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**Records of the  
Washington Superintendency  
of Indian Affairs  
1853—1874**



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*Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs*

*Record Group 75*

RECORDS OF THE  
WASHINGTON SUPERINTENDENCY  
OF INDIAN AFFAIRS  
1853-1874

On the 26 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced four volumes and most of the unbound records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1853-74. A few additional records of the Superintendency were found after this publication was completed.

From 1789 to 1824 Indian affairs were administered in the Office of the Secretary of War. In 1824 a separate agency, the Office of Indian Affairs, was created in the War Department. In 1849 the Office of Indian Affairs was transferred to the Department of the Interior, and in 1947 it was renamed the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

During the 19th century, superintendencies and agencies were the two principal field jurisdictions of the Office of Indian Affairs. Superintendents had general responsibility for Indian affairs in a specific geographic area. Their duties included supervision of relations among the tribes in their jurisdiction and between the tribes and non-Indians, supervision of the conduct and accounts of agents responsible to them, communication of instructions from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to agents, and granting of leaves of absence to subordinates. It was also common practice for them to receive contract bids, enter into contracts, and issue annuities to the Indians. Agents usually were responsible for the affairs of one tribe or reservation. Until about 1878 most agents were accountable to a superintendent, although some reported directly to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C.

The Washington Superintendency was established in 1853 with the organization of Washington Territory (10 Stat. 172), which included the area north of the Columbia River and the 46th parallel and west of the Continental Divide. When Oregon became a State in 1859, the eastern part of the former Oregon Territory was transferred to Washington Territory, which then included all of the present State of Idaho and parts of Montana and Wyoming. With the organization of Idaho Territory in 1863, Washington Territory was reduced to the boundaries of the present State.

Before the establishment of the Washington Superintendency, the Indians in the Washington area were under the jurisdiction of the Oregon Superintendency. Between 1857 and 1861 the Oregon and Washington Superintendencies were combined. For this period most of the records relating to the superintendency in general and to Oregon in particular are with the records of the Oregon Superintendency. Records relating specifically to Washington are usually with the records of the Washington Superintendency.

The superintendency headquarters was at Olympia, the Territorial capital, except while the Oregon and Washington Superintendencies were combined from 1857 to 1861. During this period the headquarters was at Salem, 1857-59, and Portland, 1859-61, Oreg. Before the consolidation of the two superintendencies, the Territorial Governor acted as ex officio superintendent; thereafter there was a separate full-time superintendent. The Washington Superintendency was abolished in 1874, when the Congress failed to appropriate funds for its support. The agents then reported directly to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C.

Many groups of Indians resided in Washington Territory. These included the Blackfeet, Cayuse, Chehalis, Chilkat, Chinook, Clackamas, Clallam, Coeur d'Alène, Colville, Cowlitz, Dwamish, Flathead, Klickitat, Lake, Lummi, Makah, Muckleshoot, Nez Percé, Nisqualli (Nisqually), Paloos (Pelouse), Pend d'Oreille, Puyallup, Quaitso (Queet), Quileute, Quinaielt, Skokomish, Spokane (Spokane), Squaxon, Swinomish, Tulalip, and Wallawalla (Walla Walla).

The first agents in Washington were usually assigned on a geographical basis. After a series of treaties negotiated between 1854 and 1856, the Indians who had agreed to a particular treaty were often assigned to one agency. The agencies in Washington were Puget Sound District, Columbia River District, Flathead, Nez Perce, Yakima, Puyallup, Tulalip, Neah Bay, Skokomish, Umatilla, Quinaielt, and Colville. There were also numerous special agencies, subagencies, and local agencies.

### The Puget Sound District Agency

The Puget Sound District Agency was established in 1851 under the Oregon Superintendency. It was located at Steilacoom and was responsible for all the Indian tribes in the Washington area west of the Cascades and north of the Chehalis and Skookumchuck Rivers. In 1853 the agency was transferred to the new Washington Superintendency and the agent made his headquarters at Olympia. During the period 1854-61, the Puget Sound District consisted of as many as eight minor jurisdictions, each under a local agent or a special agent. Although these local or special agents received their instructions directly from the Superintendent and reported directly to him, they submitted annual reports to the Puget Sound District Agent, received funds through his hands, and were under his general jurisdiction. These local agencies were as follows: Bellingham Bay; Fort Kitsap; Holmes Harbor, which was absorbed into the Penn's Cove Reservation; Penn's Cove; Port Townsend; Sawamish and Fox Island, both of which were absorbed into the Medicine Creek jurisdiction; and Seattle and vicinity.

