Umatilla (Shahaptian stock) Synonym: Utilla. A tribe formerly occupying the lower portion of the river of the same name, with the adjacent bank of the Columbia in Oregon.

They speak a distinct language of the Shahaptian stock. By the treaty of 1855 they agreed to go on the Umatilla reservation in Oregon, where in 1892 they were reported to number 216. A large proportion of those now called Cayuse on the same reservation are Umatilla mixed bloods. Mooney, 14th annual report.
Ow-ak-tin chief.

Howlish Wampo, chief.

Wa-nap-2noot, chief.

...many of the Indians have been absent on their annual hunting and
fishing excursions to Collie.

...reservation covers a tract of country equal to an area of about
25 square miles and embraces a large body of the most valuable land in
Eastern Oregon. The Umatilla river, a small but beautiful bright stream
flows entirely through it from east to west and abounds with
mountain trout and in some seasons with salmon.

...he white settlements have crowded upon the borders of the Indian
tract on every side and the expression of desire on the part of the
whites that the treaty should be extinguished and these lands thrown
open for settlement, has been universal and ardent. Rumors are afloat
that efforts will be made at the next sitting of Congress to
this end which has created much dissatisfaction and complaint among
the Indians.

......
Suicide cemetery is two miles from the mission. They quite burying there about 1928. Before that anyone who committed suicide or met a violent death was buried there.

Then there is the Catholic mission cemetery.

There is the Tatawalla mission cemetery. It is Presbyterian.

The Mikiah creek cemetery is called Howtee-Pooos.

The West Mikiah creek cemetery is four miles out of Pendleton. The last buried there was Bishop were hung. There were several who killed men over on the old Oregon trail at Dead man’s hill. That was about 1898. One of the men didn’t die but recognized the Indians and they hung four of them. They hung them where the old courthouse is at Pendleton. It is gone now and the saddle and leather store, Hamley’s is located there now.

A long time ago if someone died while traveling, they had different places to bury. There was John Day in Oregon and the City of Wallowa. Even if the person died when 20 miles away they carried them there and buried them.

At the West Mikiah cemetery they buried just before noon, those men who had been hung. The next day they were found. One of the men who had been hung hollowed after they buried him and some Indian happened to be going by. He thought it was an evil spirit and told the Indians but no one went there for several days. Then they found that a man had risen part way up out of the ground. His mouth was full of dirt and he had been managed to tear some of the things off himself, but he was dead then. So after that they quit burying there and now they wait three days after death.

Cattle:

The Cayuse had cattle as early as 1804.

Tom Joe’s mother lived to be over 130 years old. Tom Joe’s mother was named Kim-Sha. She was a woman with a child when Lewis and
Umatilla.

Umatilla Indian Agency, Oregon, August 19, 1865.

As you are aware, the tribes under my charge are composed of the Cayuse, Walla Walla and Umatilla bands, confederated by the treaty of June 9, 1855 and numbering as per census taken by me on the 22d June last 759 souls classified as follows, viz:

Cayuse—E-n-stin-Met-Sic, chief, 89 males, 140 women, 67 boys, 74 girls, total 370.

Walla Walla, Houte chief, 48 men, 63 women, 23 boys, 26 girls, 160 total.

Umatilla—Sonap-Snoot, chief, 55 men, 93 women, 39 boys, 42 girls, total 229.

Grand total, 192 men, 296 women, 129 boys, 142 girls, 759 grand total.

The privilege is granted to the Indians at certain seasons of the year to hunt and fish in the mountains bordering the reservation, as per first article of the treaty, but I only permit them to be absent for a limited period, and when they are not engaged in agricultural pursuits. Last spring while a party of Umatilla Indians were encamped on a tributary of John Day's river, distant about forty miles from the reserve, they were attacked by a party of hostile Snake Indians and all their horses fifty one head—stolen from them.

