

# Winnemem Wintu History Timeline

Compiled by Jessica Abbe for 2017 Run4Salmon Curriculum Guide

Pre-contact	An estimated 14,000 Wintu live along northern California rivers. Along the present-day McCloud River, the Winnemem Wintu enjoyed a relatively mild climate and abundant deer, salmon, berries, roots and acorns.
1815-1833	Early contact with Russians and other trappers brings deadly diseases to the Wintu, including mosquito-borne malaria.
1848	Pearson Reading, recipient of a large Mexican land grant for the area of present-day Redding, discovers gold on Clear Creek in Shasta County.
1848-9	California Gold Rush brings violence toward native people and destruction of their lands by an onslaught of Americans and foreigners.
Sept. 9, 1850	California becomes the 31st state
Aug. 16, 1851	Cottonwood "treaty of peace and friendship," calling for a 35-mile by 35-mile reservation for the Wintu, is signed at Reading's ranch on Cottonwood Creek.
1852	The U.S. Senate refuses to ratify the Cottonwood Treaty, and files it under secrecy not lifted until 1905.
1872	Despite protest by Winnemem, Livingston Stone establishes a fish hatchery at Baird, on the salmon-rich McCloud River. After initial resistance, some Winnemem become hatchery workers.
1873	Salmon eggs are sent from the fish hatchery to establish fisheries in many locations in the United States, and New Zealand.
1875	U.S. President Ulysses Grant sets aside 280 acres of Winnemem territory on the McCloud River for the government fish hatchery at Baird.
1880s-90s	Construction of the Southern Pacific RR in the Sacramento River canyon
1883-1888	Baird fish hatchery closed due to lack of fish, probably from explosions downstream for the railroad construction.
1889	The Wintu and Yana people petition U.S. President Benjamin Harrison for land and justice.
1893	Under the Dawes Act, U.S. President Grover Cleveland authorizes land allotments to non-reservation Indians. Some Winnemem people receive allotments.
1910	Decimated by disease, violence and landlessness, fewer than 400 Wintu remain.
1914	A government agent requests that the Winnemem (Baird) Indians along the McCloud River should have land purchased for them.
1915	An Indian agent proposes purchase of lands for the Winnemem, but a landowner refuses to sell, expecting a newly-proposed dam to drive land prices higher.
1937	U.S. government retakes allotments of Winnemem along the McCloud River, to prepare for flooding by the dam
1938-1945	Construction of Shasta Dam begins. Winnemem laborers work on the project, which will eventually flood their homelands. No passageway for migrating fish is built around the huge dam.

1941	Bodies from 183 Winnemem graves are disinterred along the river and moved to higher ground miles away.
1943	Winnemem are removed from their homelands on the lower McCloud River. Water from the filling of the reservoir inundates village areas and sacred sites.
1945	At completion of construction of Shasta Dam, Shasta Lake is the largest man-made reservoir in California. The Winnemem no longer own any land along what remains of the McCloud River. Due to the obstruction by Shasta Dam, the salmon can no longer reach the upper rivers where they were accustomed to begin and end their lives, and they start to die off.
1989	Under California's Endangered Species Act, the salmon that used to swim in the McCloud River—the Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon—are declared endangered.
1994	The Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon are declared endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act.
Sept. 2004	Winnemem hold a war dance at Shasta Dam in opposition to a proposed enlargement of the dam which could flood more tribal sites and harm remaining salmon. News coverage of the war dance reaches New Zealand. Winnemem chief Caleen Sisk receives a phone call from a New Zealand professor telling her, "We have your fish." Of all the fish transplanted during the 1800s, only those in New Zealand survived, and thrive today.
March 2010	Winnemem travel to New Zealand to sing and dance for salmon of the Rakaia River, the genetic offspring of McCloud River salmon eggs sent in 1873.
2014	Winnemem call for the restoration of the McCloud River Chinook salmon in California, using fish from the healthy population in New Zealand, and construction of a fish bypass around dams to the upper rivers.
Sept. 2016	First annual Run4Salmon traces the customary migration route of the Chinook salmon, as Winnemem and other participants walk, run, bicycle, boat and ride horses hundreds of miles from San Francisco Bay to the McCloud River.
Sept. 2017	Second annual Run4Salmon

Primary sources include: Jessica Abbe's research; Alice R. Hoveman, *Journey to Justice*, ©2002 Turtle Bay Exploration Park; Winnemem Wintu Tribal Timeline, 2004.