



KOYOORE TUKADU:
PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

Numaga, son of Old Winnemucca, got his name because he was known to be very generous. It was said that “the giver” always shared what he received understanding that the tribe lived as one. Numaga lived with the Kooyooe Tukadu on the western shore of Pyramid Lake and the mountains behind it. The rugged eastern shore of Pyramid Lake was inhabited by periodic camps. Other tribes stayed on the eastern shore when it was time to catch, clean and dry the fish. Gathering for fish was an event that could take days or weeks.

Winnemucca and his son had different view points. It was known that Numaga believed in finding peace with the settlers. Numaga believed that if settlers were killed many more would come. He knew that their weapons were far more superior. In an effort to get his people to agree, Numaga went from camp to camp and family to family without success. Defeated Numaga lay, with grief, on the ground for three days without food, water, speech, or motion. As a last attempt he spoke with the council. When word of the events at the Williams Station reached, without hesitation, Numaga went with his men to fight the battle that was sure to come. Although Numaga was known to fight only as a last resort, he was known for his remarkable ability on the battlefield. He was a patient and confident man who earned enormous respect.

After the Pyramid Lake Wars, the Paiutes were scattered. There were attacks on the Pony Express Stations. Some Paiutes were taken prisoner to the Honey Lake Valley Region and held until Numaga came to speak with Agent Lander. Allowing his temper to cool upon the sight of men who had killed his own, Numaga finally spoke. He told Lander of the injustices and broken promises. He spoke of the new fear that lived with a once peaceful and honest tribe. He told how he fought to protect his people and the land they have “owned” for thousands of years but never set aside property to claim as their own. Lander and Numaga made a pact not to fight for at least one year or “until the grass is dry next summer”.

Numaga was a noble man with the hope that he could help his people live in harmony with the settlers. On December 5, 1871 Numaga died of tuberculosis.

Numaga





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Numaaga



Numaga, or Young Winnemucca, the Pyramid Lake Paiute chief, stood out among his people and white men as the most significant northern Paiute. He posed for this portrait with his native hunting gear after the 1860 war.

Courtesy Nevada State Museum.