It is currently believed that the commander of this military department has recently ordered the abandonment of Fort Walla Walla as a military post. The post is distant from the agency about thirty miles and if the troops are withdrawn from it I earnestly request that a detachment of cavalry be stationed permanently on the reserve within a few miles of the agency for the purpose of protecting both whites and Indians. It is a well known fact that the reservation is
a thoroughfare to the agricultural districts of Grande Ronde and Powder River valleys and the gold and silver mines of Boise and Owyhee, being constantly traversed by thousands of white people, it is difficulty and at times almost impossible for the agent, unaided to prevent serious disturbances between travellers and Indians. If the reservation is left without military protection nearer than one hundred and fifty miles as it would be by the withdrawal of the troops from Fort Walla Walla trouble will soon arise between the worst class of whites and the Indians who have heretofore been kept in subjection by a wholesome fear of the military. . . .

Wm. H. Barnhart, U.S.

Indian agent. J.W. Perit Huntington, Esp. Supt. Indian Affairs

Salem, Oregon.
Umatilla

This agency is situated in the northeast corner of the state and is a fertile and valuable tract of land.

The superior quality of the land and its location on a great thoroughfare, conveniently to the gold mines of Powder river, Boise basin, Cughen and other points, of course make it attractive to the whites. There are constant attempts to encroach upon it, constant attempts, under various pretexts, to locate upon it and occasional attempts to exasperate the Indians into the commission of some overt act which will justify, or at least palliate, retaliation and then give an excuse for plunging the country into another Indian war, the end of which they well know would be the expulsion of the Indians from the coveted tract.

...Population is rushing into Washington, Idaho and Montana at the rate of many thousands per month. The only parts now entirely unsettled are barren deserts, quite as incapable of supporting an Indian as a white population.

I estimate that the reservation could be sold for $150,000 to $200,000. Its perpetual possession has been guaranteed to the Indians by treaty and it would be the grossest of bad faith to take possession of it without their consent. That consent will be obtained with the greatest difficulty, if at all.

Two roads have been authorized by your office to be opened through the reservation within the past year, one for the use of Thomas & Ruckle's stage firm and the other for the use of the citizens of Umatilla county, Oregon.

The treaty with these Indians reserved to them the same rights that were reserved to the Indians at Warm Springs by the treaty with them. I refer to the right to fish, hunt, gather roots and berries and pasture their stock on land outside the reservation. This privilege is simply equivalent to giving them permission to roam at
will over the country and is demoralizing to them and damaging to the whitesettlers. Their facilities for obtaining whiskey is almost unlimited. Instructing them in schools or teaching them the art of arming and its value are impossible and the Indians are impoverished, debauched and demoralized.

I.W.P. Huntington, Supt. of Indian affairs for Oregon to Hon D.N. Cooley, commissioner of Indian affairs.

Report to Secretary of Interior, 2d session 39th congress, 1866-67.
Commissioner of Indian affairs, 1868-69. 3rd session, 40th congress.

Umatilla Indian Agency, Oregon, July 25, 1868.

Sir: I have the honor to present this, my seventh annual report, of the condition of Indian affairs at this agency.

Your circular dated the 6th instant requiring my annual report to reach your office by the 1st proximo has only just been received by me. This report, will, therefore, be less complete, in detail than I could wish in consequence of the hurried manner in which it is necessarily prepared.

The three main tribes under my charge, confederated by the treaty of 9th June 1855, consist of the Cayuses, Walla Wallas, and Umatillas, numbering in the aggregate 847 souls, as per census taken by me on the 25th of March last and classified as follows:

Cayuses, chief, Howlish nampo, 87 men, 155 women 78 boys, 61 girls total 381.

Walla Wallas—Houhi—62 males, 36 women, 34 boys, 31 girls, 223 total.

Umatillas—Woman—hoote—37 males, 111 women, 55 boys, 30 girls, 243 total. Grand total:

216 men, 362 women, 147 boys, 122 girls, 847 grand total.

It will be observed that the last census shows a material increase in the number of Indians on the reservation.

These Indians were induced to come and live on the reservation by the example presented to them by members of their own tribes—Walla Wallas, Umatillas, who cultivate the soil and by the moral suasion of the agent, who has never relaxed his efforts to bring here all Indians who were parties to the treaty.

