



KOYOUE TUKADU:
PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

Peter Skene Ogden, a thirty year old trapper for Hudson’s Bay Company, was chosen to head down to the Snake River country for the companies next expedition in 1824. He trapped beaver in the north and ventured into the Numu territory of Nevada in the autumn of 1828. On November 9, Ogden was fortunate to find the Humboldt River with its abundant source of beaver.

While trapping, Ogden came to realize that beaver ran wild in this land. He couldn’t figure out why there were so many beaver since at night many fires were lit on the mountain side, showing that there was a large band of natives living in the area. After Ogden and his men were trapping here for a while, tribal members came to visit them. Since the Numu were a peaceful people only the hunters of the tribe carried bow and arrow. They were interested in trading parts of beaver skins. When asked what they did with the remainder of the skins the Indians simply pointed to their feet, revealing moccasins made of the animals’ hide. The natives had shown how efficiently the beaver fur could be used for clothing, shoes, and bags. The beaver fur was used so efficiently that the beaver was able to procreate quicker than they were hunted.

A short time after the visits from the natives, the traps along the river began to go missing. Fingers pointed to the natives at first, but soon trappers realized that because the beaver were so wild they would fight and struggle so relentlessly that injured or dying they would get away with the traps. Eventually, some of the traps were found further downstream with a dead beaver still in the trap!

Ogden left the area for the winter, but returned in May, 1829. Although the natives informed Ogden of another river that was abundant in salmon the men wanted only to trap beaver. Unable to find any beaver to trap for fur in the Humboldt Sink area, the party headed north towards the path that they had used in the fall. They were unable to find any beaver along this path, revealing the rapid depletion of beaver in a land where it was once so plentiful. Ogden and his men managed to trap and kill so many beaver in such a short period of time that the beaver were unable to replenish themselves. They left so few beaver in the Humboldt Sink area that the Paiutes had to make a change in their lifestyle and find another covering for their feet.

Peter Ogden

