

( Now in possession of  
Judge E.V. Kuykendall  
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Original manuscript of  
Dr. G.B. Kuykendall. In family  
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Pomeroy, Washington.

### Smohallah

Smohallah was a sort of prophet and dreamer among a little subTribe that was usually called the Smohalla band. He was a member of the Smokulk or Sohulk tribe or clan , a sort of offshoot of the Nez Perces. They lived mostly in the regions around Priests Rapids on the Columbia River. His name Smoqualla really signifies preacher and was given him after he put himself forward as prophet, dreamer and reformer. He claimed to have a revelation from the 'Sahalie Tyee' or Great Spirit, in regard to the future of the Indians and whites.

He set himself up as a sort of reformer . His birth took place somewhere along about 1815 or 1820 as stated by some authorities. The latter date would be about right, I should think from his appearance at the time I knew him.

In his earlier days he had been about the Catholic missions, and had no doubt been impressed with the ceremonies of the Catholic form of worship. He may have had some instruction in religion of the whites. He was reputed to have been quite a warrior in his earlier life and began the role of preacher some time along in the early fifties. He was rather egotistical and wanted to be a leader, and this disposition led him sometimes into friction with rival chiefs.

Chief Moses, while he may have been to some extent impressed and influenced by Smohalla's religious ideas, never had any liking for him. I have heard Moses speak contemptuously of Smohallah.

When young Smohallah had some sort of quarrel or difficulty with some of ~~the~~ his rival chiefs, and could probably not retain the hold upon the people around him that he coveted, so he slipped away and travelled quite extensively, going as far south as old Mexico.



While he was gone his fertile imagination was not idle, and he studied out a plan to make himself a great leader and reformer. He returned to his own people and suddenly appeared among them, and surprised them, for they had not known where he had gone. When questioned as to where he had been he said he had been to the spirit world, where he had communication with the Great Spirit and the spirits beyond this world, and that he had been commissioned to return to tell all the Indian people what he must do. He was a great talker and and adroit and somewhat oily in manner. He had the natural traits and tendencies to make him a leader in religious ideas, and had he been white and educated, he would have been the right kind of material for an enthusiast or fanatic.

Among the things taught by him were that the Indians were to reject the teachings of the whites and to return to the old Indian ways and Indian religion as expounded by himself and his teachers, as they had been revealed to him in visions and dreams, by the Great Spirit.

He told them that if they did this the Indians would have power to rise up and sweep the whites from the earth, and that they, the Indians, would then have all the land. The Indians that were dead should rise again and come back to live on earth, and that they all would be happy and have everything to themselves. The whole country would be full of Indians, as it used to be, in the days of their fathers, they would have their old hunting grounds and all would be happy.

He told them the Great Spirit was angry with the whites, but that he had a kindly feeling for the Indians and wanted to help them. If the Indians wanted to get free of the whites they must leave off all white ways and not follow the white teachings. This kind of teaching

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was accompanied with much drumming and dancing and sing of songs of the old Indian kind. With all this was introduced much of ceremonial



spectacular performances that made considerable impression upon the Indians. The dancing and preaching or haranguing took the form of a craze that spread from tribe to tribe, and swept many of the peaceable and friendly Indians from the moorings of common sense and prudence. The young Indians hailed the new religion, or new exposition of the old religion as an opportunity to distinguish themselves in the final great clash of all the tribes against the whites, and the driving of the white man from the land. In the good time coming the people should live long and have plenty the old would not die. The teachings of Smohalla were certainly calculated to appeal to the Indians and stir them up against the whites, and unite them in rebellion against the restraints thrown around them by the white man and his law.

As was to be expected, these teachings soon began to bear fruit. Drumming and dancing and teaching this fanaticism spread like wild fire, and the Indians along the outskirts of civilization first shewed a spirit of insolence and insubordination, and it soon became apparent that they were contemplating a general uprising.

Outbreaks occurred here and there less formidable at first, then more serious. The more wild Indians of all the tribes seemed to take up the new teaching. It seemed that the drumming and dancing craze had taken hold more or less of all the tribes of the Northwest.

Indian runners were going constantly from one tribe to another trying to induce them to join the hosts of the dreamers, and prophets.

