Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society
Vol 7., No 1, 2018, pp. 132-157

Do some work for me: Settler colonialism, professional communication, and representations of Indigenous water

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Abstract
The Bureau of Reclamation, a federal agency within the Department of the Interior, is responsible for diverting, delivering, and storing water in the Western U.S. It controls hydroelectric dams and irrigation projects that require Indigenous lands and waterways to operate; it is further a settler colonial institution in that its projects enable non-Indigenous settlement. The Bureau of Reclamation published a monthly magazine as a public-facing form of professional communication for nearly 80 years to narrate diversions of Indigenous water. A typical issue included updates on engineering feats, Reclamation construction, transcriptions of political speeches, legal decisions on water, practical instruction for farmers, and black-and-white photographs of water. It was not enough to use dams and reservoirs to control water; the Bureau of Reclamation had to narrate it, too. This form of professional communication reveals how hydroelectric dams are built with more than engineering equipment—their tools also include narratives, language, rhetoric, and image that recast Indigenous waterways for settler audiences. This paper identifies the settler colonial narratives this archival magazine employed from 1924-1942—a particularly intense time of damming—and then juxtaposes the magazine with contemporary Indigenous literature about dams to undermine the Bureau's recasting of water for white settlers.

Keywords: *Bureau of Reclamation, settler colonialism, dams, hydroelectricity, technologies of settlement, Indigenous literature*

Roll along, Columbia, you can ramble to the sea, But river, while you're rambling, you can do some work for me.

- *Woody Guthrie (1941)*

How do we grieve the death of a river?

- *Winona LaDuke (2016)*

Introduction

In 1941, U.S. folk singer Woody Guthrie wrote 26 songs in one month for a propaganda film promoting government-run hydroelectric dams. While his lyrics for the settler colonial anthem "This Land is Your Land" are more famous, Guthrie's Columbia River ballads are less known. They praise hydroelectricity, painting the Northwest as a promised land for white settlers.[1] Guthrie's enthusiasm conflicts with Winona LaDuke's question of where mourning for water even begins. Although the water projects administered by the Bureau of Reclamation that Guthrie glorified brought and bring cheap electricity, irrigated farmland, and flood protection, they have also brought disaster for Indigenous communities. Reclamation projects have flooded lands, polluted water, impeded salmon runs, and submerged graves—just some of the effects.

The Bureau of Reclamation, a federal agency within the Department of the Interior, is responsible for diverting, delivering, and storing water in the Western U.S. It controls hydroelectric dams and irrigation projects that require Indigenous lands and waterways to operate; it is further a settler colonial institution in that its projects enable non-Indigenous settlement—cities such as Los Angeles and Colorado as well as much of the Southwest. Formed in 1902, the Bureau of Reclamation extended the policies of the 1887 Dawes Act from land to water (Gahan & Rowley, 2013, p. 726). As Karin Amimoto Ingersoll (2016) urges from a Kanaka Maoli perspective, strictly land-based studies of settler colonialism ignore water; taking Ingersoll's cue, a close reading of the Bureau of Reclamation requires both water and land to be held in mind together.

As one politician defined it in 1928: "no land is reclaimed until it has people who will live on it and work it; until it has railways, highways, drainage, churches, schools, banks, health centers, markets, towns and cities" (19.4:262). The name "Reclamation" elides Indigenous presence, implying a snatching of water from a non-human wild. That these actions *re*-claim further justifies theft instead as a taking back. What is more, the Department of the Interior oversees both the Bureaus of Indian Affairs *and* Reclamation; traditionally the Department has promoted Western water development over protecting Indigenous rights (Burton, 1991, p. 23).[2] This conflict of

[1] In his song "Roll On Columbia, Roll On" Guthrie ultimately deleted lyrics about fighting, murdering, and hanging Indigenous people (Vandy & Person, 2016, p. 101). When fellow folk singer Pete Seeger contacted Guthrie in 1948 for the lyrics, Guthrie had forgotten the song; all he could remember without consulting his songbook was the anti-Indigenous stanza he had originally deleted (pp. 124-125).

[2] From 1902-1923, the federal agency was called U.S. Reclamation Service; after, it was and still is named the Bureau of Reclamation, which is how I refer to it throughout the paper. The Bureau of Indian Affairs was named the Office of Indian Affairs from 1824 until 1947, when it changed to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which is the name I use throughout the paper.

interest within hydraulic societies is not uncommon, for "in many cases, the achievement of domination over watercourses (however temporary) coincides with an intensification of social domination" (Chen, MacLeod, & Neimanis, 2013, p. 6).

The Bureau of Reclamation published a monthly magazine as a public-facing form of professional communication from 1907 to 1983.[3] Reclamation water users—15,000 in 1937—received the Magazine, and an additional 2,000 subscribers subscribed annually for 75 cents (27.4:69). These water users primarily included white settler farmers working land in the Western states made newly possible by government water projects. The Magazine described its purpose as "bringing the individuals into close personal and sympathetic touch not only with the employees of the [Reclamation] Service, but with their fellow water users," forming an imagined community through its pages. One reader stated it was more than a Magazine: it was his "permanent library" on all things water (17.9:158). The Bureau of Reclamation saw the Magazine as a tool to help water users repay government construction costs (27.4:69) as well as to silence critics who believed Reclamation projects only benefited Western states (Gahan & Rowley, 2013, p. 909). A typical issue included updates on Reclamation construction, transcriptions of political speeches, legal decisions on water, practical instruction for farmers, and black-and-white photographs of water. It was not enough to use dams and reservoirs to control water—the Bureau of Reclamation had to narrate it, too.

The government publication began as the *Reclamation Record,* then became the *New Reclamation Era* (1924), and finally *Reclamation Era* (1933). The change in 1924 was more than a title. The new version, the new *era,* was conceived as "less technical and more 'human'" than its predecessor (15.3:42). The cover of one issue from 1926 featured a photograph of the office belonging to the Department of the Interior's secretary—an open door with a welcome mat (17.1:73). The new, humanized version directed articles at wives of Reclamation farmers on home decorating, cooking, and childrearing and stated it would be an open place to discuss government failings. The new title also coincided with another change: in 1924, the Bureau of Reclamation claimed to have pulled out of "Indian business." While previously the Bureau of Reclamation oversaw projects both on- and off-reservation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs began its own engineering outfit in 1924. As one article stated, many of the "Indian projects" required "constant contact with the Indians" and the Bureau of Reclamation was "not acquainted with Indian characteristics and habits." As another article explained, "Indians generally are subsistence farmers and are not interested in commercial farming," further justifying the transfer from the Bureau of Reclamation to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (31.12:322).

Despite claims the Bureau of Reclamation had pulled out of "Indian projects," after 1924 the theft of Indigenous land and water in many ways intensified. The interwar period is often considered a respite from genocidal and assimilationist policies. In 1924, the Indian Citizenship Act extended voting rights to many. Ten years later almost to the day the Indian Reorganization Act overturned some of the assimilationist policies of the Dawes Act of 1887, which broke up tribal lands and made it available for settler purchase. The Act also granted some forms of Indigenous self-government. Mindy Morgan (2015) writes also of the relief programs at this time specifically for Indigenous workers. The period between the two world wars also preceded termination policies, a series of laws passed beginning in the mid-1940s in which the government ignored the sovereignty of some Indigenous nations and ended many of its obligations to

[3] The Magazine ceased production between 1933 and 1935 "in the interest of economy" (24.5:64) and 1942-1946 due to WWII.

Indigenous peoples, including health and education. At the same time, this so-called "Indian New Deal" continued to depend on state recognition of sovereignty. It resulted in the Navajo Livestock Reduction Program, which gave power to government to slaughter Diné animals in the name of soil erosion prevention (Weisiger, 2009). This period also saw some of the most ambitious Reclamation projects, including the Hoover (1936), Parker (1938), Grand Coulee (1942), and Shasta (1945) Dams, among many others. The government responded to the Great Depression with make-work projects through relief programs such as the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps, which provided millions with short-term employment. Many of these jobs included large-scale projects that drastically changed Indigenous land and water.

