**How did the Bannock War begin?**

The camas bulb has a special significance to the Indian people and the prairie’s history. For centuries, the Bannock migrated to the prairie from the southern plains each summer to harvest and hunt. The camas and yumpa plants were staples in the Indian diet. The prairie, rich in camas, yumpa, grains and game, was a paradise. In 1878, Chief Buffalo Horn led the Bannock to war against the newly-arrived homesteaders because of the camas.

The Indians were outraged that the newcomers and their livestock were destroying the bulbs. “Those pigs eating the camas was what began the Bannock War,” says Carolyn Boyer Smith of the Shoshone-Bannock Culture Resources Department. Ultimately, the Indians were relocated to Fort Hall, duped out of their lands by a spelling error in the 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty. “In the treaty, ‘Kamas’ was spelled ‘Kansas,’ thereby illegally excluding the Bannock people from an agreed-upon reservation site in the Camas area,” explains Smith.

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