We on the Yakima Indian agency were in close touch with the Indians, and we had there on the reservation Indians from nearly all of the surrounding tribes and the ties were so close that we were pretty well informed as to what was going on around us.

We were in a position to keep informed as to the feelings of the Indians generally, in the Pacific Northwest. There were all kinds of rumors afloat. The papers brought accounts of drumming and dancing and war talk among the different tribes.



It was generally understood that there was danger of an outbreak at any time. The authorities with the Indian and War Departments were keeping an eye on the progress of events. Gen. O.O. Howard with a party of military officers and others hastened to Eastern Washington and Idaho to look over the situation, and to see and gain all the information possible as to the part the chiefs and head men of this country were going to take and to assure them that the intentions of the government were good toward their people. It was the desire to ascertain ~~their~~ what grievances the Indians were claiming were sufficient to cause them to take up arms against the whites, and to learn the state of feeling generally among them. Early in the summer of 1877 Gen. O.O. Howard and a staff of several members came to Fort Simcoe with the view of calling together as many chiefs of the surrounding tribes as could be reached and notified to come to a council. Runners were sent out to notify the chiefs and head men. On a warm day a council was assembled in the grove below the agency buildings. The interpreter was at that time an old lame Indian that on account of his walking with a cane was called Stick Joe. Gen. Howard, Captain Wilkinson and others representing the military were present. Father Wilbur was there representing the Indian Department, and there were a number of chiefs and sub chiefs assembled, representing a wide range of country.

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Smohalla the dreamer and prophet was there among the rest. He seemed to be out of his place and was ill at ease, was apparently under some sort of nervous tension. He knew that his teachings and his drumming and dancing were not in favor among the whites, he knew also that he was distrusted as being a disturber of the peace by teaching incendiary ideas. He knew probably that there was really a good deal of feeling against him, among the cattle men and outside settlers, many of whom



would have been glad to assist at a hanging bee in which Smohallah was the principal recipient of attention.

The general impression was that Smohalla was a treacherous deceptive old rascal and that his word or pledge was absolutely worth nothing.

Interpreters were on hand to interpret anything to any one of any of the parties present, in case they did not understand.

General Howard made a statement to them that he was on a friendly mission and wanted to ascertain the state of feeling among the Indians generally and to listen to any grievances they had against the whites or the government. In short he wanted to establish an understanding between all the Indians and to have them keep at peace with the whites. He mentioned the good progress made in learning to farm, among some of them, and hoped they would learn to be like the whites, have farms, homes and plenty of everything. There had been some rumors that Smohalla and Moses were inclined to go on the war path, and it was the desire to sound the Indians as to their feelings and get them pledged to keep free from hostilities and to promise to keep the young warriors at home and not permit them to go out making trouble.

When he had made his presentation of the subject he asked the chiefs and head men to give their views, to state what the feelings and intentions of their own people were and how the Indians around them felt on the subject. A number of the chiefs and sub chiefs spoke and the general feeling seemed to be in favor of peace and holding the young and less responsible Indians in, and keeping them from doing anything against the whites.

Joe Stwire, head chief of the Yakimas was a large, heavy, portly Indian, well built and of a manly bearing, with an open, honest, frank countenance. He expressed his views very decidedly and emphatically in favor of peace and friendly feeling toward all. He wanted his young men to be free from making trouble, or of being connected with any acts of violence.



Thenas another chief spoke in favor of peace and expressed a desire to live at peace with all. Quite a number of the chiefs and sub chiefs expressed themselves freely and frankly. Smohallah was called on to speak also.

The day was warm and old Smohallah sweat profusely at the council and while he was calm it was evident he was not in his crowd. He felt somewhat ill at ease. He was surrounded by with Indians who were not in sympathy with his ideas on religion, and with his drumming and dancing tendencies. He had on a brownish grey shirt, it was a good deal soiled and may have been of almost any other color when new, this he had outside of his pants and as the sweat rolled off from his face and ~~outside~~ ample stomach he kept the tail of the old garment flapping to cool him self and to keep away the flies. He was not troubled with any ideas of the conventionalities of polite society and seemed to see no impropriety in ~~expressing~~ exposing his brown belly to the audience, a number of whom were white ladies. Smohallah's talk was quite rambling and mostly in reference to what Sahalie Tye had told him was right and wrong and what he was told to teach the people. He evidently aimed to impress

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those present that he was a great teacher and leader, and a very important man. Summing it all up his talk did not amount to much.