Expectedly, the Magazine does not represent Indigenous voices, epistemologies, or spiritual relationships to water. Nor does it inform readers of the violence or displacement required for projects, or the attempts to undermine Indigenous self-determination, survival, and resistance. Though contextualized by these omissions, this article's point is less to recover them than instead to chart traces of erasure. I am informed by Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie's (2015) concept of critical place inquiry—the "spatialized and place-based processes of colonization and settler colonization" (p. 19)—and extend it to water. In this analysis I employ the concept of dam/ning (Griffith, 2017a). The term encompasses both the ways settlers dammed—the discursive practices they used to justify and normalize the violence of such practices as resource extraction, water diversion, and land theft—as well as the way Indigenous peoples damned it: their methods of resistance. In my examination of these archival traces from 1924-1942, I first hold the Magazine responsible for eliding Indigenous presence and then describe when Indigenous peoples do make an appearance to bolster Reclamation agendas—examples of damming. The paper concludes with juxtapositional readings of the Magazine alongside literature by Indigenous writers that undermines the Magazine's settler colonial narratives, with particular attention given to Lawney L. Reyes' *B Street* and James Welch's *Winter in the Blood.*

Damming and tactics of erasure

Reclamation, the Magazine argued, was a logical continuation of making land available for settlers now that the comparatively easy grabs of the late nineteenth century were no more. Articles stated the arable "raw land" of "old pioneer days" was gone (15.10:165). The Magazine transcribed a speech given at a 1925 Reclamation conference titled "Smoothing the Path of Colonization," which advocated applying "our vast colonization experience to our present-day problems"—earlier lessons such as ensuring a settler was supported by community, selectively chosen, and influenced by Christianity (17.2:24). It also highlighted how in this new era of colonialism the government must, like the previous century, ensure settlers would remain on the land—the very definition of settler colonialism (Wolfe, 1999). "The colonist-visitor injures a project," according to the Magazine; however, "the colonist-settler determines its success." Similar to nineteenth-century settler colonial rhetoric, the Magazine painted land in the West as arid and otherwise useless without Reclamation (16.5:68), "a desert solitude" home only to "sand and cactus desolation" (17.3:39), and "infertile, nonirrigable, seeped or otherwise unproductive" (17.7:108). Much of this language invoked justifications for taking Indigenous land in the previous century.

Despite continuity, the Magazine made it clear that Reclamation's techniques were new. One reprinted speech admitted that in the past, "free land" was acquired by "crowding the Indian farther west and making free farms out of his domain" (16.6:97); however, "this is now gone, and

we must provide something to take its place," as if the two colonial tactics were different. One article similarly stated that "the last part of the great West has passed into history, and that future tillable soil must come from irrigating our arid lands" (16.5:68). The Magazine loudly boasted of these twentieth-century techniques, from engineering feats to statistics of horsepower. It celebrated the new communities, enlarged cities, and bounty made possible by Reclamation: citrus and dates, lettuce in the winter, and cantaloupe all year round. The Magazine quoted congressperson Samuel B. Hill, a proponent of Reclamation projects who saw them as fated. For Hill, otherwise arid lands in the West "have been kept there, no doubt, under some divine provision as a residuum awaiting the necessity for their development to constitute homes, rural life, and economic development" (19.5: 280). The Magazine oscillated between presenting Reclamation as an extension of earlier settler colonialism and presenting it as newfangled.

The Magazine carefully defined the "right" kind of benefactor of Reclamation. Its construction sites were notoriously discriminatory. Hoover Dam, for instance, prohibited workers of Asian descent, and its workforce consisted of merely 0.002% Black workers, who had to fight even for that (Arrigo, 2014, pp. 160–161; Dunar & McBride, 2001, p. 306; Fitzgerald, 1981; Rogge, 1995). The Magazine provided a few examples of Indigenous workers (15.3:38; 27.11:266; 31.12:324; 32.4:86), though as Anthony F. Arrigo (2014) argues, at Hoover Dam the government held posed photographs of Black and Indigenous workers in reserve to quash accusations of racism (p. 161). The Magazine was more coded in defining the ideal settler on Reclamation farms as white. The Magazine explained that Reclamation settlers would be selected starting in 1924 by a board appointed by the Department of the Interior (16.10:148-149). This board would define settler suitability based on age, citizenship, and marital status, as well as more nebulous categories: vigor, industry, and character. Other articles called such qualities a settler's "rural sense," experience, temperament (17.2:28), intelligence, and energy (17.3:46). The Magazine quoted the Secretary of the Department, Hubert Work, who stated settlers needed to be "handpicked" because

> reckless settlement of irrigation projects is just as damaging as reckless colonization. The West still needs more people, but one good citizen—a dependable pioneer who can be expected to build up the taxable wealth of the commonwealth—is of more value than a dozen herded in (17.5:72).

One article stated character "usually descends from father or mother" and "has a long history, further back than the beginning of our civilization and further back into that long indefinite period of prehistory"—back to when men "conducted long voyages by sea or migrations by land, and, later still, when Englishmen came overseas to settle in the wilderness of the eastern Atlantic coast" (17.3:46). In other words, character was a white settler trait. The Magazine explained that though it was genetic, the trait could decay as so happened with "the extraordinary attainments of Indian character." Another article similarly stated Reclamation settlers should transition out of government support, for "it was never meant that Government operators should remain forever upon the ground and that the settlers should be placed in the same category as Indians upon reservations" (17.4:69). The Magazine used Indigenous peoples as a foil to what a settler was not.

The Magazine also conducted what Lorenzo Veracini (2010) calls "peer-reviewing," in which settler states compare their techniques and learn best colonial practices throughout the world (p. 23). The Magazine offered readers international examples of pilot projects, policies, and obstacles of water management faced throughout the world. But more common were articles on settler colonial states. One article summarized a report that concluded, "the conditions which affect

reclamation in this country are operating in much the same fashion in Australia" (17.5:86). The report compared the damming of Australia's Murrumbidgee River to the Colorado River while another article compared Australia's Hume Reservoir to Hoover Dam (17.9:184). Another article on South Africa concluded, "Apparently these two great sister nations have reached much the same conclusions concerning the future success of irrigation development" (16.6:93). The Magazine compared the U.S. to South Africa's catchment areas, prices of so-called irrigable land, and riverbed levels (17.11:192). For the Magazine, "the experience of our neighbors in this undertaking will be viewed with fraternal interest, realizing that principles and methods, which may prove successful in one locality are likely to produce favorable results here."

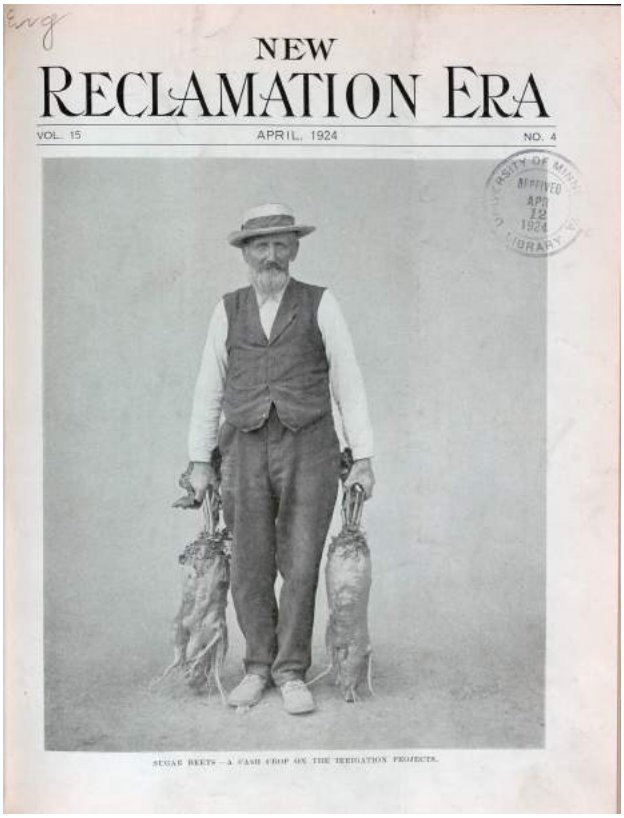
NEW
RECLAMATION ERA
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Figure 1: "Sugar Beets—A Cash Crop on the Irrigation Projects," 15.4 (1924). Image reproduced thanks to University of Minnesota Digital Library Services Department and the Bureau of Reclamation.

Figure 2: "Drying Almonds on the Orland Project, California," 15.1 (1924). Image reproduced thanks to University of Minnesota Digital Library Services Department and the Bureau of Reclamation.

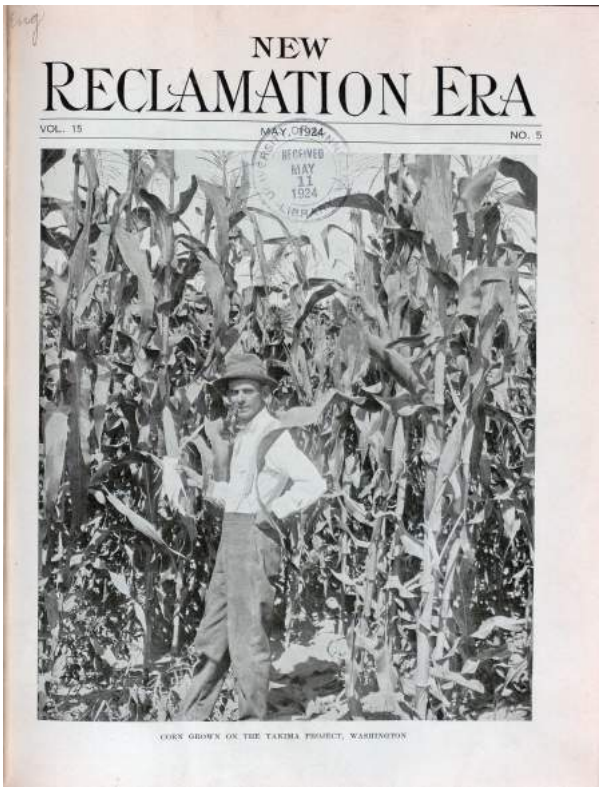


Figure 3: "Corn Grown on the Yakima Project, Washington," 15.5 (1924). Image reproduced thanks to University of Minnesota Digital Library Services Department and the Bureau of Reclamation.

