**UINTAH-OURAY INDIAN RESERVATION**

The Uintah-Ouray Reservation in eastern Utah is the home of nearly three thousand members of the Northern Ute Tribe. It is the largest reservation in Utah, containing valuable timber, oil and gas, water, and other natural resources.

The intrusion of Mormon settlers onto Utah Indian lands in 1847 touched off an extended period of conflict between Mormons and several Ute (Nuciu) bands in particular. By 1860, Ute Indian agents suggested removing these Indians to the Uintah Basin. Brigham Young agreed to the proposal after satisfying himself that the isolated area was "one vast contiguity of waste," fit only for "nomadic purposes, hunting grounds for Indians and to hold the world together." In 1861, Abraham Lincoln set aside the Uintah Valley Reservation, comprising 2,039,400 acres in the Uintah Basin. By 1870 most members of the Tumpanuwac, San Pitch, Pahvant, Sheberetch, Cumumba, and Uinta-at bands of Utah Utes (collectively called the Uintah Band) resided on the Uintah Reservation.

In 1881, following a uprising of Colorado Utes, the federal government forcibly removed members of the Yamparka and Parianuc bands (known as the White River Utes) to the Uintah Reservation. The peaceful Taviwac (Uncompahgre Utes), led by Chief Ouray, could not escape removal, but managed to obtain their own reservation in 1882 -- the 1,912,320 acre Ouray Reservation, situated on the Tavaputs Plateau, immediately south of the Uintah Reservation. The two reservations maintained separate agencies at Whiterocks and Ouray until the Bureau of Indian Affairs merged their administration in 1886. The Indian agency was moved from Whiterocks to Fort Duchesne after the military post closed in 1912.

In 1888 Congress removed a triangular "strip" of 7,004 acres containing valuable Gilsonite deposits from the eastern end of the Uintah Reservation, and in 1897 mining interests influenced Congress to begin
allotment of the Ouray Reservation. In 1904, Congress approved 80-acre individual allotments for the Uintah and White River Utes of the Uintah Reservation. The Uintah-Ouray Reservation shrank from nearly four million acres in 1882 to a jointly owned 250,000-acre grazing reserve and 1,283 individual allotments totaling 103,265 acres by 1909. In 1905 the federal government withdrew over 1,100,000 acres for the Uinta National Forest and 56,000 acres in 1909 for the Strawberry Valley Reclamation project, throwing the remaining reservation land open for public sale. Sales of individual allotments further reduced Northern Ute holdings.

Following the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, the Northern Ute Tribe began repurchasing alienated reservation lands. In 1948 the federal government returned some 726,000 acres to the tribe in what is called the Hill Creek Extension. In a 1986 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld an Appeals Court ruling granting the Northern Ute Tribe "legal jurisdiction" over three million acres of alienated reservation lands -- an important decision for the future of the tribe and the region.


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SOURCE...
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