I was impressed with the idea that he was a crafty, wily, snaky, sort of character, not much to be depended upon in any way and that he was more likely than not to himself stay away from where there was much danger, but would send or at least permit his young men to go out and fight and pillage while he would stay at home and profess to be very friendly. It was only a few days after this council war had actually begun up in the Idaho country and we knew we were in for bloody war.

My estimate of Smohallah was and is, that he was never very brave in war or ~~anywhere~~ anywhere else if there was much danger to his own skin.



He would probably have been brave if he had "the upper hand."

Joe ~~Stin~~ Stwire expressed my idea of Smohallah, when he said Smohalla was "delate caqua coyote," (just like a coyote) The Coyote is the Indian's representative of craft, cupidity and deception, mixed with sneaking fear.

During the progress of the Joseph war, ~~we~~ we were very anxious to have Smohalla to come in and stop on the reservation, as we felt that it would be better if he were where he could be watched. Agent Wilbur had gone to Washington on some business connected with Indian matters. Before going he had asked me to take charge of the office of the agent in his absence. Many of the people had been suspecting that Smohalla had been back of a great deal of the disquietude and unrest among the "wild" Indians and some of the outbreaks or threatened outbreaks in the Priest Rapids country, and it was thought that if Smohallah were where he could be readily ~~g~~ gotten at, this would have a good effect. "good many of the stock men and settlers on the outskirts would have given the old chief a pretty hard deal, had they been able to get at him. We at the fort were anxious to know what Smohallah thought about the troubles ~~on~~ that were being experienced with the Indians, and whether he was not secretly helping to keep up the strife, and perhaps sending his young men out on the war path, while he was skulking in the mountains. We felt that it would be a good thing, both for Smohallah and for the whites, if he could be induced to come in and camp on the reservation while the war was going on. It would have a good effect in allaying suspicion against him and his little band and would act as a deterrent upon those of his people who were inclined to act treacherously.

Under these circumstances I called together a lot of the chiefs and head men of the Reservation and laid the matter before them, asking them what they thought of it. I assured them that if Smohallah would come in, and remain on the reservation during the hostilities, no harm ~~would be done~~



should be permitted to come to him and he would be kindly treated. It was pointed out that the fact of Smohallah's coming in and remaining near the fort would have a good effect in allaying bad feeling and prejudice against him. Enquiry was made among the persons present at this council as to the whereabouts of Smohallah. It was learned that he was out in the mountains, somewhere up above the Natchez river, camped there in a secluded place, where he could escape if there were any alarm given. I finally ~~learned~~ succeeded in learning just where the old fellow was, and got Chief Eneas and some of his people to undertake to bring Smohallah in. The party who went out were assured that

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Smohallah would not be treacherously dealt with, but that he should have a square deal every way. After being gone several days they brought the wily old chief into Fort Simcoe and we had a council meeting, and it was decided that for the present he should camp down on the reservation near where Chief Eneas lived. This was perhaps six miles below the fort in a very pleasant and commodious place.

It was soon noised about that the old chief Smohallah was on the reservation, and the prejudice against the old fellow was so great that there were some of the more reckless ones among the white men who would have been glad to go on the reservation and capture him, while he was practically a hostage of the whites. There was talk of going on to the reservation and taking him by force, and as there were a good many of the Indians who understood the English language quite well, and some of these were half breeds who had constant dealing with the whites this talk of Smohallah's capture probably got to Smohallah's ears.

One morning it was found that he and every one of his people had fled in the night and we never caught sight of them again. Whether Smohallah went back to his old haunts and from there directed his young warriors to assist in outrages against the whites or whether



he did his best to restrain them, I never knew. A few days after he and his people had left their camps on the reservation, I heard that a party had been organized in Yakima City to go to the reservation and capture Smohollah, the very next night after he decamped. I think very likely this was true, and that Smohollah heard of it, and "skipped out" to avoid being taken. It is probably better that he should have left in the way he did rather than that he should have been taken by the rabble and possibly killed and trouble made. Had he been taken it would have been sure to have caused many of the Indians to believe that we, the agency, had dealt treacherously with Smohollah in getting him upon the Agency where he could be captured by the people outside. I was not much disappointed when he left, for it would have been unpleasant to have had a charge of double dealing with the Indians to meet and explain.



