the new marker was to present two conflicting versions of the battle of Battle Rock, opposition mounted. Author and descendent John Quick—who was extremely offended—also began to call. Simultaneously, the Wayfinder construction was being challenged and the disappearance of the old sign became an issue. In a powerful objection to the Community Resource Team and its activities, opponents simply disbanded it. Sea Reach and the Historical Marker Committee found they were no longer dealing with a citizens’ committee, but with the City Administrator and the Parks Commission.

#### Interpretive panel

Sea Reach Vice President O’Callaghan attributes the ultimate production of text for the panel funded by ODOT for the Wayfinder to the work of Parks Commissioner Rick Cook, who got “some of the most vocal people in opposition together with representatives of the tribes.” Cook is a long-time resident and local business owner in Port Orford who also agreed to be interviewed and granted permission to use his name. Before being officially appointed to the Parks Commission, he had become concerned about an increasing level of “anti-Indian rhetoric” heard around the town. Cook organized an informal meeting at his home and invited prominent opponents of the sign removal and rewording of text to sit down and talk with the Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue and other

Chetco-Tututín people. This meeting appears to have established working relationships between some of the Native American individuals who were later consulted with for approval of the new text for the wooden marker. Furthermore, it also nurtured social relations. In May of 1999, a ceremony was led by Agnes Pilgrim at a site where people had been detained in the 1850s before being taken to the newly established reservations to the north. The latest of several ceremonies held near the former Coast Guard Barracks north of Battle Rock, the occasion has been described as an honor ceremony "to come together to honor the spirits of the old ones and to bring together all people in a healing ceremony" (*Port Orford Today!* May 15, 1997: 11). An influential and outspoken member of the community of Port Orford who had been adamantly against the Wayfinding Point, the sign removal, and the proposed sign with two versions of the conflict at Battle Rock, but who had begun working with Native Americans at Cook's home, attended this honoring ceremony.

According to the Sea Reach Vice President, the people working with Cook

... came up with a story that basically was kind of a stream of consciousness approach which addressed everything from the fact that Native Peoples lived along the coast thousands of years ago, to George Vancouver, to the fact that the 'brave defenders' showed up, and then the Indian Wars broke out, and everybody was rounded up, and in the end, people still live there today.

This proposed text, too long for an exhibit at 1200 words, was sent back to the Historical Marker Committee. According to O'Callaghan, the committee "basically said, 'this will never fly. . . . What does it commemorate?'" and declined further involvement.

O'Callaghan continued to work with the Parks group, which officially included Cook when he was appointed to the Commission on August 10, 1998. While the sign still could be included in the Wayfinder project if it were not an official state historical marker, official approval was still being sought (*Port Orford News* Sept. 2, 1998:1). However, O'Callaghan explained that the interpretive panel would deal in general with the "'Indian Wars' and the 'Trail of Tears story,'" rather than addressing the "nuts and bolts" of the site-specific battle of Battle Rock.

Cook presented the proposed wording at the August 26, 1998 meeting, noted earlier, of the Parks Commission—the meeting following the raucous session of June 23, 1998 when the dual-version historical marker had been at issue. Inclusion of a graphic with the text was requested by Beverly Fry, Raymond Fry and their daughter Rhonda Baseler who, in a letter to the editor in the *World* that was also printed in the *Port Orford News*, were named as authors of most of the text for the interpretive panel (Weaver 1998) [26]. Mrs. Katherine Leep of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue remarked that the wording still had to go to the tribal board for approval; the Commission voted to recommend that City Council approve the wording subject to CTRLR board approval. The City Council did approve the wording on September 14, 1998 (*Port Orford Today!* Sept. 17, 1998: 1). However, further changes were

later made. With additional change in wording and the deletion of a dedication “to the Dene Tsut Dah (People of Long Ago),” the proposed text was again presented to the Parks Commission and approved on August 4, 1999 when the Commission voted to recommend to the City Council that the sign, with some minor changes to the text’s background imagery, be placed at the Wayfinder site (Stoler 1999: 1; *Port Orford Today!* August 12, 1999: 1).

Some of the intricacies of the process involved in creating the text for the interpretive panel are revealed through the efforts of Donald L. Fry, Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue. He was the first to alert me that there was to be a new historical marker put up at Battle Rock. In the course of a telephone conversation with him on October 16, 1998 regarding the status of his tribe’s petition to the Bureau of Indian Affairs for federal acknowledgement, he mentioned that they were having an historical marker put up at Battle Rock and that “it was like rewriting history—we told it like it was.” He later described how his involvement began with the making of the new sign. After having been contacted by someone from Port Orford concerned the middens would be damaged by construction of the Wayfinding Point, Donald Fry traveled there from his home in Coos Bay to observe the site. He was subsequently invited to attend the Parks Committee meeting of June 23, 1998. Contact was made there with representatives from the Historical Marker Committee who also attended this meeting. According to Fry, without a response from the Siletz Tribe, the Historical Marker Committee later contacted the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue, which then worked with Sea Reach to produce the text. The CTRLR Chair discussed the text with members of his family, took the text around to the Coos and Coquille—other tribal groups—and then took it back to the committee. Further changes were made: the addition of the name “Tecumtum” for “Chief John,” the deletion of a drawing of Captain Vancouver’s ship with the substitution of a smaller image of the graphic, and the repositioning of the text over the graphic image. The completed panel was finally installed at the Battle Rock Wayfinder Point in December 1999.

The graphic over which the text is printed, *Ahnekuttie Tillicums (Ancestors)*, by artist Peggy O’Neal, was originally commissioned by the Confederated Tribes of Siletz. It shows Humbug Mountain in the distance with a view of the coast extending along the bluffs just south of Battle Rock. A long line of people trail behind their leader, Tecumtum. A brochure describing the painting explains, “because he and his band fought with such determination for the land of their ancestors, they were forced to march the treacherous Oregon coastline to the Coast Reservation in Siletz”; “the painting depicts these last holdouts for freedom as they were marched into Port Orford, Oregon July 2, 1856” (Siletz Tribal Fine Arts n.d.). This graphic image, slightly modified, also appears on the cover of E.A. Schwartz’s *The Rogue River Indian War and Its Aftermath, 1850-1980*. When the final draft for the interpretive panel was presented to the Port Orford City Council by the Parks Commission for approved, the authenticity of

this visual image was questioned by one of the councilors. The councilor was assured by the Parks Chair and another councilor that there was a record of 180 persons being marched along the beach (Stoler 1999: 1). While the version of events as recorded by Dart was not given historical credence and thus was not included on new signage, the march down the beach to the site of incarceration before deportation was accepted as historically verified. This western "Trail of Tears" is given authority by being presented visually as well as textually on the new interpretive panel. The image has been made even more powerful by the installation of the interpretive panel at the crest of the bluff the people in the graphic appear to be climbing. Looking out over the horizon, the viewer sees Humbug Mountain in the distance. Looking down at the sign, the viewer sees the graphic representation of Humbug Mountain and the approaching stream of refugees.

#### Refurbished wooden marker

As described earlier, the text for the marker eventually returned to its landmark status was produced through the efforts of those active in the committee set up by the city council as well as through the citizens who earlier had begun to meet informally. Despite the failure of the City to carry out the mediated settlement, a tentative agreement did proceed to restore the wooden sign and involve in the rewording of the text the citizen initiating the action against the City. In a September 15, 1999 letter to the editor, the sign committee members, who re-appropriated the designation "Battle Rock Historic Marker" for the wooden sign, thanked those who had been involved:

Many months of meetings involving south coast Indian Tribal representatives and local citizens of the south coast [sic].

Finally a new text was agree upon by local Native American representatives and the park sign committee. Next the Port Orford City Council considered the text and approved it. (Mayea et al.)

These "Indian Tribal representatives," according to an interviewee who was a member of the sign committee, included members of groups in both Coos and Curry Counties: the Siletz and Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue. According to this interviewee, the sign committee talked over the wording and met with tribal representatives with "quite a bit of back and forth exchange." He also referred to at least three different public meetings on the new text. He stressed that it was agreed upon by the "south coast Indian representatives."