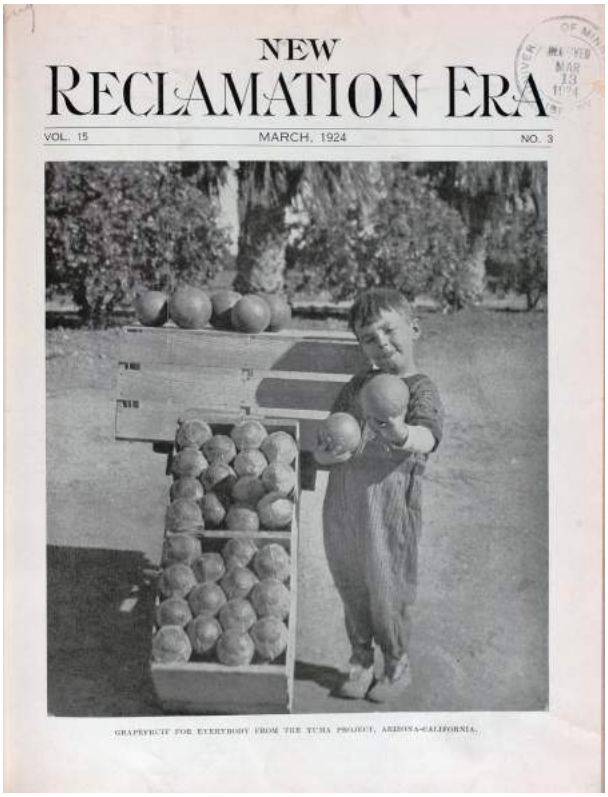
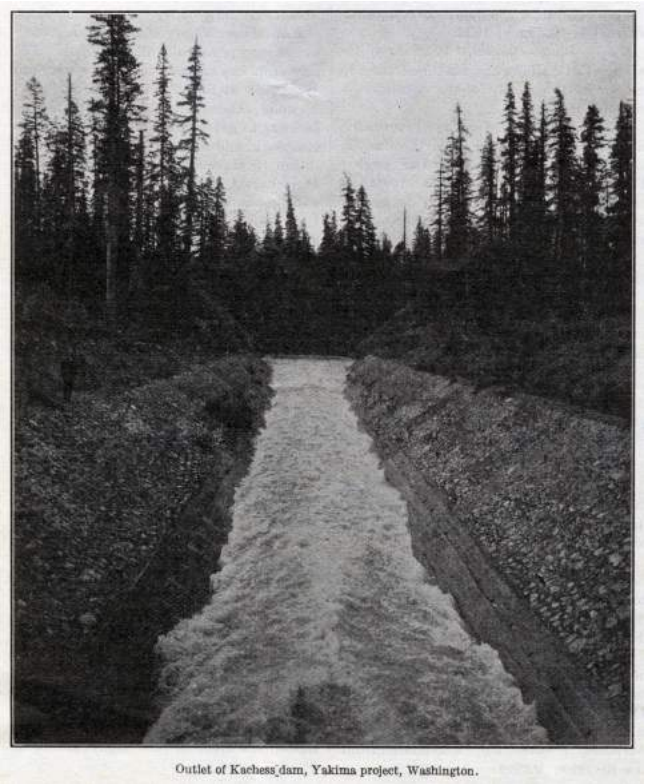


Figure 4: "Grapefruit for Everybody from the Yuma Project, Arizona-California," 15.3 (1924). Image reproduced thanks to University of Minnesota Digital Library Services Department and the Bureau of Reclamation.

One sustained peer review was with Canada. Key differences notwithstanding, the U.S. and Canada are both settler colonial states that require Indigenous land and rely on violence as well as narratives to assist in doing so. Despite what Eva Mackey (1999) calls the "benevolent Mountie myth," Canada's colonialism also was and is violent; comparisons between the two states go beyond simply a shared border. The Magazine reported on Canada's Soldier Settlement Act (1917) because it "will be of interest to those who are studying the question of aided and directed settlement in the United States" (17.3:41). The Magazine also closely followed Canada's goal of attracting British farmers in the 1920s, called the Empire Settlement Agreement. Canada offered travel subsidies, land with low interest rate, and loans for equipment (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2010, p. 193). Yet the plan was a bust: "by 1941, only seventeen families had repaid their loans, while more than 50 per cent had abandoned their farms." But in the 1920s, before such results came to pass, the Magazine reported on Canada with interest (16.1:9). One article discussed the role of the Canadian "field supervisor," who would meet arriving families at the train and help them buy equipment and seed (18.12:186-187). Though the Magazine admitted the Canadian program was under its target of 3,000 families, it proclaimed "the scheme has thus far proved a conspicuous success and promises to become the most successful effort in colonization undertaken by any government in modern times." Peer-reviewing went the other way, too: the Magazine described a Canadian delegation that came to the Milk River in the U.S. to make notes and report back to Canada (27.11:258). The majority of examples, though, were how the water management practices of settler colonial states throughout the world might offer lessons for the U.S.

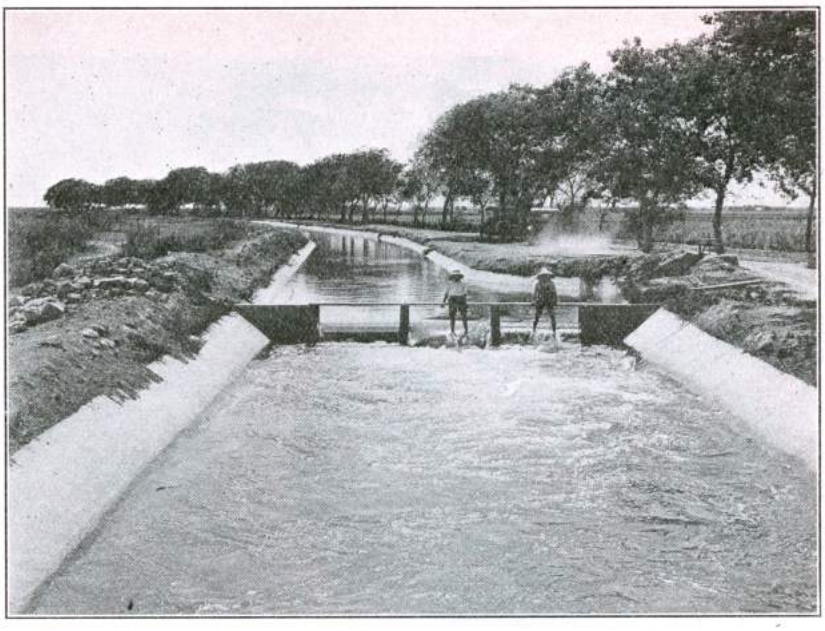
Another technique the Magazine deployed was to visually promote water as belonging to white settlers. The Bureau of Reclamation has always promoted settler colonial narratives of water through visual media—diorama, travelling slide shows, and especially film (Gahan & Rowley, 2013). After the Magazine's reboot in 1924, it also featured black-and-white photography. These images included studio portraits as well as on-site photographs of Reclamation officials. Some images featured settlers posed with bounty from newly irrigated land (see Figures 1-4), which appeared more abundant when contrasted with humans. In addition to scale, the Magazine's photographs also used the tool of time. Jean O'Brien (2010), in her study of nineteenth-century New England archival records, describes what she calls firsting and lasting. Firsting in the archive celebrated the first colonies, births, and marriages of settlers; lasting emphasized Indigenous death and relics. In O'Brien's study, "New Englanders appropriated and displayed Indian artifacts and bones as evidence of Indian demise, and constructed a story whereby Anglo Americans logically and rationally—legally, it is asserted—replaced Indian peoples and cultures" (p. 94). Informed by O'Brien is a related technique I am calling beforing and aftering, where land is visually displayed before and after Reclamation. Beforing and aftering was a common tool in nineteenth-century Indian boarding school propaganda in the U.S. and Canada, which featured images of Indigenous students upon arrival with long hair and no shoes next to images of the same children after their tenure with haircuts and suits (Brady & Hiltz, 2017; Malmsheimer, 1985; Miller, 2003; Racette, 2009; Warley, 2009). Like O'Brien's concept of firsting and lasting, beforing and aftering occurred in tandem: it was not enough to display an image of land only before or after water—the two had to be side-by-side. A 1926 issue presented the image of small bushes and sand next to a garden (17.8:129). Another presented a man beside a fence with the caption "The transformation of desert from sagebrush to alfalfa" (19.8:1). One photo collage titled "Irrigation Reclamation in a Nutshell" (18.1:16) offered readers images of a glacier, dam, desert, canal, crop, cows, factories, and finally houses. In this collage, white settler readers could view water unfold over time from original water source to white settlement.