There are yet several hundred Indians belonging to these tribes living on the Upper Columbia who never have partaken of the benefits of the treaty, and indeed, have never even visited the reserve. Owing for
away from any thoroughfare of the whites, they have caused no
trouble to the country and live on fish and roots in which that region
abounds.

The past year has witnessed the usual prosperity of my Indians
in pastoral and agricultural pursuits, together with other evidences
of a permanent transition from barbarism to civilization.

The area of land in cultivation will exceed that of 18009d last
year and the growing crops promise an abundant harvest. The number of
acres planted this spring may be estimated as follows: Five
hundred acres of wheat, 100 acres of corn, 150 acres of oats and at
least 400 acres in potatoes, peas, timothy, hay, melons, squashes
onions, parsnips and other kinds of vegetables.

I believe it is clearly demonstrated that all Indians who
can be induced to cultivate the soil are improved in all respects and
present a striking contrast in their surrounding friends and relatives
who still adhere in a greater or less degree to their primeval customs.

Years of patient effort are required to thoroughly searve the untamed
savage from the aboriginal habits of his fathers and the thankless
perilous task is not unfrequently repaid by a complete retrogression
on the part of the ungrateful ward, unexpectedly loans to the mountains
to hunt and 800 fish at a time when his cereal harvest is bending its
golden head for the sickle.

However, it is gratifying to know that year by year the number who
rely mainly on the products of the farm for their livelihood is
increasing and it is not too much to expect that by the time the
treaty expires all may exist solely by the art of the husbandman.

The last winter was more than usually severe, yet the Indians lost but
little of their stock; the greatest number however were short of seed
in the spring, but sufficient for all their wants was furnished by God me.m
At the present writing rumors are rife that Congress has recently enacted a law authorizing the superintendence of Indian affairs to purchase the reservation from the Indians and make a new treaty with them. Nothing relative to the matter is officially known by me as yet, but the Indians are becoming quite uneasy in consequence of the distorted information constantly being vouchsafed them by white people.

As soon as the facts regarding this law, so vital to the Indians are known to you, I beg respectfully to be officially informed thereof that the minds of the Indians may be gradually prepared by me in an authoritative form for the contemplated negotiations.

My own opinion is that the Indians, by judicious action on the part of those having the management of the affair may be induced to sell their lands with the improvements thereon and remove elsewhere if they can be assured of the perpetual possession of as good land, of less extent, somewhere removed and isolated from the proximity and cupidity of their civilized white brethren.

That the fact is patent to anybody that this tract of land lying as it does on the highway to Boise, Owyhee and Salt Lake with stage routes and roads traversing it is entirely unfit for an Indian reservation and the sooner it is purchased from the Indians and settled by the whites the better it will be for both races.

A great portion of the land is valuable for agricultural and grazing purposes and if sold in small tracts of say 160 to 320 acres it would not be long before there would be a wealthy and populous country where there is now only a few hundred Indians, who are being constantly annoyed, harassed and impoverished by their too close proximity to white people who want their land.

William H. Barnhart, U.S. Indian agent. To J.W. Perit

Huntington esq. supt. of Indian affairs, Salem, Oregon.
No. 18. Umatilla Reservation, Oregon, July 24, 1868

Sir: In accordance with the rules of the department I have the honor to submit the following report:

The school, as in the two preceding years, has been generally well attended; especially in winter, when all the Indians are at home, the average number of scholars at that time ranging from 20 to 26.

In the summer season, however, the attendance was not so large, many of them accompanying their parents into the mountains at this season of the year.

I believe the only plan to prevent the children from traveling around with their parents at this time to be the establishment of a regular boarding school...

With very few exceptions all the scholars are initiated into the elementary principles of arithmetic and many of them can read well in the 1st, 2d and 3d Saundar's Readers. They have also made satisfactory progress in writing. Accompanying this I enclose a few leaves from their copy books which, if you deem proper, you can forward to the department with my report.