Dr. G.B. Kuykendall

(Agency Physician 1872-82)

Coming of the Piute Indians to the Fort.

During the winter of 1878-9 we had quite stirring times on account of the coming of the Piute Indiansto the agency. These Piutes were a branch of the Shoshone or Snake tribe of Indians and had been active in the disturbances of the Bannock war, that cost so much trouble, loss of life and expense to the government. In the dead of winter, when the snow was at least a foot deep, the weather cold, these miserable Indians were brought to the agency. There were among them many old, decrepit, blind and sick with scrofula, tuberculosis, rheumatism and various other ailments. They were without exception the most miserable looking lot of human beings I ever saw. They were brought in under the military in command of Captain Winters and Lieut. Westendorf, with other officers and ~~Lieut.~~ Lieutenants Sparrow and Pickering. These last two were young men who had just graduated at West Point, and had come out to ~~the~~ the far west. The weather was cold and bad, and the Indians were illy prepared for such a journey and were a squalid, poverty stricken lot that made a most striking appearance as they came to the fort and camped below and around the agency. There had been for generations ~~between~~ a feud between the Shoshones and the Yakimas, and the latter regarded the shoshones as "dogs and snakes" so that it may be readily understood they met no very cordial reception. They a hospital tibe, a despised people, were forced upon the Yakimas without consultation, and without their consent. It must be said however that the Yakimas under the circumstances exhibited a disposition and spirit that was a credit to them. Under the good management of the agent Rev. Wilbur there had grown up quite a herd of cattle that belonged to the Indians, but as soon as these Piutes came, food had to be provided for them, for they had nothing whatever ~~and~~ in the way of food, and little in the way of clothing.

There seemed to be nothing to do but to begin slaughtering beef



cattle and issuing food to ~~these~~ these starving wretches. They had not only to have beef, but flour, salt and other provisions. The sick old and decrepit ones had to have blankets, for they were actually suffering from the cold and exposure. The exigency was great and the want was immediate. No provision having been made for the situation, the agent found it, with the means at hand, impossible to supply their wants, and as a result there was much suffering. The Yakimas seeing the beef cattle being driven up and killed and fed to ~~hostile~~ hostile strangers naturally felt ~~aggravated~~ aggrieved. The agent appealed to their generosity and Christian spirit and asked them to remember that they too were once poor and had nothing, were ignorant and had been at war with the whites. He asked them to be charitable to their red brothers and sisters. It was very creditable in the Indians of the ~~the~~ reservation, to bear as patiently as they did this thrusting of a strange tribe upon them. White people would scarcely have been as tolerant and patient. Their conduct on this occasion spoke much for the good effect of Christian teaching upon them.

The Piutes really had to suffer badly. They had to make camp in the deep snow, having no tents and but very little bedding, they had a ~~very~~ pinching time of it. Many were ~~so~~ hopelessly sick with tuberculosis and many others, especially the older ones, had a painful form of chronic rheumatism, while many others still had bronchitis and nearly all had severe colds. It was very ~~hard~~ hard on their little children.

It was utterly impossible to give them proper attention, and even if they had been given the best of medical treatment, their superstition and ignorance would have prevented the use of it. The result was these poor wretched people began to die off, and it was pitiful to witness their deplorable condition. All Indians are superstitious and when the Yakimas saw the Piutes dying off, they became afraid they had a contagion of some kind that would be communicated to them.

The result was that the poor Piutes did not receive much ~~of~~ sympathy from their Yakima friends.



I never saw any people at any time or anywhere so desperately homesick. Any one having any humanity could not help being sorry for them when listening to their lamentations and stories of woe, and of their longing for their homes and native land. I thought of the lamentations of the Israelites in Babylon when they were captive as recorded in the Psalms. It seemed to be their uppermost thought of how they could get back, and quite a number ran away, soon after they came, knowing that they would have to cross the mountains, travel hundreds of miles and go through almost incredible hardships, hiding like wild beasts and then run many chances of never reaching their haunts and old homes, for they were outcasts, feared and hated of the whites and not wanted anywhere.