The Magazine's photographs also offered readers visual command over water. These images are unpeopled and emphasize straight lines, presenting water as unchaotic, ordered, and ultimately knowable. Often, they feature on their margins trees or rocks, naturalizing the unnatural landscapes of Reclamation projects. The perspectives of the Kachess Dam in Washington State (Figure 5) and a Carlsbad canal in New Mexico (Figure 6) hover above the water, placing viewers in the middle of the flow. Some of these perspectives a bystander could not normally have, as was the case with the Magazine's photo collages. These composites offered readers multiple views of the same subject. For instance, one collage offered four views of the Sun River Project in Montana: the river channel above the dam, the portal spillway tunnel, and the north and south abutments (17.9:164). The Magazine further permitted readers visual command over water with the regularly occurring column "Pictorial Lessons in Practical Irrigation." These features instructed readers how to recreate an image for themselves—for instance, the Magazine taught readers how to cultivate orchards to prevent water evaporation (15.4:52). Throughout its pages, the Magazine used both text and image to argue its fictional thesis: water was white property and Indigenous peoples were nowhere to be found, or at least not present enough to make any reasonable claims to water.



Outlet of Kachess dam, Yakima project, Washington.

Figure 5: "Kachess Dam," 15.3:42 (1924). Image reproduced thanks to University of Minnesota Digital Library Services Department and the Bureau of Reclamation.



Cement lined section of the main canal on the Carlsbad project, New Mexico.

Figure 6: "Carlsbad Canal," 15.2:31 (1924). Image reproduced thanks to University of Minnesota Digital Library Services Department and the Bureau of Reclamation.

Damming tactics of temporality

The Magazine replaced Indigenous presence with stories of white settlement, eliding Indigenous perspectives on water in text and image. But the Magazine was not devoid of representations of Indigenous peoples. Some articles describe Indigenous peoples as historically violent (23.3:66), warmongering (27.12:282), and as an infestation (17.3:46). But more commonly the Magazine praised Indigenous peoples and water, romanticizing their "ancient" methods. One article on Reclamation in Arizona stated that "ancient Indians possessed considerable skill in the art of irrigating," which included ditches and reservoirs lined with burnt clay and techniques to eliminate seepage and evaporation (26.10:226). An article by Reclamation photographer Ben Glaha described the Hohokam people as "the true pioneer of irrigation on our western deserts." For Glaha, "to some long-forgotten aboriginal red man goes the honor of the first dimly glimpsed vision of 'desert lands made fruitful'" (32.3:51-53). Accompanying Glaha's article are seven images of archaeological evidence for "prehistoric" water practices next to images of produce and Reclamation projects (see Figure 7).

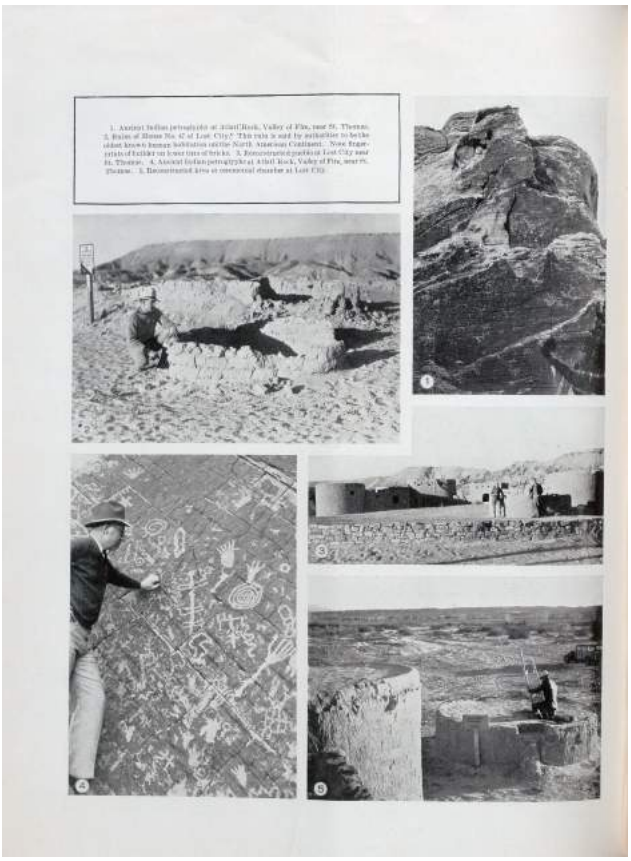


Figure 7: "Ben Glaha Photographs," 26.8 (1936). Image reproduced thanks to University of Minnesota Digital Library Services Department and the Bureau of Reclamation.

By crediting Indigenous people with water firsts, these examples exhibit O'Brien's concept of lasts: the Magazine invited representations of Indigenous water practices onto its pages to emphasize they were no more. One article on the construction of the Bartlett Dam in Arizona noted how the project sprang "from the ashes of the ancient Indian civilization of the stone axe and the stone hoe, which flourished here ages ago" (27.5:97). Another claimed that "prehistoric Indian

civilization in Arizona flourished on irrigated land. Now our cities rise above irrigated fields in the same locale" (26.12:1). The Magazine reprinted a speech from the Under Secretary of the Interior John J. Dempsey, who stated:

> All around is concrete evidence that water means life and progress. There are remains of canals and large buildings constructed by an ancient Indian people who attained a high civilization many centuries ago. They had mastered the art of irrigation. Then they vanished into a dusty record for museums. The culture of the ancient Hohokams is today a scattered group of trash mounds—a field for pothunters. Why? Because their water failed. The West must have water—water for irrigation—or its civilization dies (31.11.283).

This speech, made permanent and accessible by its publication, offers several claims about water. For one, it positions Indigenous peoples as in ancient opposition to the modern, white settler water projects Dempsey promotes. Dempsey concedes a "high level of civilization"—defined by him—but safely locates it in the past. Indigenous water practices for Dempsey are in museums, dusty records, and archeological sites. Failure. Trash. Indigenous water in Dempsey's rendering serves as didactic—water means life: but whose life? The article not only participates in firsting and lasting but also almost *claims* these Hohokam origins as American. Such articles frame Indigenous water practices as precursors, good for their day but not for now.

An important part of these articles is to separate contemporary Indigenous peoples from earlier generations. One article on the Milk River Project in Montana stated that "the genesis of the American Indian is a matter of conjecture and genealogists differ in their opinions" (27.9:215). Another described how "when or from whence the Indian came no one knows. How many prehistoric peoples had lived and died before the Indian no one knows" (30.5:136). While this article presented a Gros Ventres creation story, the article safely contains it as an "ancient legend," not as truth or evidence. One article claimed, "the Indian has been unable to tell the white man who the people were that made the flint arrowheads. Neither from memory by folk-tale can they explain them" (27.1:9). An exception includes discussing the methods of contemporary Indigenous peoples, including the Pima, Papago, Mohave, Chemehuevi, Yuma, and Cocopah peoples (26.10:226). But even in this example, their irrigation practices are precursors to Arizona's "modern" Reclamation projects. This rupture between past and present accomplishes at least two things: it allowed the Magazine to extol the virtues of science, both for explaining origins but also the science of modern irrigation. Furthermore, it authorized the Magazine to fill in the gaps, implying that if Indigenous peoples could not explain these contexts then archaeologists and the Department of the Interior would. The Magazine does not leave space to consider that Indigenous people may have strategically kept secret these explanations, protecting stories from cooptation and damage.

