

Intertribal Relations

This article, "Indian Participation in the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade" is written by Jay Buckley, history professor at Brigham Young University. [Changed for easier reading using ChatGPT.]
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The Eastern Shoshones (Utah Indians) got along well with their western and northern relatives, as well as with the Flatheads, Nez Perce, and sometimes the Crows. But their main enemies were the Blackfeet and Arapahos— especially after British traders from Canada gave the Blackfeet guns. This led to the rise of the powerful Blackfoot Confederacy, which joined together several northern tribes: the Blackfeet, Bloods, Piegians, and Atsinas. This group was much larger than the Shoshones—more than five times their size—and their land stretched from the Saskatchewan River down to the Yellowstone River. The Atsinas caused the most trouble because they often traveled through western Wyoming to visit their Arapaho relatives in the southeast. The movement of American traders into the American West made cultural conflict and violence worse between Native nations. Some tribes had strong ties to the British, while others depended on Americans for trade goods and guns to protect themselves and their land. The Lewis and Clark expedition started friendly relationships with the Shoshone people. However, Meriwether Lewis increased the anger of the Blackfeet toward Americans and their Native allies when a random meeting ended in a fight that killed two Blackfeet warriors.

Original

“The Eastern Shoshones got along well with their western and northern relatives, as well as with the Flatheads, Nez Percé, and occasionally the Crows. Their principle enemies, however, were the Blackfeet and Arapahos, especially after British traders from Canada began supplying the Blackfeet with firearms. What resulted was a powerful Blackfoot Confederacy that allied northern plains tribes of the Blackfeet (Siksikas), Bloods (Kainahs), Piegans, and the Atsinas. This confederacy outnumbered the Shoshones more than five-to-one and ranged from the Saskatchewan to the Yellowstone rivers. The Atsinas proved a most troublesome foe since they regularly traveled through western Wyoming to visit their Arapaho cousins to the southeast.

The advance of American traders into the American West only intensified the cultural conflict and violence between those nations with British ties and those relying upon Americans for trade goods and firearms to defend themselves and their natural resources. The Lewis and Clark expedition had initiated friendly relations with the Shoshones. But Meriwether Lewis intensified the animosity of the Blackfeet towards Americans and their Indian allies when a chance encounter led to the death of two Blackfeet warriors in a fight" (pg. 85)