The actual text that was agreed upon has been referred to as a "compromise." It was adapted from the version that appeared on the original historical marker, with the notable addition of the phrase dedicating the city park "in memory of the Ancient People (Dene Tsut Dah)." This dedication had been included on both signs approved at the August 26, 1998 Port Orford Parks Commission meeting. The

“wooden historical sign” was to begin, “Battle Rock City Park has been dedicated in memory of the Ancient People (Dene Tsut Dah) and the Pioneer founders of this townsite,” while the “cultural historical sign to be located at the Wayfinder Site plaza” was to begin, “Dedicated to the memory of the Dene Tsut Dah” (*Port Orford Today!* September 3, 1998). This dedication, however, does not appear in the final version of the text on the cultural sign [27].

One long-time Port Orford resident provided this critique of the original wooden marker and noted how involvement in the process of changing the wording changed some of the participants:

I think the previous signage that was down at the park . . . has aggravated a number of people that live here and have passed through here. And primarily, the main reason was that it monumentalized Western manifest destiny and really, really didn't mention the Native American population any more than the fact that they quote unquote had attacked this landing party. . . . And finally . . . we're making the changes, and I think that . . . what was important in this change was that some of the locals . . . participated in the process rather than have it forced upon them. They chose to come and sit down and work on the process of the wording on the signs. . . . I think initially they all resisted change in the sign because they thought that someone was trying to rewrite history. . . . But in this process . . . they slowed down long enough to read some history books—and most of white America has an amnesia about what happened to the Native population. And it's jolting their memory. And, you know, I think that's kind of a key to some success. You can't force it on them. It's got to be done kind of with a certain gentleness. And a lot of them do kind of have this awakening that, well, you know, something happened here that really isn't right. And I think we saw that. I think we saw that with these locals.

But is it a case of “amnesia” that simply “jolting” memory” can remedy? Peggy O'Neal, the artist who painted *Ahmkuttie Tillicums (Ancestors)*, the first in a series of paintings entitled *The Lost Chapters* being done as a joint venture with the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, explained,

My mother, my father, were both born in this area. My grandparents and their parents were born in this area. And doing the research on this particular project has enlightened me to the fact that this was a whole history that had never been taught to me in the education system here in this area. It was completely unknown, and I find it an area of history that needs to be remembered.

Uncomfortable and widely unacknowledged realities underlie the understanding of the American past. Archeologist Jon Erlandson of the University of Oregon, Eugene, has stated,

I teach my students what I know in my heart, that the history books have not yet told the true and whole story of Indian-white relations in Oregon and elsewhere in America. For many, coming to grips with the truth of what happened to American Indian Nations as the United States of America spread from sea to shining sea will be a painful process, not just for Indian people, but for American persons of all colors and creeds who will listen to this story. (Coquille Indian Tribe 1997)

Certain citizens of Port Orford had to confront these painful realities when their long-accepted but strategically-selective history was challenged.

## PUBLIC HISTORY, PUBLIC MEMORY AND COMMEMORATION

"The shaping of a past worthy of public commemoration in the present is contested and involves a struggle for supremacy between advocates of various political ideas and sentiments."

--James Bodnar (1992: 13)

My investigation has exposed some of the circumstances surrounding the removal and replacement of a sign presenting public history at Battle Rock Park and the addition of a new sign at the nearby Wayfinder Point. My account is partial and of necessity selective. Writing public history—the representation of history in public places—has been shown in this paper to be a complex process with a wide range of participants [28]. The historical texts that have been produced have been socially constructed by these participants. Alternate versions of events at Battle Rock with varying claims to historical veracity have been shown as competing in a milieu of social and political struggle in a changing community. While the long-dominant version inscribed on the wooden marker has retained its local hegemony and remains a commemoration of the settlement of Port Orford, it now incorporates and publicly displays elements drawn from another version of "how the West was won"—that there were already people settled here since "ancient" times and that their land was appropriated without signed treaties.

However, another competing version, that the famous "battle of Battle Rock" was an unprovoked attack against the Athapaskans gathered near *Tre-geen-on*, was dismissed as inaccurate, unsubstantiated, or even as untrue [29]. Despite this story being known "forever" at Siletz, and despite being retold in public lectures given in Port Orford, it remains a marginalized history, excluded from public display. Yet the story recounting an unprovoked attack by the men in the landing party persists by being told and retold, becoming shared social memory of those who also share a different experience of frontier settlement and its aftermath. Although marginalized as part of oral tradition, this version of events at Battle Rock has not been forgotten, rather, it has been suppressed.

The exclusion from incorporation into public history in either the new text on the wooden marker or in the more detailed text of the Wayfinder cultural interpretive panel exposes how public history may be constructed from what Elizabeth Furniss has described as "selective historical traditions" (1999: 54). Furniss builds on Raymond Williams' identification of "selective tradition": "a partial vision of history that provides the official story of that society's past, a story produced and communicated in the most significant of public domains, ranging from public schools and national museums to ceremonies of the state, and a story that plays a vital role in rationalizing past and present social institutions and structures of political authority" (1999: 53). In Port Orford, the public history of the town's founding remains such a partial vision.

In *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (1992:15), John Bodnar describes “public memory” as

... a body of beliefs and ideas about the past that help a public or society understand both its past, present, and by implication, its future. It is fashioned ideally in a public sphere in which various parts of the social structure exchange views.

Such public memory, Bodnar asserts, is created in commemorative activity and the “dramatic exchange of interests” that such activity involves (1992: 13). According to Bodnar, “[p]ublic memory emerges from the intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions” (1992: 13). His distinction between “official” and “vernacular” cultural expressions and interests poses a theoretical structure in which to place distinctions between varying stakeholders in the history presented publicly in Port Orford: those who rallied around returning the original marker with (preferably) its original text, and those who supported the creation of an entirely new sign. This new sign was to have displayed a text incorporating what some interpreted as a new historical discovery—Anson Dart’s letter. In acknowledgement of the problematic nature of this discovery, viewers were to “make up their own mind.”

The lack of acceptance of the ambiguous version muted expression of the unacceptable possibility that the unprovoked attack had been made by the landing party. Instead, the initiators of the “conflict” which gave Battle Rock its name are not specified on either the two signs now in place. The sign eventually installed at the Wayfinder site differs significantly from both the old and new wooden markers, presenting in detail the effects on the inhabitants and their land of the miners and settlers who “infiltrated” the Rogue River country. The text describes how some “natives were force-marched” to the reservation and others were “held in open pens” then “deported north.” Its closing sentence states that descendants of these “displaced” peoples now reside on Siletz and Grand Ronde Reservations.

In Bodnar’s terms, the original historical marker placed in the 1950s at Battle Rock Park represented an “official” cultural expression, that is, a cultural expression that

... originates in the concerns of cultural leaders or authorities at all levels of society. ... [T]hese leaders share a common interest in social unity, the continuity of existing institutions, and loyalty to the status quo. They attempt to advance these concerns by promoting interpretations of past and present reality that reduce the power of competing interests that threaten the attainment of their goals. (1992:13)

The text for the proposed historical marker that was never erected, as well as that of the interpretive panel that was eventually installed, share some characteristics of what Bodnar designates as “vernacular” cultural expression: “an array of specialized interests that are grounded in parts of the whole. They are diverse and changing and can be reformulated from time to time by the creation of new social units . . . ” (1992: 14). Vernacular interests may clash, and their defenders are “intent on protecting values and restating views of reality derived from firsthand experience in small-scale communities rather than the

'imagined' communities of a large nation" (1992: 14) [30]. Promotion of the inclusion of Anson Dart's report into the public commemoration of events at Battle Rock and the successful inclusion of details of Native American history in the Wayfinder panel do represent distinct challenges to what had long been officially represented on the original historical marker. Each is a restatement of the reality of the resettlement of the West. Since the 1950s, historical interpretation of the American West has undergone great changes. There has been increasing awareness of the importance of including Native American perspectives and voices and a critical awareness of the role of narrative in structuring historical—and anthropological—interpretation [31].

Local vernacular interests, besides clashing and competing among themselves, thus challenge official interests committed to promoting wider loyalties. In commemorative activities, Bodnar asserts, competing interpretations are mediated, with some explanations being privileged over others. The Historical Marker Committee, having the power and authority to officially sanction historical interpretation, attempted to mediate competing versions of events at Battle Rock. However, their efforts to officially commemorate these events were unsuccessful. Rather than promoting social unity, the text version presenting both stories promoted social conflict.

The two signs that have been successfully placed represent specialized, local interests. Their texts criticize government actions—Congress' passing the Donation Land Act before treaty-making and Congress' creating the reservation onto which U.S. troops "removed native peoples from their aboriginal lands." Competing vernacular interests in Port Orford had appropriated what may have been first constructed by official interests to foster loyalty to the state through commemoration of the settlement of Oregon. The commemorative text on the newly inscribed wooden marker, with its powerful invocation of the pioneer as the townsite's founding father, explicitly promotes local loyalty.