The Magazine doubly exhibited firsting and lasting in its descriptions of the visual displays of the Department of the Interior. The Department frequently showcased dioramas, models, and displays at various events, such as Philadelphia's Sesquicentennial Exposition in 1926. These displays featured representation from the Department's various bureaus, including both the Bureau of Reclamation and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. At the sesquicentennial, the Department exhibited on the Reclamation side a model farm with a miniature geyser spurting water, photographs of dams, as well as a film on "the story of reclamation from the snow-capped mountains to the completed farm" (17.7:122). Next to the Reclamation exhibit was a display from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which was meant "to show the progress made by the Indian race

during the last century, through a contrast between his original mode of living and his present status." The exhibit included art, baskets, and beadwork as well as "a Navajo Indian woman actually weaving these articles while a Navajo Indian silversmith will also be at work." At a county fair in Montana, the Department profiled the Guernsey Dam in Wyoming next to display cases on how the region did not have a long Indigenous history, as "close on the influx of the Indians came the first white men in 1812" (30.6:185), undermining Indigenous claims. One display case was dedicated to "the Departure of the Indians" (p. 186)—the ultimate settler colonial fantasy. One article professed to *be* a museum, offering readers a tour of the new Department of the Interior Museum, which featured Indigenous-made baskets and jewelry as well as "the original Indian citizenship law, approved by President Coolidge on June 2, 1924" (28.4:57). The exhibit also featured images of "homes ranging from wigwams to modern houses" as well as a map of Reclamation dams (p. 58). The exhibit ended showing "early irrigation methods of the Indians as contrasted to present-day methods." These examples have several layers: they are representations in the Magazine of ephemeral representations of the Department at fairs and expositions. They first and last as well as before and after, offering both the original visitors as well as the Magazine's readers supposed old and new; inhabitant and owner.

Other articles "displayed" archaeological finds from dam sites. Kimball M. Banks and Jon S. Czaplicki (2014) note how dam construction has often represented dubious opportunities for archaeology. The Magazine discussed the excavation of Nevada's so-called Lost City, which comprised 77 Pueblo sites dating from before 500 A.D. (Harry, 2008). These articles feature archaeologists racing against the clock to recover artifacts before the Hoover Dam would flood the area (26.5:90; 26.8:1). The August 1936 issue opened with a photo collage of "ancient Indian petroglyphs" as well as a reconstructed pueblo and kiva (26.8:181). The Magazine paid particular attention to what it called the Sacred Buffalo Stone, found on the Milk River project and relocated to a nearby town (27.1:9;16). The Magazine used the artifact to make the point that "when the elevators and beet dumps and seed houses are silhouetted against the rising moon, one can imagine the shades of departed braves gathered in the city park as they shuffle to the tum tum-tum of ghostly drums." In this museum of the Magazine, Reclamation projects do not entirely eclipse the past, represented by the Buffalo Stone; yet they are a stand-in for ghosts and tropes. Dwayne Donald (2009) offers the example of the papamihaw asiniy, or flying rock, which now sits in a museum in Alberta. For Donald, "that is what happens in a museum. The story of the artifact and the significance of the place that it comes from must be ignored. The artifact must be depersonalized and renamed, its original power and place must be removed and replaced so that it can be objectified, analyzed and shelved" (p. 17). Like a museum, the Magazine similarly exhibited Indigenous peoples as decontextualized and in the past to serve larger settler colonial narratives about possession of water and land.

The Magazine continued its museum-like displays in a special series beginning in 1940 that provided stories behind Reclamation place names—from lakes, to dams, to towns, to rivers. The entries of English, French, Spanish, and Russian names reference settlers who named a waterfall or tributary or hill after themselves—naming as claiming. One entry described how part of the Yakima Project in Washington State was named Roza in honor of the daughter of a railway official; another stated the Buchanan Dam honoured a Texan Member of Congress (30.6:181). The series largely muted Indigenous toponymies. As one entry noted, "early explorers substituted Spanish or English words for most of the Indian terminology in use and the early settlers had little inclination to borrow from the strange languages of the Red Man" (30.5:144). Jani Vuolteenaho and Lawrence D. Berg (2009) argue in their work on critical toponymies that "place naming

strategies almost invariably operate inextricably in tandem with other material and discursive processes equally fundamental for the operation of power" (p. 11). The website of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville reservation, which was particularly affected by Grand Coulee Dam, features a 160-page document of Salish names for places and waterways misnamed by the Magazine (George, 2011). These entries do more than just list: they re-place that what the Magazine attempted to overwrite.

Occasionally, the Magazine highlighted the Indigenous origins of Reclamation projects such as Toyon, Nespelem, Kitsap, and Wenatchee (30.4:100-104). But often these vacuous entries on names for water remained disconnected from a specific language, people, or land. As one article stated about the "romantic" place names of the Big Thompson Project in Colorado, "some of the most attractive and distinctive place names of the area were given by the Indians who generally made use of phrases descriptive of the landscape and commemorative of some event that took place in the vicinity" (30.5:144). The Magazine also stated that Caputa in South Dakota could be a Sioux word for "Beaver Head" or "Upper Lip," but it might also be Latin for "Head Camp" (31.6:186). These techniques—of highlighting settler names or invoking flattened and vague Indigenous origins—safely contained Indigenous claims. Christi Belcourt (2013) writes how Canadian settlers are comfortable with Indigenous place names "but only to a point. The names must remain vague—empty references—rather than carry the burden of Canada's colonial history and the erasure of Indigenous ownership of lands" (n.p). The Magazine's series, too, vaguely traced the names of Reclamation projects to Indigenous languages without undermining white claims to water.

In brief and controlled moments, the Magazine permitted representations of contemporary Indigenous people. This is less a credit to the Magazine and its "inclusivity" than to Indigenous peoples and their ongoing resistance to settler colonialism. The Magazine described a celebration in 1940 for the All-American Canal, so-called because it skirted water away from Mexico (30.11:314-315). At the event, Commissioner of Reclamation John C. Page praised how the Canal made possible the settlement of more than 60,000 people as well as powered factories and industries in California and Nevada. The Magazine briefly stated that present were the "Quechan Indians"—with no other description. At a celebration for the American Falls Dam in Idaho, the Magazine stated there was "a portrayal of Indian life by 600 members of the Bannock tribe" (16.10:147). Another American Falls Dam celebration included an address from Construction Engineer F. A. Banks, who praised the Dam yet casually noted it required "the acquisition of some 30,000 acres of land from the Indians" (18.11:168-169). The article then stated Chief Jack Edmo, Shoshone, gave a speech "in his native tongue and in full tribal regalia," translated by a state senator. According to the Magazine's transcript, Edmo admitted "the river-bottom lands had long been the pasture ground for their ponies and a favorite site for camps, but if the great lake which now covered many acres was for the benefit of the country, the Indians were willing to make the sacrifice." Was this translation accurate? What else might he have said? The rest of the celebration included a parade "made colorful and picturesque by a file of Indians in elaborate headdresses and tribal costumes." As well, "many of the Indians from the Fort Hall Reservation were present to hear their chief speak to the whitemen." The Magazine also featured a photograph of an "Apache Indian tourist powwow at Coolidge Dam which supplies irrigation water to the San Carlos Indian Service project, Arizona" (31.12:322) (see Figure 8). The Magazine limits the presence of Indigenous peoples at Reclamation celebrations to endorsement, leaving out considerations of the ulterior or strategic reasons for their attendance, which may have been oppositional to Reclamation agendas. As Vine Deloria Jr. (1988) writes, "Indians must be redefined in terms that white men

will accept, even if that means re-Indianizing them according to a white man's idea of what they were like in the past and should logically become in the future" (p. 92). While the Magazine casted representations as either anachronistic compared to the modernity of Reclamation or as a symbol for Indigenous support for government water projects, Indigenous peoples featured in the Magazine may have had their own reasons for hearing a speech, for participating in a powwow, and marching in a parade.

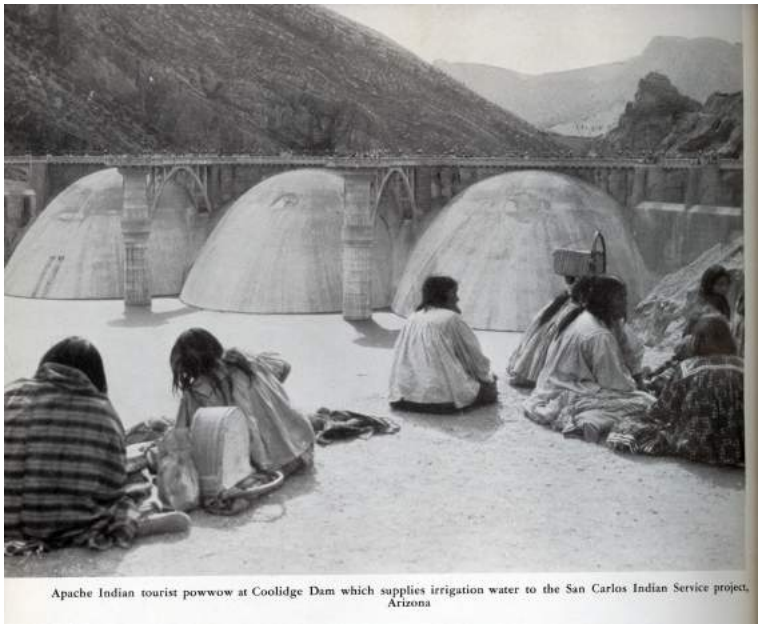


Figure 8: "Coolidge Dam Powwow," 31.12:322 (1941). Image reproduced thanks to University of Minnesota Digital Library Services Department and the Bureau of Reclamation.