It is my candid opinion if the children had received the benefit of a well trained boarding school and had been removed from their parents they would by this time be considerably advanced and would be able to speak our language pretty fluently.

...I again take the liberty to bring to your notice the condition of the school house. It is entirely too small and too low. It has no fire place and the roof is too unsound to keep out the rain, and it is really too hard to put these children, after having made their way through the mud, snow and cold, in a room without sufficient fire....

A. Vermeersch, teacher... to Hon William H. Barnhart, U.S. Indian Agent.
Umatilla Indian agency. Commissioner of Indian affairs, 1874

September 17, 1874.

Sir: I have the honor to submit my annual report as agent for the Walla-Walla, Cayuse and Umatilla tribes of Indians.

In January last I took an accurate census of these Indians which I found to be as follows:

Walla-Walla, 29 men, 53 women, 24 boys, 22 girls, 128 total.
Cayuses, 98 men, 133 women, 88 boys, 71 girls, 385 total.
Umatillas: 40 men, 71 women, 55 boys, 23 girls, 169 total.
Grand totals: 157 men, 262 women, 147 boys, 116 girls, 689 in all.

These are all living on the Umatilla reservation. In addition to this number there are about 150 Indians who occasionally come upon the reservation and remain a short time but do not make it their permanent home. Nearly all who permanently reside upon the reservation cultivate the soil; and a majority of them have, to a greater or less extent, adopted the dress of the whites. Although these Indians are possessed of large bands of horses and cattle and some individual Indians are wealthy, the majority of them, particularly the Walla-Wallas and Umatillas, are poor.

During the past year these people have been well behaved and peaceable and one of them have evinced a disposition to go to work.

This I attribute in a great measure to the difficulties now experienced by them in obtaining spirituous liquors. The large number of persons whom I have caused to be arrested and punished for selling liquor to Indians has had a most beneficial effect and has almost put an entire stop to the vile traffic; and it is now extremely rare to see a drunken Indian; in fact I do not think I have seen one on the reservation in the last twelvemonths.

The Indians this year put in a much larger area of ground than formerly. Several new farms were opened and old farms enlarged new fences were built and we had every prospect of a large crop, but
Unfortunately we were visited by immeasurable quantities of crickets and grasshoppers which devastated more than half of the farms on the reservation so that the yield this year will be very short. I have consequently been compelled to allow the Indians to go to the mountains and valleys adjacent to the reservation to hunt, fish and dig roots, so that they may be amply provided with sufficient food to make up for the loss of their crops. On the agency farm the wheat which promised well was entirely destroyed and the oats partially so. Next spring it will be necessary to purchase considerable grain for seed.

During the summer a deputy United States surveyor, acting under instructions from the surveyor-general of Oregon made a survey of that portion of the reservation running from a point in the Umatilla river opposite the mouth of "Ild Horse creek to C. McKay's land claim and also took evidence in regard to the mouth of "Ild Horse Creek in order, as I understand, that the same may be laid before the commissioner of the general land office for his decision on the matter. I hope as soon as a final decision is reached that I may be furnished with a map showing the boundaries of the reserve, as disputes are liable to arise at any moment between the white settlers and the Indians.

This reservation, being entirely surrounded by white settlers who are all more or less engaged in stock-raising, it is impossible entirely to prevent their stock from coming on the reservation and mixing with that of the Indians, which is a constant source of annoyance. Of course should they be found willfully to drive their stock to the reservation, the law could then be put in force against them. Of this the citizens are fully aware. The law of 1834 (copy) provides that any one guilty of driving stock upon the reservation without the consent of the Indians shall pay a fine of $1 per head for every animal so driven, to be recovered in an action for debt.
That portion of the law, should I think, be amended in regard to all offenses under this act and the penalty should be by fine or imprisonment or both at the discretion of the court.