The old wooden marker and its text had become important public symbols of local autonomy and control. Bodnar (1992: 257-8), stressing the multivocality of commemorative activity with its clashing interests, draws from the work of Clifford Geertz, in which symbols are understood to contain discordant meanings. Commemorative events and activities contain "powerful symbolic expressions . . . that give meaning to competing interpretations of past and present reality" (1992: 16). Bodnar cites the idea of the nation-state and the language of patriotism as the cultural expression best containing "the multivocal quality of public commemorations;" as a symbol, this idea unites interests of different social groups; used as a metaphor, it "stimulates ideals of social unity and civic loyalty" (1992: 16). Bodnar writes,

[t]he symbols of the nation-state and the patriot do what all symbols do: they mediate both official and vernacular interests. By themselves they do not privilege one interest over another. That task is performed admirably by men and women living in space and time. (1992: 16)

Standing for decades at the evocative site of Battle Rock, the sign was an every-day reminder of the legitimate ownership by pioneer settlers and their descendants of the town—and its history. The tenacious assertion of ownership of history by those with longstanding ties of ancestry or residence to Port Orford is abundantly illustrated by the opposition mounted to the proposed changes to this history.

But the re-representation of history in public places is not only done through textual commemoration. Public history can be powerfully incorporated into social memory during commemorative ceremonies, as Paul Connerton has described in *How Societies Remember* (1989). Some of the tenacious attachment to history expressed by residents of Port Orford may be attributed to participation in a historical re-enactment that until recently took place at the site of Battle Rock.

### BATTLE ROCK AND EMBODIED MEMORY

“The people of Port Orford fight the battle of Battle Rock every Fourth of July.”

--Edith Wakeman Jones, *Oregon Historic Landmarks: Southern Oregon*, Oregon Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (1974: 24)

The Port Orford Fourth of July “Jubilee” is widely advertised and a major tourist draw on the Southern Oregon Coast, attracting residents and visitors alike who enjoy four days of festivities that include pancake breakfasts, square dancing, dinghy races, a parade, and a famous fireworks display. Up until about ten years ago the celebrations also included a reenactment of the battle of Battle Rock. Staged at Battle Rock, the “pageant” was expected in 1940 to attract visitors “from all parts of Oregon and the Northwest to witness the show” (*Port Orford Post* Dec. 13, 1940:1). The production had been staged several times previously, with a lapse of almost ten years since the last performance. Sponsored by community organizations and the City of Port Orford, the performance would depict “scenes of early Port Orford history” and “re-enact the battle scenes between Indians and the nine men who stood them off in 1851”; the pageant was to be “in celebration of the founding of the City of Port Orford” (*Port Orford Post* Dec. 13, 1940:1). This particular event was not scheduled on the Fourth of July, although during the 1930s, the wife of the mayor “encouraged the children to re-enact the Battle of Battle Rock in the twilight hour before the fireworks display” during the Independence Day celebrations; “the girls wore dresses made from gunny and did dances around a campfire on the beach” (Cramer 1999:6). On the centennial of the landing of Tichenor’s nine men, June 9, 1951, the celebrations included “a performance of Indian dances and the Battle of Battle Rock” (Cramer 1999:6).

To commemorate the Oregon centennial in 1959, communities were encouraged to celebrate with special events; in Port Orford the Fourth of July, close to the landing date, was chosen (Cramer 1999:6). For this occasion, townsmen were enlisted to portray the “Indians” in the battle re-enactment.

A description of the 1959 parade was provided in the special newspaper publication promoting the 1999 Jubilee:

The morning parade's theme was "Parade of Progress". [sic] A horde of Indians rode at the front, followed by pioneers, trappers and 'oldtimers'. [sic] Entries of modern industry concluded the parade. A float carried a replica of Battle Rock . . . . (Cramer 1999:6)

According to one interviewee, participants in the re-enactment have included members of the Boy Scouts playing the parts of the "Indians." Children portraying Native Americans shot arrows with their bows, and members of a black powder club shot their firearms. Roles were acted out as a script was read over a public address system. Descriptions of the event indicate it was an occasion celebrated with some joviality. One year the members of a bagpipe group that marched in the parade decided to "help the Indians"; that year they won (Cramer 1999: 6).

The end of the performances was attributed by one interviewee to the organizers receiving a letter of complaint from a Native American woman asserting that the re-enactment was discriminatory. Another interviewee thought that on one occasion participants had gotten hurt and the event was subsequently discontinued. Even so, as this interviewee described, periodic attempts to revive the re-enactment have been made:

In the early 90s there was talk about starting it up again [be]cause a lot of people thought it was just a great draw. It was their story and they wanted to see it redone. And so two other people and myself went to the Jubilee Committee meeting and said, We hear that you're thinking about doing this again, and we think it's offensive. We don't want to see it happen . . . . And it every once in a while comes up. . . . People don't think of it as . . . what it really is. The people that want to see it re-enacted kind of think of it as winning the football match.

Following Connerton, the re-enactment of the battle—through a regular calendrical association with the most patriotism-imbued day of the year, through the verbal repetition of a script derived from the words of one of the brave defenders, and through gestural repetition of the actual combat—exemplifies a commemorative ceremony in which social memory is actually embodied by the participants. Connerton asserts that versions of the past are preserved not only in words and images, but in commemorative ceremonies, which "keep the past in mind by a depictive representation of past events. They are re-enactments of the past, its return in a representational guise which normally includes a simulacrum of the scene or situation recaptured" (1989:72).

The physical form of commemorative ritual invites the very embodiment of social memory. The element of carnival aside, the social consequences of such embodiment for participants who repetitiously re-enacted unequal and violent social relations between "pioneer settlers" and "Indians" would have been to naturalize contemporary social, political and economic inequality. Furthermore, the division into what

Furniss has described as “two ideal and mutually exclusive categories: Indian and white” perpetuates a presumption of inherent difference (1999: 190).

One woman I talked with in Port Orford talked about the re-enactment:

It was something that was re-enacted every year, and, you know, part of the history. . . A major part of the Fourth of July celebration was that re-enactment of the battle. And I’m sorry to say, and it maybe—and I’m feeling now obviously that I was very naïve—I didn’t understand how disrespectful that might have been, you know. I didn’t understand. I wasn’t sympathetic or sensitive . . . to how that might have seemed. But it was part of our, it instantly became a part of our own history, but re-enacting it over and over and over year after year after. Not once or twice, you know. And hard to stop doing it and not understanding, well, we still couldn’t do it, you know.

She also talked about her family’s connection to the history of Battle Rock and how it felt to be confronted by those promoting an alternate version:

I wanted to let you know how painful it was for this community to go through the rewriting of the history of Battle Rock. . . . And what was the most painful part for me—and our family’s a pioneer family here, . . . we have a real connection with the history. And the problem with this community was when all these new people moved in here and they told us—and they said it at meetings publicly—that we should be ashamed of our, this battle of Battle Rock history. . . . They said it’s shameful what happened here. And of course, you know, the story of what happened throughout the entire United States with the Native Americans was a sad story, but it’s a part of our history. . . . It’s just awful to have someone tell you should be ashamed of your history of your community. It was very painful. And it really divided, really divided this town. Taking that sign down divided this town like you can’t even imagine.

### THE PERSISTENCE OF MARGINALIZED MEMORY

During the time the Wayfinder Point was in the planning stages, there were discussions held between the Port Orford Women’s Fishery Network—which was planning a memorial to honor fishermen lost at sea—and those planning the Wayfinder directed at combining these projects. However, according to one interviewee, after initial encouragement, the organizers for the Fishermen’s Memorial felt growing opposition to their ideas about an appropriate design. They pulled out of the project. With the help of a far-flung network of women, the Women’s Coalition for Pacific Fisheries, they began planning a separate memorial. The interviewee had felt it important to have the memorial near Battle Rock Park because it was where all the local people went and would receive wide recognition there. However, a place at the Port was eventually found. To raise funds, bricks that were to be used on the plaza of the memorial were sold on which a short phrase could be engraved. In describing how one donor bought several bricks for her children and grandchildren, the interviewee said,

She wanted to have everybody’s name on there because if [you’ve] lived here for a long time . . . you feel you’re part of the history. You want to be part of the things that are going to be historic.