Damning literature

The Magazine's rare representations of Indigenous peoples bolstered—not challenged—settler claims to land and water. Counternarratives, which undermine these claims outside of the Magazine's censorship and gatekeeping, include literature by late twentieth-century Indigenous authors. For instance, Thomas King's (1999) *Green Grass, Running Water* features the Blackfoot character Eli, who must fight against contemporary dam construction and an architect who considers dams apolitical; the novel concludes with Coyote dancing so hard he causes an earthquake that ruptures the dam. D'Arcy McNickle's (1988) *Wind from an Enemy Sky* offers the stories of Bull and his nephews of Little Elk tribe, who fight the construction of a dam in the 1930s amidst the punishment of the U.S. justice system. As Shari Huhndorf (2014) argues, McNickle's novel "contests the practices of dispossession" by "exposing their colonial motivations and drawing out their disastrous effects" (p. 47). Leslie Marmon Silko indirectly counters the Magazine's settler colonial narratives throughout her oeuvre, especially in *Almanac of the Dead* (1992) with the character Leah and her evil plot to develop property in water-parched Arizona despite Indigenous protest. Silko also writes of dam construction in *Gardens in the Dunes* (2000), which changes the landscape and economy of the Chemehuevi reservation. The character Sister Salt observes how after the river was diverted she would "find silver-green carp belly-up, trapped in water holes in the empty riverbed" (p. 214); she learns how "the Mojave people were terribly

upset because their beloved ancestors and dead relatives dwelled down there under the river." The white settler character Edward, in contrast, is happy about the cheap water the dam will provide (p. 281). Silko metes out an alternative justice, in which characters such as Leah and Edward are eventually punished for commodifying water. King's, McNickle's, and Silko's dams are fictional and therefore allow readers to generalize about settler colonial tactics throughout Turtle Island.[4] In contrast, the two literary texts below—*B Street* by Lawney L. Reyes and *Winter in the Blood* by James Welch—name specific dams and communities, permitting more direct counternarratives to the Magazine.[5]

Lawny L. Reyes and Grand Coulee Dam

Grand Coulee Dam is a massive hydroelectric dam on the Columbia River in Washington State, part of the Columbia Basin Project. The Dam, constructed between 1933 and 1941, today generates 75% of the Pacific Northwest's power supply and makes billions in annual profit ("Pacific Northwest Region: About us," 2016). The Dam was particularly important during World War Two, when it powered the assembly of planes, tanks, and atomic energy. Creating Grand Coulee Dam resulted in flooding 21,000 acres of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation—important hunting and fishing areas, sacred sites, and cemeteries all submerged.[6] Holly Sprague's (2011) research reveals how white farmers were in cahoots with government, strategizing how to displace Indigenous peoples viewed as not using land and water to their full advantage (pp. 29-30). In 1940 the government forcibly relocated three Indigenous communities to prepare for the Dam (p. 36). Some were able to move their homes while others had theirs burned. Some settler organizations offered to "help" transfer soon-to-be submerged graves but used the opportunity to loot museum pieces (pp. 37-39).[7] Despite this devastation, the Magazine coolly noted in a reprint of a 1937 legal decision that "it is not possible to construct a dam at that site without flooding both the allotted and the tribal lands of the Colville Indian Reservation" (27.4:76); it later promoted the new lake as an opportunity for boaters (30.12:349). Similarly, the newly formed Lake Mead offered a boat tour called the Paiute, which illustrated the cover of the June 1936 issue (Rosenberg, 2001, p. 95; see Figure 9).

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[4] While *Gardens in the Dunes* hints that the dam represented is Parker Dam (border of California and Arizona), its construction in 1938 does not accord with other late nineteenth-century events in the novel. While one reviewer considers this as anachronistic (Lynch, 2000, p. 291), leaving the dam unnamed offers ways to universalize its effects.

[5] See also *This Stretch of the River* (Howe, TallBear, & Oak Lake Writers' Society, 2006) for Lakota, Nakota, and Dakota writers' perspectives on water in response to the two hundred year anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Discovery Expedition.

[6] See also Laurie Arnold (2012) for more on Colville and termination.

[7] See the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation's website for excellent videos and Elder testimony on the histories and effects of colonialism as well as several Colville communities' decolonizing practices. Video titles such as *The Price We Paid*, *False Promises*, and *The Dam's Tribal Impacts* are telling. http://www.colvilletribes.com/media.php

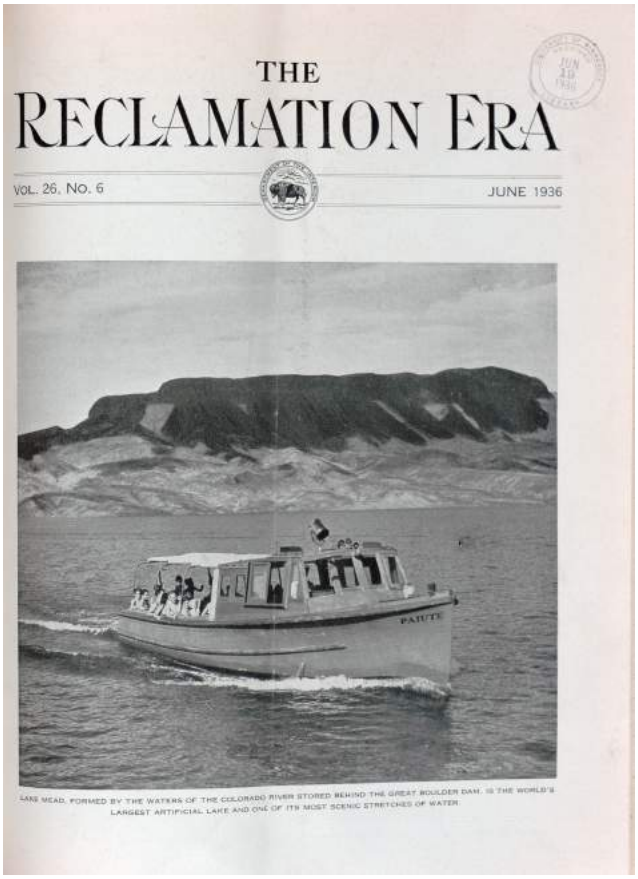

Figure 9: "Lake Mead's Boat Tour, the Paiute," 26.6:132 (1936). Image reproduced thanks to University of Minnesota Digital Library Services Department and the Bureau of Reclamation.

The government failed at attempts to mitigate effects on fishing.[8] Plans included trapping fish at Rock Island Dam and transporting them in refrigerated trucks to holding ponds. Fish were then spawned artificially, their eggs transferred to hatcheries, rearing ponds, and finally various tributaries. The Magazine provided crushing accounts of how "at times the fish spend several days in this area next to the ladder in vain attempts to get over the dam, before they will enter the ladder. Many fall back on projecting rocks and are injured, while others are more or less exhausted by their repeated attempts to get over the dam" (30.6:175).

Lawney L. Reyes's memoir *B Street* (2008) acts as counternarrative to these clinical descriptions. Reyes documents his family's move in 1933 from their home in Inchelium, Washington on the Colville reservation in advance of the town being flooded. The Reyes family moved to Grand Coulee Dam's construction site and opened a restaurant, profiting off the new town and its workers. Throughout, Reyes calls the Columbia River the Swah net ka, counteracting the Magazine's settler toponymies. Reyes describes how the Sin-Aikst people of Inchelium were not informed about the Dam; they found out after seeing Reclamation workers marking where the water would rise with wooden stakes (p. 15). The Magazine explained how during construction other wooden stakes drew concern from settlers who thought they represented workers killed or graves of Indigenous people. The Magazine corrected the assumption: "the markers were

[8] See Roberta Ulrich (2007) for a history of the failed attempts to fix the damage of Bonneville Dam along the Columbia River.

surveying targets, placed there so that the dam would grow not only big and strong, but also straight" (31.9:239). But as Reyes shows, wooden stakes symbolized far more.

Florence, a respected Elder, led a community meeting in response (pp. 16-23). She began inviting the two men who had encountered the Reclamation workers to repeat what they witnessed. Florence then provided critical histories of Inchelium—earlier land thefts in both Canada and the U.S., forced relocation, and effects on salmon. Florence delivered her speech in both English and Sin-Aikst so all could understand. Unlike the histories in the Magazine, which erased and romanticized Indigenous presence, Florence outlined how the government "was now about to take what was left of their land by covering it with water" (p. 19), connecting the proposed flooding to earlier Swhy al puh land grabs and claims that the Sin-Aikst were extinct. Presciently, Florence predicted that if Inchelium was going under water so was nearby Kettle Falls, jeopardizing salmon runs and submerging ancestors' graves (p. 21).

