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By Matthew S. Makley

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**The Small Shall Be Strong: A History of Lake Tahoe's Washoe Indians.** By Matthew S. Makley. University of Massachusetts Press, 2018. 234 pages. \$90.00 cloth; \$27.95 paper.

Often overlooked by historians, smaller American Indian nations have contributed significantly to the sociocultural and political transformation of their respective territories. Matthew S. Makley, a professor of history at Metropolitan State University of Denver, makes this argument for the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, which has “continued to influence the culture, society, and physical space of the eastern Sierra” (6). Extending the work done by the late Jo Ann Nevers, an enrolled member of the Washoe Tribe, in *Wa She Shu: A Washo Tribal History* (1976) and the anthropologist Warren L. d’Azevedo, Makley contributes significantly to the dearth of academic work pertaining to the Washoe. Indigenous to the Lake Tahoe region and its surrounding peaks and valleys, the Washoe have populated their history and the history of western Nevada and eastern California with projects of resilience and continued resistance to colonialism. Although the history of the Washoe seems micro in scale, its impact on the macro histories of the American West, Native American history, and United States history is made clear in Makley’s presentation.

Makley masterfully utilizes oral histories from a wide range of Washoe people to construct a complicated narrative. Isolated by the Sierra Nevada mountain range to the west and the vastness of the Great Basin to the east, Washoe lifeways were sheltered until the nineteenth century. Settlers invaded Washoe territory as they trekked west to seek riches in the California gold fields and then returned east to the Nevada Comstock Lode. Makley contends that within about a twenty-year span, the Washoe were dispossessed and marginalized by the now-dominant society. The oral histories include individuals from the three bands of Washoe: the Welmelti (Northern Washoe), the Hanglelti (Southern Washoe), and the P’a-walu (Central Washoe). Complementing the oral record, Makley thoroughly examined archival materials in anthropological records, governmental correspondence, Bureau of Indian Affairs classified files, and legal case notes; especially notable is that he was able to access minutes of Washoe Tribal Council meetings. A major contribution to the literature comes from Makley’s use of the Washoe language in a range of instances from Washoe place names such as Cimé Dimé (Double Springs) to Washoe concepts like *wegéleyu* (power). This intervention reflects advancements in the discipline of history to recognize the ability of Indigenous languages to explain and create understandings of differing worldviews.

Covering Washoe history from their genesis to their contemporary realities, Makley’s mostly modern history impressively maneuvers through various phases of federal Indian policy and local attempts to quell Washoe survival. Inclusive of accounts from regionally famous Washoes such as Epesuwa or Captain Jim, Henry Rupert, and Datsolalee, this important history demonstrates the powerful contributions of Washoe individuals to the broader historical narrative of the region. Testament to the Washoe tradition of resiliency, Makley documents their collective determination to navigate federal bureaucratic complexities and achieve enormous victories in land reclamation

in the Pine Nut Mountains and at Lake Tahoe, and the legal protection of one of their most sacred sites, Deʔek Wadapuš (Cave Rock).

The chapters paint a picture of blatant racism and the institutionalized marginalization of the Washoe that supported dispossession but more importantly, the resilience of the Washoe to endure and resist. Early chapters offer a prelude of Washoe life prior to invasion and detail the destructive intentions of settlers, influenced by the desire for gold and land, through the formation of anti-Indian philosophies. Chapter 3 introduces the rising violence and environmental devastation during the Gold Rush. Chapter 4 details the carnage enacted upon Washoe territory while exploiting mineral resources in the Comstock Lode. Chapter 5 demonstrates the variety of ways that Washoes, individually and collectively, survived culturally and physically. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 explain how Washoes came to reclaim components of their territories for use as “colonies,” the prejudices that Washoes endured, and the very important Indian Lands Claim case in which Washoes would once again be slighted by the US government. The final chapter, “The Journey Home,” offers a telling history of the presidential summit in 1997 at Lake Tahoe where Washoes were finally returned to the influence and land at the heart of their world, Lake Tahoe. Makley included only one map, which is usefully explanatory and accurate displaying Washoe territory, but it would have been beneficial to include additional maps to offer readers a clearer view of the Washoe allotments and colonies.

In addition, Makley’s use of both settler colonialism and extractive colonialism are minimal, mentioned once in the introduction and again in chapter 4, “The Chaos of Destruction.” A more complex presentation of settler-Native relations could have been developed, had Makley employed these theoretical frameworks more deeply. Makley’s preface announces his deliberate intentions to “go light” on academic theoretical emphasis. I applaud this decision, as the book is very readable and accessible to a broad audience.

Joining a distinguished group of historians of Great Basin American Indian history, including Martha C. Knack, Steven J. Crum, and Ned Blackhawk, Makley has formulated an analytical foundation on which future research pertaining to the Washoe can build within academic disciplines such as Native American history, North American history, and American Indian studies. Considering the ethical obligations of researchers investigating Indigenous groups, it is important to maintain reciprocity. Makley holds this principle in regard, writing that he has “formed lasting relationships with tribal members” by contributing a history that could and should be read by readers inside and outside of the academy. *The Small Shall be Strong* should be read by historians of Native American history and all students of Washoe history.

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