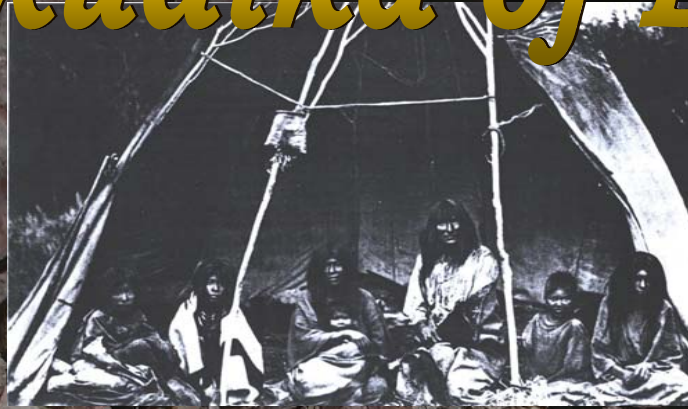


The Tukudika of Big Creek



The only existing picture of the Tukudika in Yellowstone

The Tukudika people belong to a subgroup of the Shoshoni. The Shoshoni speak a language that has similarities to the central Numic sub-family of the Uto-Aztecan Indian languages. However, very little of the Tukudika in Big Creek oral history and cultural attributes were recorded, so information on the ways of the Tukudika and their language is limited.



Tukudika eat mostly bighorn sheep it was were they got their name Tukudika

Tukudika subsistence living

Bighorn sheep meat comprised the major protein source for the Tukudika diet. Other foods included: Salmon, Steelhead, deer, and riparian berries. The Tukudika and the Lemhi Shoshoni fished the Salmon River using jigs, spear and weirs. Food harvested during the summer was dried and put in caches for winter months.

Sheepeater Campaign of 1879

The Sheepeater campaign of 1879, carried out by U.S. troops in Big Creek against the Tukudika was brought about by conflicts between the Indians and settlers. The settlers came into the region by discovering gold in Warren and Boise city. The Tukudika surrendered to the troops after four months June to October 1879 of the campaign. They were taken to Vancouver Washington then to Fort Hall Idaho the next summer. A private in the army summed the campaign in these words " So ends the never to be forgotten campaign of 1879. A number of animals made useless, and men badly used up"(Roberts 1983).



Dr. Frank Leonhardy with students excavating a Tukudika site down stream from Taylor Ranch

Archaeological site testing at Big Creek

The Tukudika lived in housepits, which were dome shaped. The housepits were built out of red osier dogwood insulated by hides of wild animals. Dr Frank Leonhardy, and UI students excavated housepits down stream from Taylor Ranch. Remnants of interwoven burnt red osier dogwood were discovered. The Tukudika lived in these housepits during winter and moved higher elevations during summer.

Background picture, Tukudika pictograph down stream from the ranch

*This poster was done with special thanks to
Jim and Holly Akenson – Managers of Taylor Ranch
Larry, A. Kingsbury – U.S. – Payette National Heritage Program Manager
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Poster done by Hani Myundara.*

Tukudika Bows and Hunting Blinds



The Tukudika, were well known for their craftsmanship in making bows from bighorn sheep horns for hunting. The bows were a highly sought after commodity when it came to trading and particularly prized for buffalo hunting. The bows were made from the long horns of older rams. The horns were heated over coals to straighten the curls. Each horn would average 18 to 24 inches long. Heat was applied again to make the horn semi plastic and then pounded with a round stone. A five-inch piece of bone was used for the riser. The bows averaged 44" in length. Wet rawhide was used to join the three pieces together. Sinew was glued at the back of the upper and lower limbs for strength. The glue was made out of boiled shavings from the hoof and bits of neck skin. The scum formed was skimmed off and used for glue (Dominick 1964). The arrow shafts were made from red osier dogwood or Syringa. Obsidian or chert were used for projectile points. The Tukudika mostly hunted from blinds. These blinds were built along game trails and mostly on talus (Kingsbury 2003). Even today the bighorn sheep use the trails where these blinds were built.

*This poster was done with special thanks to
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Larry A. Kingsbury - U.S. Pacific National Heritage Program Manager
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Poster done by Brad Mrazich for fulfillment of Senior Internship*