In contrast to the Wayfinder Point, the Fishermen's Memorial was completed without acrimony; building it was described by the interviewee as fun, something people enjoyed working on. It was dedicated in conjunction with the Blessing of the Fleet in August 1999.

That the first choice for the location of this memorial was adjacent to the site of Battle Rock Park is not surprising. Battle Rock and its environs is already the site of several present-day memorials. Among them is a boulder with a bronze plaque commemorating the efforts of George W. Soranson in "preserving this historic spot as a State Park" (*Port Orford News* May 16, 1963). The graves of one of the nine men who landed there in 1851, his aboriginal wife and their son are buried at the crest of Battle Rock. Battle Rock was also the site of hangings and unmarked burials in the 1850s. It was also dedicated for a memorial statue of Theodore Roosevelt in 1925 by the United Spanish War Veterans, a plan that did not materialize (*Oregon Historical Quarterly* 1930:305). The place now known as Battle Rock, thus, has had many other meanings other than as the site of the town's founding. To Robert Kentta, cultural adviser for the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz, it is "where the hostilities began. This is where they loaded approximately 1,200 native people onto the steam ship Columbia to be relocated at the Siletz Reservation" (Lundquist 1997: A1).

Another difference perspective was contributed by one voice among the many expressed in dozens of letters in the newspapers praising or condemning the wall at the Wayfinder Point. Wanda Melton's letter to the editor states,

... after reading all the complaining I decided we who like the project should start speaking up. The letter complaining about changing Captain Tichinors settlement! My ancestors were here long before Tichinor came. In fact my great grandmother, Jane Shellhead (Too-To-Toney Indian), was one that was rounded up and brought to Port Orford, then hiked to Siletz. Yes the town is changing but like a creek that stops moving it becomes stagnate. (1998:2)

Mrs. Melton is a member of the Siletz Tribe. She is retired person and now lives Port Orford. When I first met her, her dining room table was covered with photographs, genealogical charts, and newspaper clippings. She was making albums for her family. As she explained,

Unless somebody starts talking and telling the story of our families, people aren't going to know. I'm handing this on to my grandchildren. I'm making albums. And I'm putting all this information and the paper and everything that I have gotten. I'm making albums for my children and grandchildren so that this story will be able to go on with them and it will not die with us.

Mrs. Melton, talked with me at length about her family history and how she had learned the details of it. She modestly mentioned a talk she made at her church in a nearby community two years before, after which she had been asked by another Siletz member to speak at the dedication of newly painted murals at the Cape Blanco Lighthouse Greeting Center. As Mrs. Melton said,

The one thing—reason—I agreed to talk with you and the same reason that I gave that talk in Gold Beach is because our family—all of our ancestors—you know, they aren't here. And people don't really know what happened to them. And still they are prejudiced against the Indians.

Among the Native American First Nations Peoples I talked with, shared social memory of events in Southern Oregon have persisted in a continuing oral tradition of remembrance, if not in a written tradition. George Wasson, who sits on the Oregon Historical Marker Committee, is a member of the Coquille Tribe and grew up in Pistol River. He inherited the story of Battle Rock from his grandfather through his father. For Wasson, the oral tradition is very much alive. Both his father and older brother knew it, and it continues as Wasson talks with his nephews, cousins and friends. When it comes up, he tells them that the story of events at Battle Rock as it was written down is wrong. What has come down through the Wasson family is that people were invited up to the camp on Battle Rock and were met with a blast of chopped bar lead and horseshoe nails shot from the cannon.

Two women I also spoke with share social memory associated with the pioneer colony of Port Orford, although they do not know one another. Katherine Leep and Wanda Melton are contemporaries. Each alluded to an ancestor they certainly share, a Tutuni woman sometimes referred to as "Jane," sometimes as "Jenny." Jenny Tichenor, as Mrs. Leep referred to her great-great-great-grandmother, had acted as an interpreter after the time Port Orford began to be resettled and before indigenous people were forced to leave their homes. Jenny had been stripped of her clothing and dragged through the streets of Port Orford. Jane Shellhead, as Mrs. Melton referred to her great-grandmother, had been "just for fun stripped" and been made to run "up and down the streets of Port Orford."

I first met Mrs. Leep early one cold, overcast July morning in 1999 at Battle Rock Park where she and CTLR Chair Donald Fry had come to observe if holes being augured for the poles to hold the reworded wooden marker were intruding into the middens. When the work was done for the day, we sat down for a taped interview. Members of the sign committee who had put up the supporting posts that morning were putting away their tools and saying their good-byes. One man came up to Mrs. Leep and Chairman Fry to say he would see them again. Don Fry agreed, and Mrs. Leep commented, laughing softly, "It's almost like creating history again, isn't it?"

The talk had turned to the differing versions of the Battle Rock story. Mrs. Leep confirmed that the version handed down to her from her grandmother and mother was that those invited up the rock were shot, but agreed with another person present who said he felt that identifying who fired the first shot was unimportant. "It's a thing that's done with," Mrs. Leep said. "It's past. We need to think for the future and build a better generation."

For some, memory of Battle Rock is not invested in the story of the founding of a patriotic yet fiercely independent town with a cherished ideal of democracy. There are also memories of suffering,

confinement, dispossession, humiliation and death. Some of these memories are now publicly acknowledged by the new signs now in place in Port Orford. Remembrance has been also been expressed at public lectures and at gatherings led by Agnes Pilgrim to honor the Old Ones who suffered in detention and those who walked a "Trail of Tears" from their homelands to an uncertain future. Efforts to affirm non-hegemonic meanings of memorialization to the site of Battle Rock continue. The gravesite of Jake and Betsy Summers and their son on Battle Rock have recently been protected with fencing, a request made through the Cultural Representative of the Coquille Indian Tribe and carried out by members of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue (personal communication from R. Cook, March 24, 2000). At a City Council meeting, a master plan has been recommended "to preserve Battle Rock and establish a memorial area" (Port Orford City Council 1999: 2).

### CONCLUSIONS

"I'd like us to have another creation myth around here than that battle."

--Resident of Port Orford, 1999

In a milieu of local political struggle, a town faction wanting "another creation myth . . . than that battle" and who promoted a "make up their own mind" choice between versions faced another faction that fiercely held on to its origin story. Those in the latter group insisted on a notion of history as an unchanging, factual and knowable truth. In contrast, those promoting a new historical marker with two different versions of events at Battle Rock held a notion of history as ambiguous argument. The proposed text for this marker was to have begun "Historical accounts of the same event are often contradictory, and the story of Battle Rock is no exception"; the end of this section of text would have concluded "Historians will continue to argue the merits of both accounts for many years" (*Port Orford Today!* June 11, 1998:9).

The statements on the original wooden historical marker may have once reflected and reproduced hegemonic official beliefs about how the West was won, but these beliefs were being challenged within the changing community of Port Orford. Dominating memories of pioneer founders also conflict with memories marginalized and discounted by being part of a persistent oral tradition, whether held by Siletz members, CTRLR members or others. Even the discovery of a document certainly flawed as historical evidence but supporting oral tradition did not provide enough support to make those with a long connection by residence or ancestry—like John Quick—believe a version that overturned and supplanted what "most people have accepted" as the town's history. Thus, a version of events suggested by Dart's report and persisting as part of the shared social memories of contemporary Native Americans, still remains unacceptable as history fit to be publicly presented.

There is an abundance of support for an alternate version of the Battle Rock conflict from an ongoing southwestern Oregon First Nations oral tradition. Yet this oral tradition is not acknowledged or accepted as a source of information about the past in the same way that written pioneer accounts have been accepted as unassailable truth. When scholars do not investigate Native American historical perspectives, these perspectives become further marginalized. They may even become invisible, as they seem to have been to Nathan Douthit, Professor Emeritus of History and Political Science at Southwestern Oregon Community College. In the republished *A Guide to Oregon South Coast History: Traveling the Jedediah Smith Trail* (1999), a travel guide and popular history, Douthit devotes a section to Battle Rock. After presenting the usual version of events there, he concludes, "Whether the nine men actually stood off three hundred Indians, as Kirkpatrick said, there is no way to know. Unfortunately, Indian versions of this story have not survived" (Douthit 1999: 65).

Support from persisting oral tradition for an alternate version of the "battle" of Battle Rock and from the discovery of Dart's letter seem to lack veracity as either knowledge or evidence. In the course of my research, I followed up an obscure, forty-year-old reference to a newspaper article about the one hundred year "Indian curse" on Port Orford, a well-known story that was mentioned to me on several occasions. The author of the article posed several questions:

Why would the Indians curse the land? From their point of view the nine whites in the landing party were invaders; and it cost the tribe many braves and two chiefs to dislodge the beachhead.