The Puget Sound District was considerably reduced in size in 1856 when the tribes at the head of Puget Sound who had agreed to the Treaty of Medicine Creek were placed under the supervision of Special Agent Wesley B. Gosnell. For a brief time in 1861 Gosnell, as newly commissioned "Agent for the Indians of Puget's Sound," was in charge of both the Medicine Creek jurisdiction and the Puget Sound District. Gradually, however, during the summer and autumn of 1861 and the following year, the groups of tribes that were parties to various treaties were detached and placed under separate jurisdictions. With the formation of the Puyallup, Tulalip, Neah Bay, Skokomish, and Quinaielt Agencies from the Puget Sound District, the Puget Sound District Agency ceased to exist.

### Columbia River (Southern) District Agency

The Columbia River District Agency was established in 1854 for the Indians living on the Washington side of the Columbia River and south of the Skookumchuck and Chehalis Rivers. It contained five subordinate jurisdictions: The Cascades; Cowlitz Locality, detached from the Columbia River District and added to the Western District on or before May 18, 1856; The Dalles, made a separate special agency early in 1857 with jurisdiction over the Yakima Indians between the Columbia River and the Cascade Mountains and between the 46th and 48th parallels; Vancouver; and White Salmon Reservation. The local agencies at the Cascades, Vancouver, and White Salmon were temporary establishments set up to accommodate the Indians being removed from the vicinity of the Columbia River to the Yakima Reservation. With the exception of the agent for the White Salmon Reservation, who reported to the Columbia River District Agent, all the local agents reported directly to the superintendent. In 1858 the headquarters for the Columbia River District Agency was moved to the White Salmon Reservation, and in the following year it was moved to Fort Simcoe on the Yakima Reservation. Thereafter it was called the Yakima Agency.

### Flathead (Eastern District) Agency

The Flathead Agency, known briefly as the Eastern District Agency, was established in 1854 for the Indians living between the Cascades and Bitter Root Mountains, particularly the Flatheads, Kutenai, and Upper Pend d'Oreille. The agency was located at the junction of the Flathead and Jocko Rivers. It was discontinued in 1857 after the Oregon and Washington Superintendencies were consolidated, and the agent was designated agent for Washington East of the Cascades. A special agent or subagent was assigned to the Flatheads until 1861, when they were again given a full agent. The Flathead Agency was transferred to the Idaho Superintendency in 1863.

## Nez Percé (Washington East of the Cascades) Agency

Subagents were assigned to the Nez Percé and neighboring tribes as early as 1855. When the Flathead Agency was discontinued in 1857, its agent was stationed at The Dalles and assigned to Washington East of the Cascades. He was made responsible particularly for the Nez Percé, Flathead, and Coeur d'Alène Indians. The following year the agency was moved to the Walla Walla Valley and was given jurisdiction over the Nez Percé, Cayuse, and Paloo tribes and at times over the Spokane and Coeur d'Alène Indians. After 1861 the agent usually stayed at Lapwai on the Nez Percé Reservation in present Idaho, and the agency became known as the Nez Percé Agency. A subagent was in charge of the agency from 1862 until its transfer to the Idaho Superintendency in 1863.

## Yakima Agency

The Yakima (or Yakama) Agency was established in 1859 at Fort Simcoe on the Yakima Reservation. It was the successor to the Columbia River District Agency and was responsible for the 14 confederated tribes composing the Yakima Nation.

## Puyallup Agency

The Puyallup Agency evolved from the special agency established on December 1, 1856, for the various bands of Indians living around the head of Puget Sound who had agreed to the Treaty of Medicine Creek in 1854. It absorbed the Sawamish jurisdiction of the Puget Sound District Agency in 1856 and the Fox Island jurisdiction in 1857. By 1861 it was established as a distinct agency with jurisdiction over the Indians living on the Puyallup, Nisqually, and Squaxin Reservations. Sometimes other reservations, notably Chehalis, were included in its jurisdiction. The agency was originally located on the Squaxin Reservation on Squaxin Island, but the agent spent so much of his time at Olympia that in effect it became the agency headquarters.

