



KOYOOE TUKADU: PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

Tensions between the Native Americans and the settlers started shortly after their first encounters with John Fremont. Although trappers, pioneers, and some settlers had begun to migrate through the Great Basin in the early 1830s, the California Gold Rush triggered settlers to head west in massive numbers.

In January 1848, a story in a small San Francisco newspaper announced that James Wilson Marshall discovered gold while constructing a saw mill along the American River near present day Sacramento. In May a man named Sam Brannan, a storekeeper in Sutter's Creek, pranced around San Francisco with a bottle filled of gold dust shouting "Gold! Gold!" It was then that the people of California began to believe. Residents of San Francisco began to flock towards the gold, but potential prospectors and out-of-towners beat them to the gold fields. When the *New York Herald* printed a story of the discovery in August 1848 the "rush" for gold intensified into a full stampede. A census of San Francisco in April 1847 reported that the town consisted of 77 buildings (including shanties, framed houses, and adobes). By December 1849 the population had mushroomed to an estimated 100,000.

In 1859, placer miners, miners who extract minerals by washing or dredging, and prospectors in the Western Great Basin made two noteworthy strikes of silver ore in a mountain slope near Virginia City. It was the pinnacle of regional discovery and the discovery that began a decade with the "famed" Comstock Lode. The Comstock Lode, as people soon started to call the ore body, was unique in the way that it influenced later development in the American West. The Comstock established advances on technology, corporate investment and community growth that we imitated internationally for the next fifty years. For example; Comstock had a huge labor force of salaried professionals, breaking form the California pattern of thousands of independent mining entrepreneurs digging for themselves in small groups. Unlike the small settlements throughout the California Gold Country, the Comstock District was a highly urbanized, industrial setting. By the early 1870's, the mining district's capital, Virginia City, reached a population of nearly 25,000 becoming one of the nation's larger communities.

During both the Gold Rush of California and the Comstock Lode of Nevada tensions began to build between the miners/settlers and the natives of both areas. In the case of the Northern Paiutes, the California Gold Rush had a minor affect being 200 miles from Nevada, while Comstock was taking place in Nevada. The Northern Paiutes, living in the area for centuries before the arrival of others, possessed a culture and society that the lifestyle of the miners disrupted. Although they confronted brutal prejudice and treatment, several hundred Native Americans eventually settled around the mining district and found various means to profit from the many opportunities of the new society.