Maybe they had even stronger reason for moral indignation. The historical reappraisal going on this Centennial year has raised this question: who started the battle of Battle Rock? (Frenette 1959:5)

He then related the "often-told story" of the landing, but, as he wrote it, the men in the landing party brought the cannon up the rock themselves, and the "Indians" began to assemble on the beach. The next day, they approached the rock:

At this point, there are two versions of what happened. Grover Tichenor, grandson of Port Orford's founder, lives today on part of the captain's old donation land. He maintains his grandfather later discovered, and believed, that the Indians were approaching to trade, the whites got panicky, fired the cannon, and the battle was on.

I present this provocative information as another ingredient in the roiling pot of history. While besmirching the reputation of the nine men's bravery rather than the Tichenor name, has this memory been "forgotten" in Tichenor family history, or has it been selectively excluded from repetition? With authoritative provenance from a member of the Tichenor family, will this version be disparaged, or will the veracity of a newspaper story become an issue? Would a challenge to the authority of a newspaper

account reflect back to Kirkpatrick's own account that appeared in the *Alta California* on July 25, 1851 [32]? At issue here is the authority assigned to this account as "history."

The refurbished historical marker in Battle Rock City Park presents a significant change in commemoration. The long-accepted narrative of the "battle of Battle Rock" is underpinned by a pervasive and powerful "pioneer" ideology that has layered generations of authority over one man's written account. Both the narrative and pioneer ideology sanction progress through violent encounter. However, this hegemonic ideology not only sanctioned progress through violence, it also sanctioned violence against an identifiable and seemingly homogenous group signified by the term "Indians." The new texts, constructed in a struggle to right history as much as to write history and constructed at a time in which progress—growth and change—was an underlying local issue, commemorate neither progress nor violence. No longer dedicated to the explorers and pioneers "who prepared the way for the settlement of the southern Oregon Coast," the park is now dedicated to the memory of the Ancient People, Dene Tsut Dah, and the pioneer founders of Port Orford. This simple act of inclusion re-establishes the presence of aboriginal people, even if only as memory, breaking a public silence that likely existed long before the old wooden monument staked its claim upon history.

The inclusion of more diverse groups in the process of constructing history is reflected in the inclusion of more diverse participants in the original events as portrayed in the new sign texts. The actors are not simply "Indians": they are Dene Tsut Dah; they are Tututni. More specifically, Tecumtum, a chief from the interior who was last to surrender, is mentioned by name. This represents a significant departure from the original historical marker, which pitted generic "Indians" against named "explorers" and "pioneers."

Changes to this public presentation of local history serve to both commemorate and enhance the status of the indigenous people of the past. Such change is related to the inclusion of a wider societal participation in the construction of these texts, bringing in other perspectives, memories and agendas. Such change is also an outcome of the efforts of present-day Native Americans such as members of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue, who are actively seeking political recognition from the United States federal government. Over the spring and summer of 1999 they were active in presenting their case before city and county governments up and down the coast. In the case of the City of Port Orford, their request for a letter of support was granted by a city council that was already familiar with tribal members who had appeared at meetings and had worked on the rewording of text. Tribal members solidified relationships in the town with their Parks Commission appearances. These efforts were returned with interest in a letter of support that wished them "every success with regards to the Federal Bill to Recognize the Tribe"; this letter also provides an authoritative contribution to their campaign by its

statement of recognition of the Tribes' "influence within Southern Oregon's Coastal area" (Alexander 1999).

Local newspaper coverage of their involvement with rewording sign text continues to enhance the position of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue by acknowledging their identity and publicizing their activities. They were interviewed in a free newspaper based in southern Curry County that soon after printed an article stating that the CTLR had completed their draft bill for legislative recognition. The same article announces that they had participated in the placement of cultural information signs at the Port Orford Battle Rock Wayfinder (*Angels on Horseback* 2000: 1). The *Port Orford News* printed a notice of this same event on December 22, 1999, with the headline, "Wayfinder blessed, signs installed" above a photograph of the member of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue who blessed the signs. Below this photo is another headline, "Confederated Tribes say thanks," under which is printed a letter from Donald Fry thanking the people of Port Orford, the Mayor, City Council members, the Park Commission, and others. In a list of achievements presented by the CTLR to the Curry County Commissioners, from whom they were requesting a letter of support for their federal acknowledgement, the CTLR included their recent work with the Port Orford Parks Commission in protecting Indian burials and added, "historical signs in the area were erected with the input of the CTLR board" (CTLR n.d. b: 2). These examples serve to illustrate the enhanced public profile of the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue. The social and political relations established in the process of participating in the production and approval of reworded text to be displayed as public history are a key factor in this enhanced stature.

The newly inscribed wooden sign at Battle Rock City Park and the new cultural panel at the Wayfinder Point can be understood as the products of intense social negotiation, and the public history re-presented on them as a social construction of selected possibilities. History—public knowledge about the past—is partial and incomplete [33]. As an anthropologist associated with the Historical Marker Committee reflected, "History is a lot more than just facts. History doesn't stand still . . . , and history is an interpretive process." The power to produce history from social memory and control its interpretation, however, is not shared equally. In Port Orford, the claim upon history by the memories of early pioneers has been privileged by their preservation in written form. This has been reinforced both by continual representation in this inscribed form and, until recently, by commemorative re-enactment.

The new wording on the wooden monument at Battle Rock City Park enhances remembrance of indigenous people of the southern Oregon coast, past, present and future. The Athapaskan phrase "Dene Tsut Dah" publicly honors their language, and the translation "Ancient Ones" gives public recognition to the length of their habitation. The statement that claims could be filed on "Indian land" clearly implies aboriginal ownership. The addition in the reworded sign of the adjective "white" to "settlement" is an

acknowledgement that the land was not uninhabited. The new wording, “No Indian Nation had signed a single treaty,” introduces the concept of nationhood, emphasizing the political autonomy enjoyed by American First Nations before colonization. All of these changes support the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue, as well as other non-recognized tribes, by contributing to the public remembrance of the United States federal government’s failure to meet its legal responsibilities to “forgotten tribes.”

Furthermore, these changes, combined with the history re-presented on the new sign at the Wayfinder Point, support the community of Port Orford. Rather than suppressing public knowledge of events that have taken place there, a responsibility has been shouldered at this site “to see that the Native American story is finally told here in Port Orford” (Weaver 1998). This is not a shameful admission; it is an honorable endeavor.

## AFTERWORD

Public memory in the form of community-sanctioned historical display can be suppressed by hegemonic beliefs about the past. It can also be suppressed within the families that experienced horrific events. Mrs. Melton, who pieced together her own family’s story, was eight years old when her grandfather died and “back then, they didn’t talk about it, and we didn’t ask.” Placing a brick in the Fisherman’s Memorial in memory of her great-grandmother, Jane Shellhead, was a deliberate act of memorialization, and one readily accepted into a community project that, unlike the Wayfinder, was created and constructed with a certain grace.

The act of memorialization, unlike that of commemoration, is not accomplished without the pain of remembrance. I began to learn in Port Orford that memory from settler pasts as well as indigenous pasts are informed by pain—they are about pain and continue to be painful. “Forgetting” may be a way to avoid this pain. Silencing is a way to avoid its responsibility.

I conclude with the image of a simple brick, one of many joining together to border a small plaza overlooking the sea. The lettering reads: “In memory of Jane & Toototoney Indians.” As Mrs. Melton said to me, “One way or another, they will remember.”