I would also most urgently call the attention of the department to the absolute necessity which exists of providing some measures of punishment of offenses committed by one Indian against the person or property of another. "As it is now, crimes are constantly committed; the aggrieved party calls upon the agent to see that justice is done, and all the agent can do is to lay the matter before the chiefs, who alone are authorized to punish the aggressor. In many cases the chiefs are powerless; in fact they have but very little authority. I would suggest that authority be given by Congress to the President, authorizing him whenever he deems the Indians on any reservation sufficiently advanced, to declare the laws of the United States extended over them.

This would necessitate the appointment of some person on each reservation with magisterial powers, authorized to try petty offenses, such as usually come within the jurisdiction of a justice of the peace, and in graver crimes to bind the parties over to the United States courts.

(Columbia River Indians)

From a communication from you bearing date June 11, 1874, I am informed that one of the inspectors would shortly visit this agency and that he would have some instructions in reference to the Indians on the Columbia river. He has not yet been here but I see that Gen. W. Vandever is now in Oregon and I am looking for him daily. I hope that his instructions may be such that some arrangements may be made with these Indians as they are a great drawback to the reservation Indians. Until these Indians are placed under proper control there will be no material improvement among the Indians on
the several reservations in eastern Oregon and Washington.

These Indians are numerous and are generally estimated to number about 2,000.

They belong to various tribes and bands all of which, being subject to the influence of a self-appointed chief constituted chief, named Sho-hole-ler or Big talk on four mountains. He has obtained his power by working on the superstitions of the Indians and his influence has spread through all the various tribes and bands of Oregon, Washington and Idaho; and I am informed among the Indians of California, Utah and Nevada (copy) these Indians all believe in the practice of polygamy, and their leaders are constantly preaching to their people that the day is coming when they will again be a great and powerful people and will be strong enough to drive the whites from the country.

They profess to look with contempt on the reservations and Indians, who have adopted the habits and customs of civilization, calling them whites and half-breeds. By thus appealing to the passions and pride of the Indians they hold a control not only on those living on the Columbia River but on large numbers who reside upon the several reservations.

By the exercise of the most rigid economy I had managed to save by the end of the last fiscal year out of the fund for purchase of mill, fixtures, etc. per fourth article of treaty, June 9, 1865, the sum of $791.62. With this money and the addition of a small amount from the appropriation for this year, I intended, provided I could obtain permission from the department, to remove the saw mill nearer to the timber so that we could procure a supply of lumber at a moderate expense. But to my great disappointment I received an order from the department directing me to turn over all unexpended balances at the end of the year to the U.S. treasury. Notwithstanding
this drawback, it is still my intention to make an effort to remove the mill.

During the month of July I received a communication from the department notifying me that the appropriation for pay and subsistence of the regular employees under the treaty had been reduced to $2,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1875. The treaty expressly provides that there shall be employed one superintendent of farming, one farmer, two teachers, two millers, one carpenter, one blacksmith, one physician and one wagon and plow maker. The sum appropriated this year is entirely inadequate for the compensation of competent persons to fill the several positions. I have therefore been compelled to discharge one of the employees and to reduce the pay of the others, so that I can keep within the amount of the appropriation. I trust that another Congress may see the absolute necessity of making the amount of the appropriation sufficient to enable us to fulfill our treaty obligations.

The only school on this reservation is a day school and the number of scholars is about the same as last year. The attendance has been regular until the past month when many of them were compelled by their parents to accompany them to the mountains on their annual hunt. Not being prepared to board the children it is impossible to board them during the absence of their parents. There should be a manual labor and boarding school established and a small appropriation in addition to our present means would be sufficient to make a commencement. Until this is done I intend, as soon as possible, to open another day school in another portion of the reservation to accommodate a large number of Indians who live at a great distance from the present school to be able to send their children.

N.A. Gormoyer, U.S. Indian

agent.

to Hon. B. B. Smith, Commissioner
Umatilla reservation.

Number of Indians: Walla Walla, 373 men, 476 women. total of Cayuse Umatilla

320 Walla Walla, 344 Cayuse, 165 Umatilla; 11 mixed bloods; 12 employees
20 other white people; number of Indians who wear citizen dress
300; number of houses occupied by Indians 14.

Indians roaming on the Columbia, renegades and others, 2000 2,000.