Between 1865 and 1869 one agent was assigned to both the Puyallup and Tulalip Agencies. From 1869 until the Washington Superintendency was discontinued in 1874, the Indians on the reservations were under the immediate control of the Superintendent. The Puyallup Agency, now sometimes called the Nisqually Agency, was reactivated in 1874 with headquarters at Olympia.

## Tulalip Agency

The Tulalip Agency was established in 1861 for the bands of Indians who had agreed to the Treaty of Point Elliott, 1855, mainly those Indians living on the eastern side of Puget Sound.

It had charge of the Indians living on the Tulalip, Port Madison, Swinomish (Perry's Island), and Lummi Reservations, absorbing the former Puget Sound District's jurisdictions of Bellingham Bay, Fort Kitsap, Holmes Harbor, Penn's Cove, and Seattle. Responsibility for the Muckleshoot Reservation, which also was established under the Treaty of Point Elliott, shifted between the Tulalip and the Puyallup Agencies, but most of the time it was under the jurisdiction of the Puyallup Agency. The Tulalip agent usually made his headquarters on the Tulalip Reservation. From 1865 to 1869 one agent supervised both the Tulalip and the Puyallup Agencies.

#### Neah Bay Agency

The Neah Bay Agency for the Makah and Quileute Indians living on the Makah Reservation was established at Neah Bay in 1861.

#### Skokomish (Sklallam) Agency

The Skokomish Agency, also known as the Sklallam Agency, was established in 1862 as a subagency for the Skokomish, Clallam (Sklallam), Towana, and Elwah Indians, who were parties to the Treaty of Point No Point in 1855. It was located on the Skokomish Reservation at the confluence of Hood's Canal and the Skokomish River. A full agent was assigned to the agency in 1868.

#### Umatilla Agency

The Umatilla Agency was established under the Oregon Superintendency for the Umatilla, Cayuse, and Wallawalla Indians who lived on the Umatilla Reservation in northeastern Oregon. Jurisdiction over the agency was transferred to the Washington Superintendency in September 1861 and returned to the Oregon Superintendency in May 1862.

#### Quinaielt Agency

The Quinaielt Subagency was established in 1861 for the Quinaielt, Quileute, Queet, and Hoh Indians, who had signed the Treaty of Olympia in 1856. In 1863 the subagency was moved about 10 miles from its original site on the Quinaielt Reservation to the mouth of the Quinaielt River. After 1874 Quinaielt was a special agency rather than a subagency; in 1878 it was made a full agency.

#### Colville Agency

The Colville Agency at Fort Colville was established as a special agency in 1872 for the Indians living on the Colville Reservation and the Coeur d'Alène Reservation in Idaho. These

tribes--the Colville, Spokane, Meshon, Okanagon, San Poel, Lake, Kalispell, and Coeur d'Alène--were not parties to any treaty. In 1875 the agency was given regular status.

## Content and Arrangement

When the Washington Superintendency was terminated in 1874, its records were shipped to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The records concern almost all aspects of Indian administration within its jurisdiction. There are documents relating to negotiation and enforcement of treaties, land matters, Indian emigration and subsistence, intrusions on Indian lands, law and order, annuity and other payments, Indian hostilities, military operations, traders and licenses, missionaries and schools, location of agencies, construction and repair of buildings, purchase and transportation of goods and supplies, employees, and accounts. Most of the correspondence of the Superintendency was with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and with agents and subagents in the Superintendency. There was also correspondence with other field officials and employees of the Office of Indian Affairs, the Secretary of War, army officers, Treasury Department officials, traders, contractors, and Indians.

The records reproduced in this microfilm publication consist of 11 series of records of the Washington Superintendency. The series descriptions furnished below are in the order in which the records are reproduced in the publication:

1. Letters Sent, 1853-74. Handwritten copies and drafts, with a few press copies. Arranged chronologically. Also included are some census rolls, estimates, and financial statements. Only a few letters are dated after 1857. (Rolls 1-4)

2. Letters Sent Relating to Eastern Washington, 1858-63. Handwritten copies of letters sent relating particularly to the Nez Percé and Flathead Agencies. Arranged chronologically. No other copies of letters sent during these years have been found among the records of the Washington Superintendency, with the exception of a few included in series 4, described below. (Roll 4)