## Notes

1. For discussion of federal removal policy, see Francis P. Prucha (1984: 183-213). The devastated condition of people being moved from their homelands to the Coast Reservation is recorded in the 1856 diary of General Edward O.C. Ord (1970). A.E. Schwartz (1991) focuses on later removal of people from land set aside for the original Coast Reservation. As a term, "removal," has become a euphemism for the relocation of indigenous inhabitants to facilitate the reallocation of property. The use of this and other similar terms obfuscates the violence and social upheaval that occurred in the Pacific Northwest during the mid 1800s. Philip Drucker (1937: 269) wrote in a footnote, "All the inhabitants north of the California line were *rounded up* and taken to Siletz about 1855" (emphasis added). Theoretically pre-occupied with reconstructing a timeless (and historyless) past for Athapaskans in northwest California and southwest Oregon, Drucker neither explored nor addressed what this "round up" was, other than to note that it affected his data gathering.
2. Chetco and Tututin are Athapaskan dialects. Chetco is associated with the Chetco River, while Tututin is associated with the lower Rogue River. Written variants for Tututin include Tututni, Toototoney, and Tootootoney. The majority of members are descended from those who evaded forced relocation or from women who married soldiers and settlers and did not go to the reservations (Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue n.d.b: 1).
3. Effects of this marginalization on tribes in Oregon are presented in the *Report on Terminated and Nonfederally Recognized Indians* (Bojorcas et al. 1976). Bruce G. Miller (1991), discussing the cases of the Samish and Snohomish of western Washington, notes that while treaties were signed by their representatives, most of the ancestors of present-day persons seeking federal recognition did not move to reservations. Thus they, as well as other tribes, have been described as "landless." As Miller writes, "Other tribes now attempting to become federally recognized were passed over or simply forgotten in the haste to open the frontier to settlement in the 19th century" (1991: 22). The Samish have since been successful in their efforts to obtain federal recognition. See also Porter (1990).
4. Assimilationist policy sought the absorption of indigenous peoples into mainstream American society "through the acculturative processes of private property, an agricultural . . . economy, formal education . . . and Christianization" (Prucha 1984: 179).
5. Federal government policy since the 1960s has been described as "self-determination." See, for example, Danziger (1996:223). In response to a substantial backlog of requests for federal acknowledgement from nonrecognized or terminated tribes, the "Federal Acknowledgement Process" was established through the executive branch of the federal government in 1978. However, Oregon tribes were barred from using this process because they were terminated by legislation. See Slagle (1996a, 1996b) and Miller (1991) for details and critique of the federal acknowledgement process.
6. Prucha (1984: 400) writes, "Congress on September 27, 1850, by the so-called Donation Land Law, without concern for Indian titles, had provided grants of 320 acres to American citizens or prospective citizens who had resided in Oregon and cultivated the land for four years . . . ."
7. The account I use is from Dodge (1969). Webber and Webber (1992: 8, 10) come to the conclusion after interviewing Kirkpatrick's descendants that Kirkpatrick, having little formal education, probably did not write the account preserved in Dodge (1969) and may have asked his brother to write it.
8. I use the term "social memory" in the sense described by Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton (1994: 1): "Once individual memories are articulated and thus shared, they enter the realm of social or collective rememberings." Contributors to understanding social memory in a broader context as a shared

rather than individual phenomenon include Nathan Wachtel (1990), who outlines the work of Maurice Halbwachs. Halbwachs situates individual memory within a social context in “networks of solidarity” that link individual, and thus connect group memories; he situates a group’s collective memory historically, rather than in a positivist universal human memory (Wachtel 1990: 6,8). David Cohen (1994) contributes to an understanding of social memory as fluid and responsive to power; he also points to instances of suppression and silencing, a theme developed in *Between History and Histories: The Making of Silences and Commemorations* (Sider and Smith 1997). John Gillis (1994) discusses memory and identity as politically and socially constructed. Pierre Nora puts memory and history in opposition, characterizing memory as “subject to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting;” he identifies *lieux de memoire*: sites where memory is “crystallized,” and where “a residual sense of continuity remains” (1996: 1). Each of these approaches has contributed to the thought behind my thesis and could be developed in future analysis.

9. These newspapers are the *Daily Alta California*, August 1, 1851, and the *Oregon Spectator*, July 3, 1851; I wish to thank one of the persons whom I interviewed who provided me with personally transcribed copies of these, and other, articles. Dodge also quotes from Captain Tichenor’s autobiography, in which Tichenor mentions finding scattered “fragments of diary” near the site of Battle Rock (1969: 23). Kirkpatrick’s account in Dodge (1969: 47-8) contains a careful explanation of how he wrote and then hid his account of the conflict before the men left Battle Rock. A comprehensive compilation and analysis of the earliest accounts of the events at Battle Rock, beyond the scope of this paper, may elucidate suggestive variations.

10. A.G. Walling’s history states that it appeared Tichenor returned the day after the nine men left their camp, believed the men to be dead, and returned to San Francisco to procure more men (1884: 473). In Tichenor’s account, as printed in Dodge (1969: 23), Tichenor indicates that he was on board the *Columbia* when it returned to Port Orford and found evidence of the conflict.

11. While Kirkpatrick specifies it was printed in the *Oregonian*, H.H. Bancroft (1888: 195) cites the *Oregon Statesman*, as Webber and Webber note (1992: 12).

12. Besides doing archival research and interviews, I stayed in Port Orford for one six-day and three two-day periods and also made several day trips. I visited the windy site of Battle Rock City Park and the Wayfinder Point on many occasions. I walked to the site of Fort Orford, went down to the port, and drove to the slightly more distant site of the Coast Guard barracks. I also toured the lighthouse at Cape Blanco and viewed displays by the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians and a new mural that depicts the settlement of that site by Native Americans. I attended the 1999 Fourth of July Jubilee and observed one City Council meeting and one Parks Commission meeting. I also attended the dedication of the Fishermen’s Memorial on August 14, 1999 and the 1999 Gathering of the People in Agness, Oregon, in September—an event sponsored by the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue. When I engaged a person in anything other than casual conversation, I informed them that I was a graduate student doing a research project.

13. I once asked my grandfather—whose mother grew up in the Willamette Valley, her own grandparents being Irish immigrants who arrived in Oregon in 1847—if Indians had ever lived here, on the banks of the Winchuck River where I was playing as he worked. He looked at me seriously, keenly, and answered, no. Disappointed, I ended my search for arrowheads among the jumbled river rocks. Yet as the years passed, I began to discover that my grandfather had been wrong, or perhaps had chosen to answer no. This paper represents my continued efforts to understand his answer to my question.

14. Newspapers reviewed were the *World* (Coos Bay), *Port Orford News* and *Port Orford Today!* The latter is a free weekly advertiser with detailed coverage of City Council meetings. Letters to the editor expressed a wide range of opinions and were particularly revealing.

15. They were usually contacted by letter and then telephoned. I asked for and received written permission to use the names of several of the persons interviewed.

16. Twelve interviewees were resident in or near Port Orford, fifteen were residents elsewhere, and the residence of one person was unknown. I judged that there were four whom I could identify as coming from "old-timer" families, that is, resident for more than one generation. Two others were long-time residents. I identified three persons as fitting into a category of "newcomer," or residents of less than fifteen years. Five persons with whom I spoke are members of Native American tribal groups.

17. I included participants associated with the Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon Historical Marker Committee, Port Orford Parks Commission, and the Port Orford Community Resource Team (now dissolved). Other participants included a museum curator, an artist, a museum exhibit designer, and a businessman whose company produces interpretive signage.

18. The Coquille Tribe of Oregon was legislatively restored in 1989 after termination in 1954; tribal offices are in Coos Bay (Wasson 1996: 143). Aboriginally, their territory included villages on the Coquille River watershed and on the coast to Sixes River; along the lower reaches of the Coquille River, Miluk, a Kusan language, was spoken, while Athapaskan was the language upriver (Wasson 1996: 143).

19. It appears that the removal and defacement of the old marker precluded this plan.

20. John Quick is the author of *Fool's Hill: A Kid's Life in an Oregon Coastal Town* (1995). The unpublished play, *Fool's Hill*, was scripted by William Sipes (1998) and presented by Mike Hall Productions during the Port Orford Jubilee Celebration in 1998.

21. There was some disagreement in the community about sign removal being written into the park master plan. This detail of the plan does not appear to have been well publicized judging, from the reactions of the townspeople. I did not review the plan.

22. Several activities are listed under "Representing the Community to the Outside." These include a Legislative Liaison for the CRT having initiated contact with the state Senator and Representative, a CRT co-chair and the Business Development Co-chair becoming members of a board that advises the County Commissioners, another co-chair representing Community Resource Teams in a regional forum which provided an opportunity to present regional interests to federal and state funding agencies, and the Business Development Co-chair heading the Port Orford Enterprise Zone (Port Orford Area Community Resource Team 1997:3).

23. The Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue initiated the federal acknowledgement process by sending a letter of intent to petition for acknowledgement to the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Branch of Acknowledgement and Research. Their March 24, 1997 letter of intent was submitted under the name "United Chetco-Toootootoney Tribes" (U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs 1997: 29). Because of a regulation in the application procedure prohibiting the federal acknowledgement process to groups terminated by legislation, the CTLR must seek recognition through the legislative branch of the United States government.