Reyes corrects many narratives found throughout the Magazine. He documents how the government actively ignored "the welfare of Columbia River Indians" (p. 145). For Reyes, "unique and important cultures that had lived in harmony with nature for thousands of years were dismissed as victims of progress." Reyes describes how the Sin-Aikst people never received free electricity and canned salmon promised as compensation and were discriminated against at the construction site: "a few of the lighter-skinned Indians had been hired to work on the dam, but the full bloods were usually turned away" (p. 56). Reyes states what goes unstated in the Magazine:

> In 1941, the communities and towns of Inchelium, Gifford, Daisy, Kettle Falls, Marcus, Plum, Peach, Gerome, Lincoln, and Keller were flooded. What was lost there could never be replaced. The traditional burial grounds in Inchelium, Kettle Falls, Keller and other places along the Columbia River were moved to higher ground. But many unmarked graves, located near the residences of Indian families along the river, were covered by water when the Columbia River rose (p. 146).

Reyes names the specific communities affected by the Dam, whereas the Magazine singularizes "the Indian people" and "Indian language." Reyes even begins the book stating how the name "Colville" homogenizes 12 distinct peoples, who all "lost their homelands to white people throughout the state of Washington and were corralled on what is now the Colville Indian Reservation" (p. 6). Reyes also names the obscene act of exhuming as well as submerging graves, which goes unstated altogether in the Magazine.

Reyes' memoir exposes Indigenous acts of resistance that the Magazine actively silenced. Florence contacted legal and government representatives in an attempt to prevent the flooding (p. 23). The community also hosted a Ceremony of Tears on June 14, 1940, which was an assembly of Indigenous peoples of the Northwest and even the Great Plains (p. 120). People discuss the centrality of salmon at the ceremony and smoke fish over willow branches (p. 128). They played a traditional stick game and ate traditional foods such as huckleberry, bitterroot, and camas (p. 132-135). The Ceremony of Tears offers one answer to Winona LaDuke's question of how to grieve a river.

The Ceremony of Tears attracted thousands of people, including settlers. Reyes states how they "were taking photographs as Indians posed. None of the Indians smiled" (p. 127). While Reyes does not elaborate, he suggests that for Indigenous people in attendance that the ceremony was one of grief, a way to mourn the land and fish soon lost but also to energize what would remain: language, stories, community. For settlers, the ceremony was a photo opportunity. Reyes

presents a similar scene at the Grand Coulee Dam completion celebration in 1941. Reyes explains that amongst the crowd of white people were "nearly a dozen Indians in warbonnets" with "perplexed expressions on their usually stoic faces" (p. 140). While cameras documented Jim James ceremoniously turning the first turbine switch (see Figure 10), Reyes provides the story behind a photograph that for settlers may have signaled Indigenous endorsement. Reyes notes that "his presence at this event suggested that he had little understanding of and concern for his people, who were losing their homes, their land, their resources, the great river—the Swah net ka—and their beloved culture and way of life." Reyes complicates the Magazine's depictions of Indigenous participation in Reclamation celebrations.

Figure 10: "Unidentified Native American Man and Chief Jim James of the Colville Tribe, at Grand Coulee Dam" (1941): identifier: pc086b01f044_1. Thanks to the Cull A. White Photographs and Negatives Collection, Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries.

The January 1941 issue of the Magazine concluded with an image of Grand Coulee Dam at night. What otherwise would be dark is unnaturally lit by the jobsite's many lights (see Figure 11). The full-page photograph did not accompany a specific article; instead, it concluded an issue with articles on proposals for the fish of Grand Coulee Dam as well as plans to widen the Columbia River Channel. The issue also discussed the "clearing" of trees and stumps before the flooding of the land, without discussing the people buried or living there. The caption of this night scene photograph simply states how the Dam's "eleven huge drum gates at the crest of the spillway section will regulate the upper 28-foot level of water."

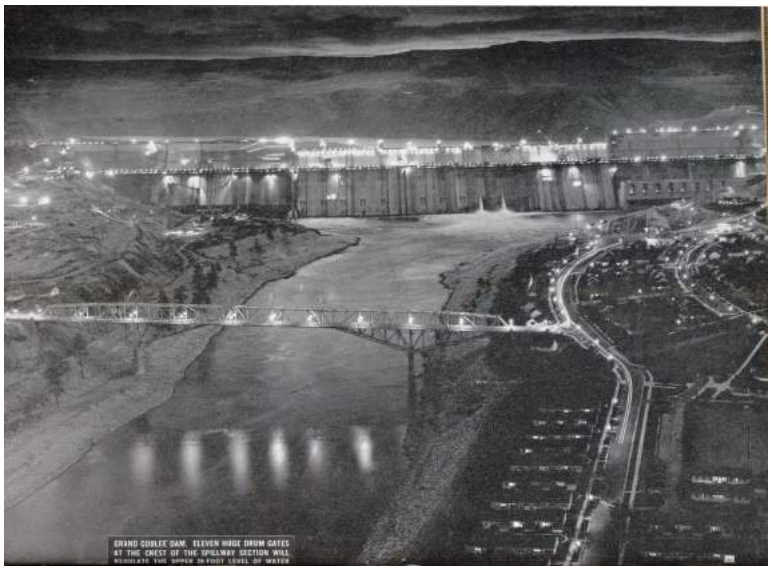

Figure 11: "Grand Coulee Dam," 31.1:28 (1941). Image reproduced thanks to University of Minnesota Digital Library Services Department and the Bureau of Reclamation.

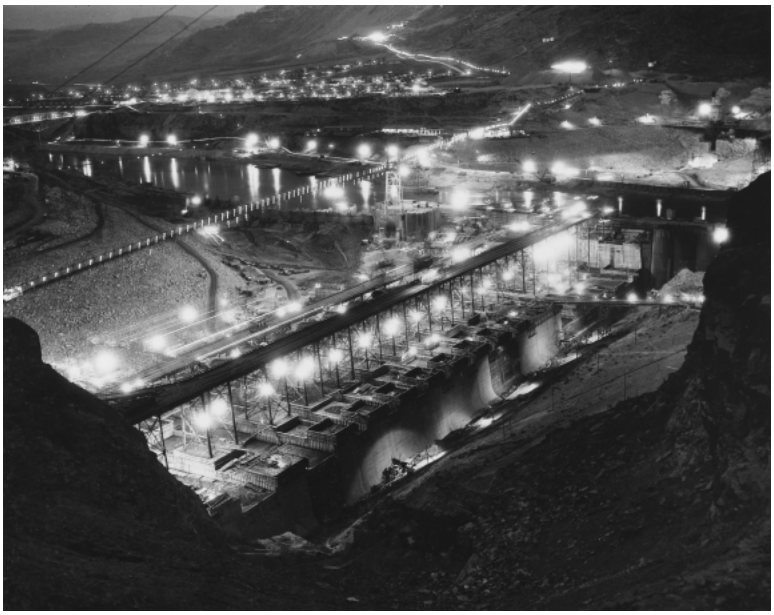

Figure 12: "Grand Coulee Dam Construction Site at Night" (1938): University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections: UW27005z.

Reyes' memoir provides a near-identical image, though with a starkly different accompanying text (see Figure 12). In the memoir, the photograph accompanies text of the Reyes family first arriving to the Grand Coulee Dam construction site at night from Inchelium. Reyes describes the family's first impressions of the machines, debris, and long conveyor belts moving rocks and gravel. Though at first the family is drawn in with fascination, they become "disturbed and saddened as they watched huge machines and powerful explosions tear and blow apart the beautiful landscape before them. Over the years, they had learned from their culture to love the land and treat it with respect. What they were witnessing now was foreign to them. They had not

expected this" (p. 39). Unlike the accompanying text on the "problem" of fish and the clearing of trees but not people in the Magazine, Reyes forces his reader to view the same scene not with appreciation but with horror.

Reading Reyes helps to revisit claims made by the Magazine. For instance, one issue in 1936 announced how Grand Coulee Dam developed services for tourists—vista points, a parking lot, and a grandstand (26.12:286). Future ideas included "a room in which it is planned to accommodate an Indian representative from the Colville Agency" who would sell handicrafts. Reading this article through Reyes complicates the reasons this person would participate. Another scene from the Magazine portrayed an Indigenous woman who "had more faith in the ancient stream than in the men damming it, Reclamation engineers found out recently" (31.11:284). The article painted this woman as old and lonely. It stated she received sufficient compensation for the loss of her home and was supposed to relocate but "steadfastly refused" (31.11:284). The article mocked her speech, called her a slur, and interpreted her eventual departure as concession—that "she was finally convinced that times had changed." But Reyes explains how "Elders who lived along the river and were physically unable to move their homes stayed until the water began to rise" (p. 146); many of those who moved "died of grief over the loss of their homes and the gravesites of their ancestors." Juxtaposing Reyes and the Magazine ushers in a consideration of this woman's refusal more in line with Audra Simpson's (2007) definition—that her refusal is a statement of sovereignty outside of state recognition. Reyes' creative nonfiction troubles what is presented as so self-assured in the Magazine.