3. Letters Sent, 1867-72. Handwritten copies of letters sent by Superintendents Samuel Ross and Thomas J. McKenny. Arranged chronologically in two volumes. Many of the letters in the second volume (1869-72) were assigned numbers corresponding to a partial index that has not been reproduced as part of this publication. (Rolls 5 and 6)

4. Letters Received From the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1853-62. Unbound letters; arranged chronologically. Included are copies of a few letters received during 1863 and one letter each for 1871 and 1873. (Rolls 7 and 8)



5. Letters Received From the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1869-71. Bound letters; arranged chronologically in one volume. (Roll 8)
6. Monthly Statements of Letters Received From the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1863-66. Arranged chronologically. The entries for individual letters give date of letter, name of writer, subject, date of receipt, date of reply, and remarks concerning reply or other action. The letters themselves have not been found. (Roll 8)
7. Statements of Funds Remitted, 1864-74. Arranged chronologically. These are statements sent to the Superintendency by the Bureau. (Roll 8)
8. Letters Received From Local Jurisdictions, 1853-74. Chiefly letters from agents and other employees of the Superintendency. Included are some labor reports, statements of persons employed, sanitary reports, financial statements, vouchers, estimates, oaths of office, census rolls, and other records. The records are arranged by name of jurisdiction or locality and thereunder chronologically. (Rolls 9-22)
9. Letters Received From Various Persons, 1853-74. Letters from Army officers, Treasury Department officials, other superintendents, Indians, and other persons concerned with Indian affairs. Arranged chronologically. (Rolls 23-25)
10. Proceedings of Treaty Commission, Dec. 1854-Mar. 1855. A handwritten journal documenting the activities of Governor and ex officio Superintendent Isaac I. Stevens in his capacity as commissioner to negotiate treaties with different tribes. Copies of the treaties are included. The entries are arranged chronologically. (Roll 26)
11. Records Concerning Negotiation of Treaties, 1854-63. Copies of agreements and reports on council proceedings that supplement the journal described above. Arranged chronologically. (Roll 26)

### Related Records

The records reproduced in this microfilm publication are part of the records in the National Archives of the United States designated as Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75. Related records in the same record group have been reproduced as National Archives and Records Service Microfilm Publications M18, *Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Registers of Letters Received, 1824-1880*; M234, *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1881*; M21, *Letters Sent by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1881*; M348, *Report Books of the Office of Indian Affairs, 1838-1885*;

*T494, Documents Relating to the Negotiation of Ratified and Unratified Treaties With Various Tribes of Indians, 1801-1869; and M574, Special Files of the Office of Indian Affairs, 1807-1904.*

Records of other superintendencies available on microfilm are: M734, Arizona, 1863-73; M832, Idaho, 1863-70; M1, Michigan, 1814-51; M842, Minnesota, 1849-56; M833, Montana, 1867-73; M837, Nevada, 1869-70; T21, New Mexico, 1849-80; M2, Oregon, 1848-73; M834, Utah, 1853-70; M951, Wisconsin, 1836-48; M856, Central Superintendency, 1813-78; and M640, Southern Superintendency, 1832-70.

These introductory remarks were prepared by Robert M. Kvasnicka.

## APPENDIX

List of Officials for the Period 1853-74.

### COMMISSIONERS OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Appointment</u>
Luke Lea	July 1, 1850
George W. Manypenny	Mar. 24, 1853
James W. Denver	Apr. 17, 1857
Charles E. Mix	June 14, 1858
James W. Denver	Nov. 8, 1858
Alfred B. Greenwood	May 4, 1859
William P. Dole	Mar. 13, 1861
Dennis N. Cooley	July 10, 1865
Lewis V. Bogy	Nov. 1, 1866
Nathaniel G. Taylor	Mar. 29, 1867
Ely S. Parker	Apr. 21, 1869
Francis A. Walker	Nov. 21, 1871
Edward P. Smith	Mar. 20, 1873

### GOVERNOR AND EX OFFICIO SUPERINTENDENT

Isaac I. Stevens	Mar. 17, 1853
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### SUPERINTENDENTS

#### Oregon and Washington

James W. Nesmith	Mar. 12, 1857
Edward R. Geary	Mar. 22, 1859

#### Washington

William W. Miller	Feb. 21, 1861
Bion F. Kendall	July 16, 1861
Calvin H. Hale	Mar. 6, 1862
William H. Waterman	May 21, 1864
Thomas J. McKenny	Sept. 25, 1866
Bvt. Col. Samuel Ross	June 10, 1869
Thomas J. McKenny	Reinstated Oct. 22, 1870
Robert H. Milroy	June 6, 1872
Marshall Blinn (acting)	Nov. 7, 1873
Robert H. Milroy	Reinstated Mar. 4, 1874