24. By "marrying white," a phrase used by one interviewee in another context, these women seem to have had their aboriginality erased. A document from the Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue (n.d.a)

states, "Because the women were not on the reservation, there is no record of their existence as Indian people." To complicate issues of identity—assigned as well as self-ascribed—those who remained in their homelands or who returned from reservations utilized strategies of survival such as those articulated by Moss and Wasson (1998: 325): denying or ignoring aboriginal identity, marriage to non-aboriginals, "and/or keeping a low profile on the margins of the community." The important role of women who married settlers and did not go to reservations has been noted by Roberta Hall (1991) writing of the Coquilles: "Much of the credit for preserving Coquille culture belongs to these women and their descendants" (1991: 153).

25. This is not the same person who spoke at the Parks Commission meetings and had been doing historical research.

26. I was unfortunately unable to meet with these three individuals. Neither they nor Mrs. Pilgrim attended the 1999 Gathering of the People in Agness, Oregon, where I anticipated meeting them in September. This represents a significant lack of thorough planning on my part, and reflects time, travel and budget limitations.

27. According to the *Port Orford News*, the dedication was to have read "Dedicated to the Dene Tsut Dah (People of Long Ago)" (September 2, 1998: 1). The words "the memory of" seem to have been omitted in error, but I was unable to verify this. It is curious that the dedication was omitted from the final version of text on the interpretive panel, as it would have explicitly signified a commemorative function for the sign.

28. This definition of public history follows that of Furniss (1999: 211).

29. *Tre-geen-on* is the Athapaskan place name for the settlement near the landing site of Tichenor's men (adapted from Bommelyn 1995: viii).

30. The pressing need for such restatement could have been derived from such experiences as confronting local efforts to rebuild the military installation and site of incarceration of Native Americans at Fort Orford as a commercial venture, as much as from confronting on a daily basis a monument perceived as offensive to Native Americans.

31. See, for example, *Rethinking American Indian History* (Fixico 1995). Kerwin Lee Klein in *Frontiers of Historical Imagination: Narrating the European Conquest of Native America, 1890-1990* writes: "Describing the encounter of European and Native American as a conflict between incommensurable cultures opened up a national memory divided by ethnicity and plot: however happy history may have been for white Americans, for the natives it was ruthlessly tragic. Tragedy dominated anthropology for the first half of the twentieth century, and when in the 1950s the new specialty of 'ethnohistory' emerged, its practitioners commonly incorporated the ethnographic tragedy into their own works. By the 1960s even nearsighted scientists could see that Native American had not disappeared. Driven partly by American Indian scholars like Vine Deloria Jr., a new story emerged in which Native American cultures heroically survived and even overcame Euro-American oppression" (1997: 9-10).

32. According to Stephen Dow Beckham (1996a: 53), Kirkpatrick wrote two accounts of events at Battle Rock, one which appeared in *Alta California*, July 25, 1851, and the other, in *The Heroes of Battle Rock, or the Miners Reward*. The latter, as reprinted in Webber and Webber (1992), closely follows the version printed in Dodge (1969).

33. This definition of history is taken from a quotation by Greg Denning cited in Cohen (1994: 23).

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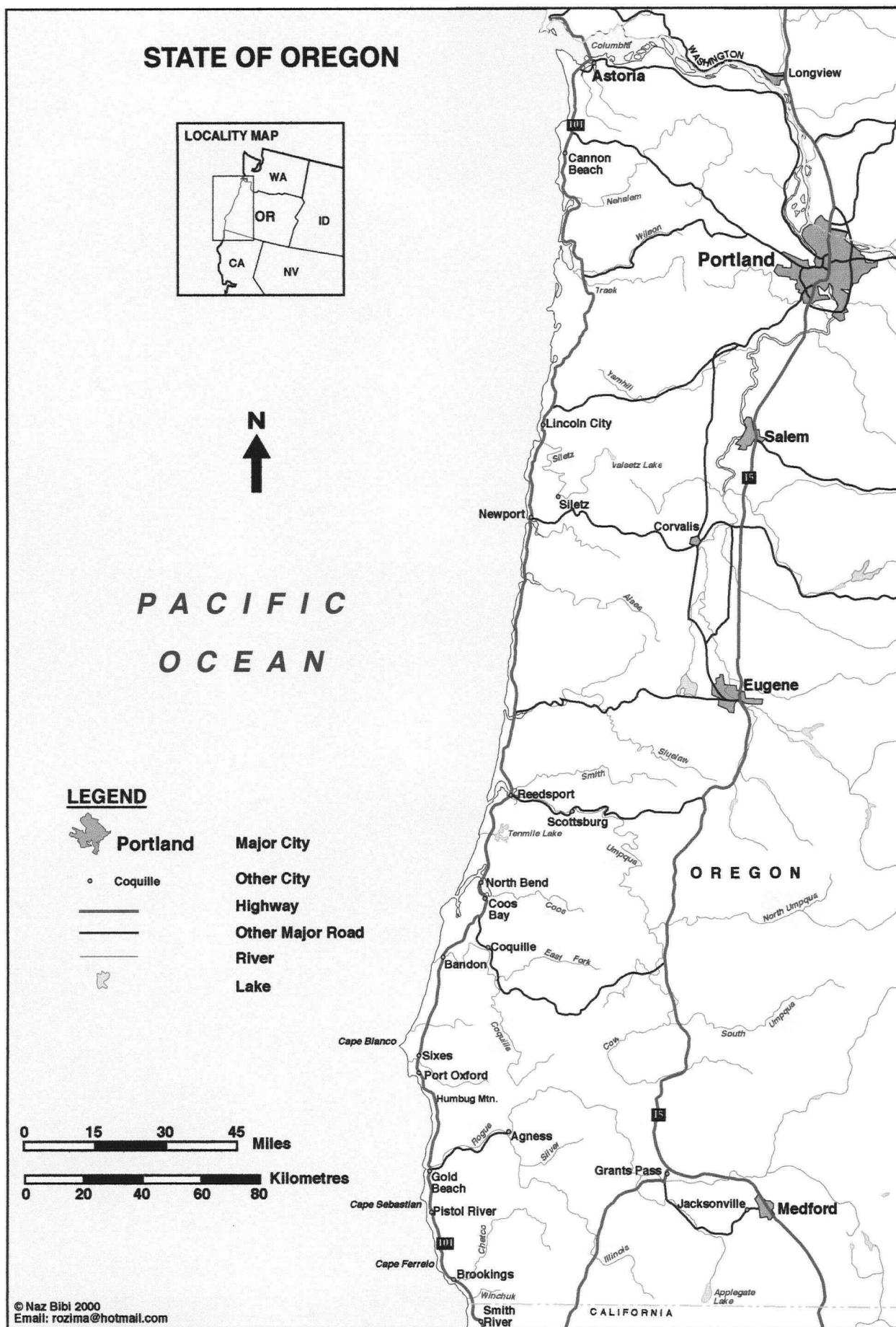
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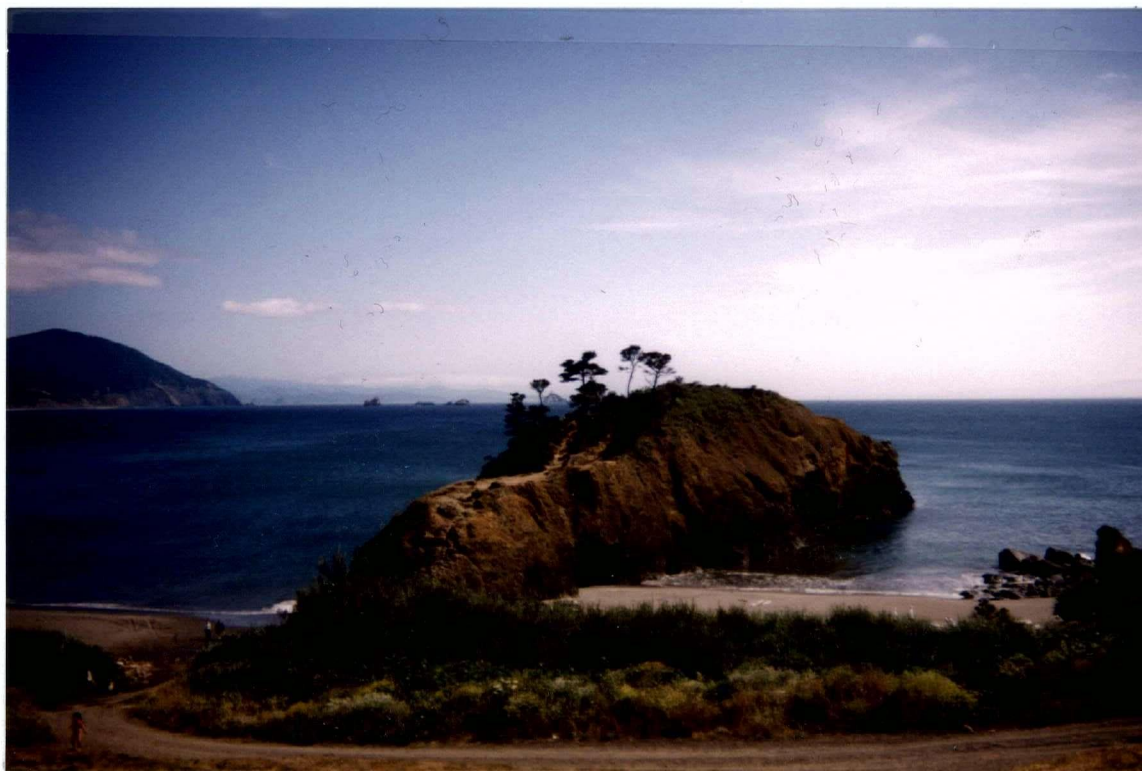
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APPENDIX I  
MAP OF COASTAL OREGON