Perhaps the ones who were best off among them were those who, hopelessly diseased, curled up in their cheerless and wretched camps, chilled and hungry, dozed off into the sleep of death dreaming of their homes and native haunts, and perchance of the happy hunting grounds in the Indian heaven.

The prevalence of so much sickness among the Piutes caused them to resort to "Indian doctoring." The sound of drumming and of the savage medicine songs were heard of nights and their weird melancholy incantations were wailed out on the night air, and reminded all who heard not only of sickness, but of that horrid oppressive superstition and dread of ghosts and spirits that made life a miserable nightmare and gloom. There seemed to be a feeling of some dreadful impending evil.

#### Sarah Winnemucca

With the Piute Indians there came to the Yakima Agency an Indian woman commonly called Sarah Winnemucca. She came with the military escort that brought the Piutes and was acting as interpreter for Captain Winters. She was frequently spoken of about that time and a little later as Princess Sarah Winnemucca. She was intelligent, of medium size, well formed and as an Indian woman, would be called good looking-some



said she was handsome.

She was a native Piute, born in Nevada near ~~the~~ Humbolt lake in 1844, and at that time was about 34 ~~years~~ years of age. Her father was or had been a chief of a band or sub tribe of Indians that had for many years lived about Humbolt and Pyramid Lakes. Her grandfather was a chief also and had been with Gen. Fremont when he ~~went~~ went to California. He was called by Fremont and his command, Capt. Treckee. It would seem therefore that Sarah Winnemucca had some claim to the title of princess among the Indians.

She was quick to learn, and when about 15 years of age had been sent to San Jose, Calif. with her sister to a school of the Catholic sisters, for a brief period, but owing to her father being held upon the land about Pyramid lake she went back home. The place where her people had been held was later formed into the Pyramid Lake Reservation.

Being intelligent and easy to learn, and of good address, and having natural ability to communicate her ideas to others, she secured a position as interpreter for the Indian agent of Shoshone Indians.

When the ~~pan~~annock war broke out, Gen. O.O. Howard had her to act as interpreter and scout when on his campaign against the Indians.

This position was attended with so many dangers that it was refused by several Indian men. She assumed the risk and was fearless in danger and a good interpreter. So far as her influence among the Indians of her own people was concerned she was a princess and they listened to her as if ~~as if~~ she were a sort of prophetess or Joan of Arc, and to a large extent her word was law. I have no doubt but that at times she had the welfare of her people at heart, and she ruled by kindness. Sarah, while neither saint nor angel was superior to any of ~~the~~ her people that came to the Fort in almost every respect, and considering her birth and environments was a rather remarkable woman.



She did not stay at Fort Simcoe long, In 1880 she was employed as interpreter at the Malheur Indian Agency and next year taught a little Indian school at the Barracks in Fort Vancouver, Wash. She was a friend of her people, and according as she saw what was best for them, sought to promote their interests. She went back to Washington with her father to plead the cause of her people at Fort Simcoe, and to ask permission for their return to their home. She presented her case so effectively that the Secretary of the Interior granted her request and gave a permit to have the Piutes returned to their own country. When Mr. Wilbur, the agent learned of this, he entered a vigorous protest and caused the order to be rescinded. This I think was a bad move for the Indians all ran away anyhow, and it would have been better to have them go feeling that they had the backing of the government than to sneak back as refugees and violators of law.

It no doubt seemed to Mr. Wilbur that they were gaining some, making some improvement, and he was taking great pains to have them learn to do farm work and become industrious. He presented the matter in such light that the work of ~~Sarah and Sarah~~ Sarah Winnemucca was undone. But human nature is stronger than human law and their inveterate longing for their native land caused them to run away in little ~~bands~~ squads, so that in a few years they were all gone. No doubt Sarah Winnemucca sent them word that the authorities in Washington were willing for them to return, and told them to leave the reservation in a clandestine manner.