NameDate of Appointment

## AGENTS AND SUBAGENTS

## Puget Sound District Agency

Edmund A. Starling	July 10, 1851
Joseph M. Garrison	Mar. 22, 1853
Michael T. Simmons (special)	Mar. 9, 1854
Michael T. Simmons	Feb. 27, 1856
Wesley B. Gosnell	Nov. 21, 1860. Relieved Simmons, Apr. 15, 1861. <i>See</i> Puyallup Agency
George A. Paige	Feb. 21, 1861. Appointed in addition to Gosnell. Jurisdiction varied. Both served until 1862

## Columbia River (Southern) District

William H. Tappan (special)	May 1, 1854
William H. Tappan (subagent)	Sept. 4, 1854
John Cain	Jan. 5, 1855
Richard H. Lansdale	Transferred from Washington East of Cascades, Apr. 1, 1858

## Flathead (Eastern District) Agency

Thomas Adams (special)	Jan. 1, 1854
Richard H. Lansdale	Aug. 4, 1854
John Owen (special)	Oct. 13, 1856
John Owen (subagent)	Notified Nov. 17, 1858
John Owen	Feb. 21, 1861
Charles Hutchins	Transferred from Nez Percé Agency, Sept. 30, 1862

## Nez Percé (Washington East of Cascades) Agency

*At The Dalles*

Richard H. Lansdale	Transferred from Flathead Agency, June 2, 1857
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NameDate of Appointment*At Walla Walla and Lapwai*

Andrew J. Cain	Aug. 19, 1858
Charles Hutchins	June 13, 1861
John W. Anderson (subagent)	Aug. 23, 1862

## Yakima Agency

Richard H. Lansdale	Moved from Columbia River District, June 2, 1859
Ashley A. Bancroft	May 14, 1861
James H. Wilbur	June 4, 1864
Lt. James M. Smith	June 22, 1869
James H. Wilbur	Reinstated Apr. 22, 1870

## Puyallup Agency

Wesley B. Gosnell (special)	Dec. 1, 1856
Wesley B. Gosnell (subagent)	Nov. 16, 1858
Wesley B. Gosnell	Nov. 21, 1860 (for Puget Sound District)
Ezra Baker	July 16, 1861
Alfred R. Elder	May 9, 1863
Henry C. Hale (subagent)	June 1, 1868 (Puyallup and Tulalip)
	No agent Aug. 1869-July 1874
Hiram Gibson	July 11, 1874

## Tulalip Agency

Benjamin F. Shaw	Feb. 21, 1861
Samuel D. Howe	Jan. 22, 1862
Alfred R. Elder	Appointed to Puyallup Agency, May 9, 1863; also assigned to Tulalip, Sept. 30, 1865
Henry C. Hale (subagent)	June 1, 1868 (Puyallup and Tulalip)
Lt. George D. Hill (subagent)	July 8, 1869
Eugene D. Chirouse (subagent)	Feb. 20, 1871

## Neah Bay Agency

Henry A. Webster	July 16, 1861
Bvt. Capt. Joseph H. Hays	June 11, 1869
Elkanah M. Gibson	Apr. 12, 1871
Charles A. Huntington	Jan. 23, 1874

NameDate of Appointment

## Skokomish (Sklallam) Agency

Franklin C. Purdy (subagent)	July 15, 1862
John T. Knox (subagent)	June 1, 1864
Charles S. King	Mar. 16, 1868
Lt. Joseph M. Kelley	June 22, 1869
Charles S. King	Reinstated Oct. 1, 1870
Edwin Eells	Apr. 17, 1871

## Umatilla Agency

William H. Barnhart	July 16, 1861
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## Quinaielt Agency

## Subagents:

John W. Anderson	Aug. 12, 1861
Giles Ford	July 1, 1862
Joseph Hill	Dec. 31, 1864
Henry Winsor	June 8, 1868
Bvt. Maj. Thomas H. Hay	July 15, 1869
Gordon A. Henry	Dec. 12, 1870
Gordon A. Henry (special agent)	July 15, 1874

## Colville Agency

John A. Simms (special)	July 1, 1872
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