APPENDIX II

PHOTOGRAPH OF BATTLE ROCK, 1999

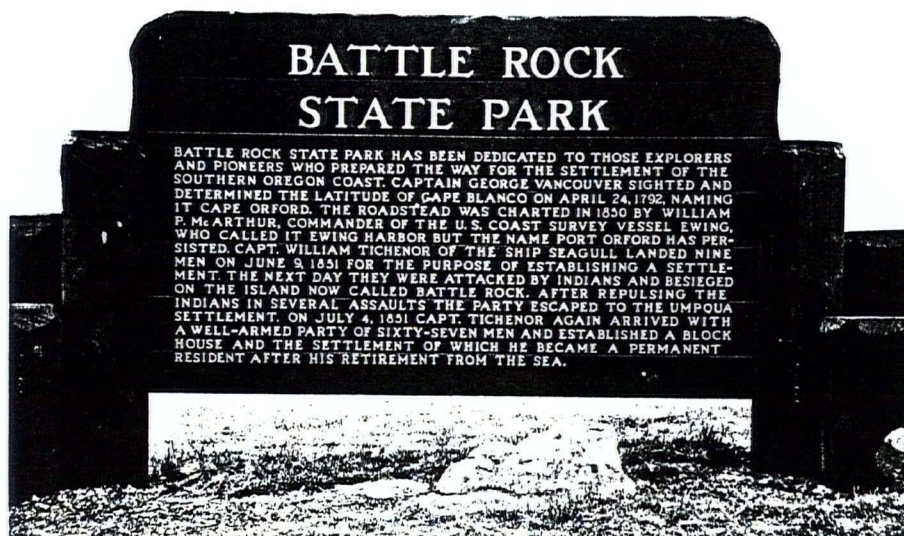


Photograph by L. Nading

### APPENDIX III

ORIGINAL HISTORICAL MARKER, CIRCA 1968

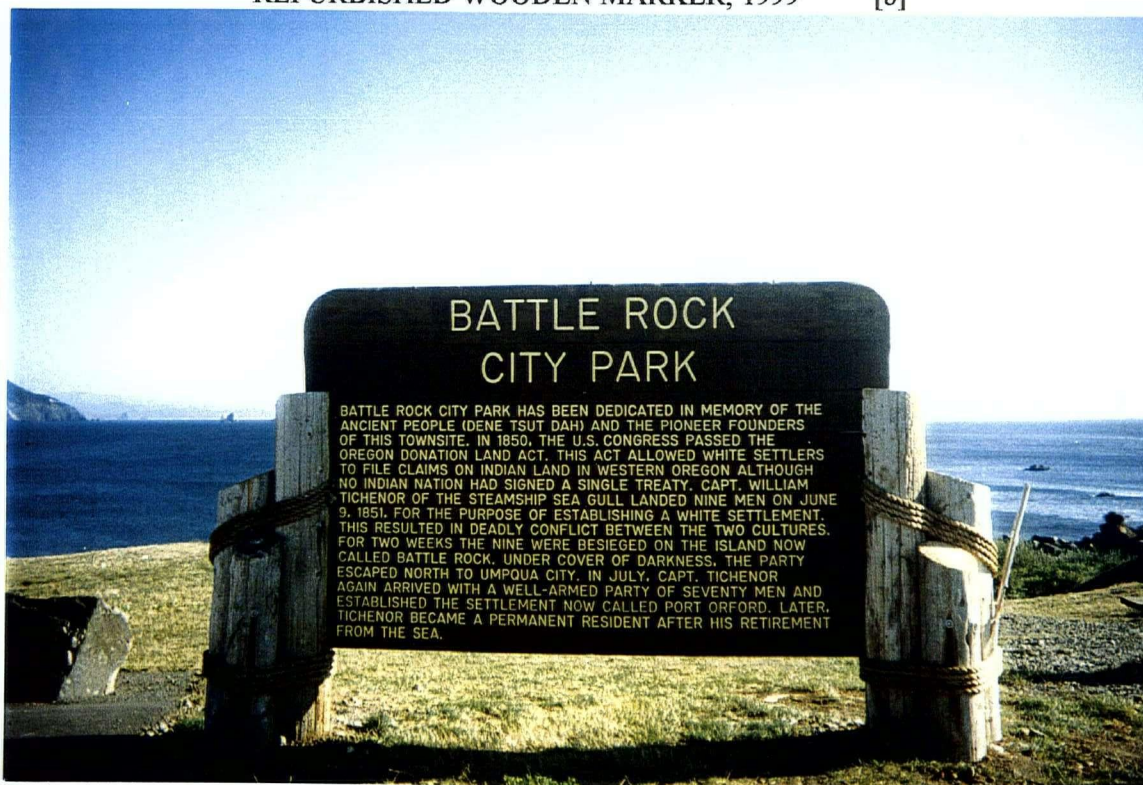
[a]



Photograph by S. Kume, used with permission

REFURBISHED WOODEN MARKER, 1999

[b]



Photograph by L. Nading

## Battle Rock

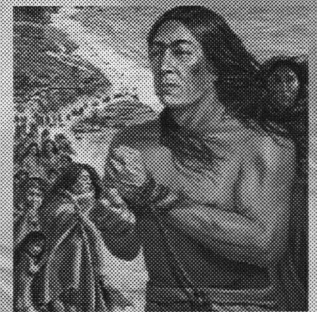
The Tututní people lived along the Southern Oregon coast, including this site, and the lower Rogue River for thousands of years before first contact with explorers, miners, and settlers.

In 1792, George Vancouver was among the first outsiders to make contact with local native peoples. He described them as "curious, with a mild and peaceable disposition." The local Quatomah band of the Tututní people were not as friendly nearly 60 years later, however, when they visited William Tichenor and his party at this site. On June 9, 1851, Tichenor landed a party of nine men armed with rifles and a small cannon to establish a town in their village — Battle Rock is named for this conflict.

## Trail of Tears

By the early 1850s, miners and settlers infiltrated the entire length of the Rogue River. Mining destroyed the fish runs, while settlement, infectious diseases, and the development of farms devastated centuries of native tradition and culture. Settlers fenced the pastures, tilled the camas meadows, and decimated elk and deer populations.

Tension mounted, and attacks by Euro-Americans and natives occurred along the Rogue River culminating in the Rogue River Wars of 1855-56. Congress created the Coast Reservation in 1855, and US troops quickly began removing native peoples from their aboriginal lands. As early as February 1856, natives were force-marched to the Coast Reservation. By 1857, the majority of surviving natives were forced onto the reservation. About 1,200 were marched here to Port Orford and held in open pens until the steamship *Columbia* deported them north to the Coast Reservation. The last resisters, Tecumtum "chief John" and his band, were marched 125 miles up the coast. Many descendants of these displaced peoples reside today on the Siletz and Grande Ronde Reservation.



*Abinkutle Tillicums (Ancestors)*  
courtesy of Peggy O'Neal.