Before leaving this rather remarkable Indian woman, I might say that her career had yet many changes. Finding that she had failed in the accomplishment of her mission, she went back east again in 1881-82 and made public talks in several cities, telling of the trials and tribulations of her people, and the wrongs done to them by the Washington authorities, she directed her complaints particularly against



Indian agents, hoping in this way to awaken sympathy with her movements.

She wrote a little book, assisted no doubt by the man who afterwards married her, Lieut. Hopkins. The title of the book was "Life Among the Piutes, their Manners and Customs." When on one of her visits to Boston she received some aid from a sympathizer who procured land for her to found an Indian school near Lovelock Nevada. She ran the school for about three years, but here her husband died of tuberculosis and she gave up the school and seems to have lost her grip morally and otherwise and went down, losing standing. She went to Missoula Montana to visit her sister and died there in 1891. Like many other partly educated and intelligent Indians she yielded at last to the tug of her inherent tendencies and went down and out, a dimmed star, set in darkness more or less of a degenerate. The removal of the Piutes to the Yakima Indian Agency in the middle of winter, without any adequate preparation for caring for them, the suffering, the wretchedness following, the permit for the removal of the Indians to their own native land, then its revocation, the running away of the Piutes to their own homes, after all the cost, trouble and suffering, all caused by their coming to the Yakima Reservation, forms another chapter in the long line of our wretched damnable management of the Indians. If nations as well as individuals are as responsible for conduct as individuals and the justice of God is meted out surely and with impartial hand, there must be a black account standing against us as a nation for settlement.

The intention of our government has always been good, but the reprehensible management of our Indian affairs and the carrying out of those intentions has been most unfortunate both for whites and the Indians. It would have been more merciful and the cause of less suffering in the end, if our authorities had proclaimed a war of utter extinction sparing neither old nor young. We sometimes talk as if it were a strange thing that the Indians were so revengeful and cruel. I have sometimes thought



I have sometimes thought suppose some people as much superior to us in knowledge and power were to come among us, debauch our women, take possession of our lands and homes, rob us, drive us out,, disease our childre, fill our youngmen with poison, disregard treaties and law and all promise made; if we should see our children fading away, dying almost rotting with loathsome disease brought by the usurpers, what would we do? Would we not fight? Would we not do worse than the Indians? Every drop of blood in our veins, every fiber and nerve of our bodies would vibrate with hatred and thirst for reveng, and we would be transformed into demons bent on murder and destruction.



Dr. G.B. Kuykendall

Fort Simcoe  
(1872)

..The building had five fire places 3 below and two above. The rooms were ceiled or plastered and smooth and well finished. The officers quarters had been built with reference to comfort during winter and summer but with due regard to resistance to the bullets of an enemy in case of attack. There were brick between the studding and thick lumber placed vertically on the outside and the whole was painted. There was a fine well of water near the kitchen door. The buildings were fenced in with an eight foot high fence on the back of the yards and in front with a paling fence. The fort grounds were laid off not quite to the cardinal points of the compass, the north and south lines running a few degrees east of north. The south side of the square was occupied by the buildings of the officers, the commandant's house being in the middle of the south side and facing north. Our house was immediately easterly from the commandant's (copy) occupied by the agent.

The other officers had been placed in their order of superiority along the south side and near the corners where the ends turned north. On the northeast were the commissary buildings and on the east side of the square had been the soldier's barracks. Down at the northwest corner was located the boarding house and dormitories. This was where the Indian children were boarded and housed. The school building stood near by and the carpenter and blacksmith shops were clustered near the northwest corner of the old parade ground. Everything was very orderly and business was run by the clock. Employees were all supposed to be at their places by 7 in the morning. We found that the government furnished us plenty of wood, vegetables for our tables, cows to milk and we had beef and mutton at a very small price, 4 cents per pound for the best quality. The houses had furniture of a plain substantial character but nothing elegant. Our living was good, wholesome and very inexpensive so that one could save up the greater part of his salary



if he chose to. No profanity , obscenity or rough coarse conversation was allowed. The place wa run on the basis of supposition that it was a mission, and the example set by the white was supposed at all times to be salutary and such as would exert a good influence over the Indians. We were supposed to be there as an example and pattern for the Indians. Whisky, alcohol and all sorts of intoxicating drinks were banished from the agency, and I never saw a drink of intoxicants taken while I was there, a period of about ten years.