James Welch and the Milk River Project

The Magazine also devoted considerable space to the Milk River Project—an extensive series of storage and diversion dams, canals, laterals, drains, dikes, and reservoirs in Montana ("Milk River project," 2012). Construction began in 1906, requiring a treaty with England—not Indigenous peoples—because the Milk River's water does not acknowledge the colonial border between Canada and the U.S. The Magazine oscillated between concern that the Milk River Project was not attracting farmers and excitement over the sugar beet industry now made possible (15.2: 27; 16.2:32; 16.6:83; 19.7: 98). One article described the historical (never present-day) existence of Indigenous peoples on the land of the Milk River Project (27.9:215). But according to the Magazine "the war whoop is stilled—the noises of Indian warfare are no more" after the Milk River Project as well as the creation of the reservation (p. 218). The article claims that now, tourists can enter the reservation and collect artifacts.

It was not just the Magazine citing the assimilative power of Montana water: in 1905, the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in Montana had a water shortage because of white settlers upriver. In 1908 *Winters* v. *United States* was decided in the U.S. Supreme Court, maintaining the water rights of the A'aninin (Gros Ventre) and Nakota (Assiniboine) peoples on the reservation (Cosens & Royster, 2012; Shurts, 2003; Tarlock, 2010). One of the case's obscurities stems from its two different codes of U.S. water law. In Eastern states water law is riparian: the water alongside a landowner's property can be used unless it interferes with a neighbour (Burton, 1991, p. 19); Western states abide by the law of prior appropriation: senior water users have rights over junior users, who may enjoy any surplus (Weaver, 1996, p. 85). *Winters* v. *United States* has led to confusion because the judge's decision, favourable to Indigenous peoples, borrowed from both riparian *and* prior appropriation law. The judge never clarified whether Indigenous users along

Milk River were considered senior users because the Fort Belknap reservation was created in 1888, before the non-Indigenous people upstream began irrigating, or because Indigenous users' seniority stretched to "time immemorial"—a critical distinction for Indigenous nations whose reservations were created after non-Indigenous people began using their water. What is more, the expressed purpose of *Winters* was to support assimilation through agriculture—never are inherent rights of Indigenous peoples and their own definitions of water discussed. *Winters* states that water at Fort Belknap was necessary because its lands, "without irrigation, were practically valueless" (p. 576). Like the Magazine, legal texts such as *Winters* v. *United States* have attempted to dictate what Indigenous peoples' relationship is to water along the Milk River and beyond (Griffith, 2017b).

James Welch's (1973/2003) *Winter in the Blood*, set on the Fort Belknap reservation, represents the same water the legal case and the Magazine attempt to, though from an Indigenous and literary perspective. Viewed as an example of the Native American Renaissance beginning in the 1960s, the novel tells the story of a Blackfoot man searching for his girlfriend and in the process learning about his grandparents, community, and self. The background of the plot includes the effects of the Bureau of Reclamation on the reservation. Welch, a Blackfoot and A'aninin writer, describes water in general—the river's milky waters as well as the reservation's aridity (p. 4). At one point the narrator asks, "how's the water?" to which he receives the response, "It'll do" (p. 4).

This seeming ambivalence about water belies the careful ways Welch's novel indirectly speaks against the Magazine's representations. While his novel is set in the 1960s, decades after the period of the Magazine I examine, the novel names effects of both the Milk River Project as well as white settlement enabled by it. While the Magazine praised the successes of a sugar beet refinery in Chinook, Montana (16.12:185; 17.12:201; 24.1:16; 31.1:25), Welch's novel highlights the repercussions after "the sugar beet factory up by Chinook had died" (p. 4). Welch also paints a history of the area where "the white men from the fish department came in their green trucks and stocked the river with pike. They were enthusiastic and pumped thousands of pike of all sizes into the river." The Magazine commonly described scenes in which the Bureau of Reclamation attempted to solve fishing problems it had created with dams; Welch, in contrast, portrays the fallout of the government programs to fix problems:

> The river ignored the fish and the fish ignored the river; they refused even to die there. They simply vanished. The white men made tests; they stuck electric rods into the water; they scraped muck from the bottom; they even collected bugs from the fields next to the river; they dumped other kinds of fish in the river. Nothing worked. The fish disappeared. Then the men from the fish department disappeared, and the Indians put away their new fishing poles. (p. 5)

In this passage, the river and the fish are agential—what Zoe Todd (2014) calls "other-than-human" (p. 231). The government workers test, electrify, scrape, collect, and dump in vain because the fish are gone. Their disappearance is not left unexplained as was the case in the Magazine: the fish and river ignored one another because of government actions. Welch further reveals the time and location of government workers compared to Indigenous peoples: while the government workers leave after their "solutions" fail, the Indigenous peoples may put away their poles but they themselves still remain.

Welch further describes the effect of tourism on the reservation as a result of the Reclamation project. The narrator hitches a ride with a white family (p. 101). From the backseat,

the narrator observes how the family "spoke about the countryside as if it were dead, as if all life had become extinct. Occasionally she would point at something, a shack or a busted-down corral beside an irrigation ditch, and he would nod and roar excitedly." The daughter becomes sick, and the father blames the water. Before they part ways, the father asks the narrator "Can I take your picture?" (p. 103). It is as if the driver understands the narrator as part of the dried-up scenery, a presence the family cannot see in their backseat.

Welch further provides a counternarrative to the Magazine by historicizing the Milk River. The Magazine portrays Gros Ventre history as warring chaos before white settlement. Welch instead describes how Blackfoot people carefully considered whether to stay on Gros Ventre land, follow buffalo south, or go west to the mountains (p. 123). But "it was the soldiers from Fort Assiniboine who took the choice away from the people. They rode down one late-spring day, gathered up the survivors and drove them west to the newly created Blackfeet Reservation." Unlike the Magazine, in which Indigenous peoples required agricultural pacification, Welch directs readers to understand government as the source of violence. Welch complicates any easy understandings of Reclamation and Fort Belknap: the novel ends by revealing how a family friend and Reclamation worker who regulated a head gate would bring food to Yellow Calf, whom the narrator just learns is his grandfather (pp. 128). Despite the devastating effects of Reclamation—subtly in the background—Welch portrays Indigenous peoples who have helped each other survive in spite of the government's genocidal tactics.

Conclusion

One of the first issues of the Magazine after it resumed publication at the conclusion of World War Two featured the cover of a newly returned sailor walking through an alfalfa field with a female romantic interest (see Figure 13). The Magazine stated that when the sailor "left his hot semiarid New Mexico home at 17 to join the Navy, he didn't expect to find so many changes" after the installation of the Bureau of Reclamation's Conchas Canal (32.5:97). The couple, hand-in-hand amongst a new farm and new country complete with a rebooted magazine, represented a future the Magazine had been promoting for 30 years. The photograph represents a future of youth, whiteness, heteronormativity, agrarian life, and settlement. It pictures the promised future found in Woody Guthrie's Columbia River ballads and in the Bureau of Reclamation's larger arsenal of its propaganda machine in the interwar period. Guthrie's lyric—river, while you're rambling, you can do some work for me—implies the water was already doing the work that would benefit settler colonialism: the government just had to harness it and reap benefits otherwise going to waste. "Do some work for me" erases the disastrous effects Reclamation projects had and have on Indigenous lands, water, people, and communities. It also silences resistance to Reclamation projects made clear in Indigenous literary representations of dams. Isolating the words and images of the past helps to delegitimize settler narratives of water inherited and perpetuated today. My reading of the Magazine is an attempt to hold the publication accountable and to demonstrate how dams are built with more than engineering equipment—their tools also include narratives, language, rhetoric, and image that recast Indigenous waterways for settler audiences. But discursive tools are also used to resist the totality of damming presented by the Magazine—literature by authors such as King, McNickle, Silko, Reyes, and Welch offer counternarratives of hope, refusal, and survivance. The answer to LaDuke's question of how to grieve a river is not found in the propaganda of government and settler colonial media, but in Indigenous story.

Figure 13: "A Sailor Returns," 32.5:97 (1946). Image reproduced thanks to University of Minnesota Digital Library Services Department and the Bureau of Reclamation.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Cutcha Risling Baldy and Melanie K. Yazzie. Thanks also to the two anonymous reviewers. Finally, I would like to thank Jennifer Claybourne at the University of Minnesota's Digital Library Services Department, the University of Washington Libraries Special Collections, Hathi Trust, Washington State University Libraries, and Alexander Stephens, audiovisual producer for the Bureau of Reclamation.

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