

## Landscapes' Lessons: Native American Cultural Geography in Nineteenth-Century Oregon and Washington

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### Abstract

The depth and complexity of the cultural significance of physical geographic spaces to Native Americans is often underappreciated or misunderstood. For Pacific Northwest indigenous groups, landscapes contained lessons by which to live and histories of their people and their neighbors. The stories embedded in the landscapes not only augmented the oral tradition but were also crucial to the maintenance of socio-cultural values of native communities. The stories the landscape produced served as cultural reminders, but their efficacy depended upon continued contact with those locales. Knowing this helps us better understand the upheaval wrought by the US removal policy, which relocated Indians away from familiar landscapes and the lessons they imparted to remote and too often mute reservation lands.

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Mathias D. Bergmann, PhD, is an associate professor of history at Randolph Macon College in Ashland, VA. He serves as the department chair and teaches courses on early American, Native American, and geographical history. His primary fields of research are nineteenth-century US Indian affairs and Native American history in Oregon and Washington. His forthcoming book on the Northwest's native peoples during the nineteenth-century will be published by the Oregon State University Press.

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