

Sell, Gregory Earl.

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**“Settler Mythology and the Construction of the Historical Memory
of the Indian wars of the Pacific Northwest”**

Supervisor: Ted Binnema

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ABSTRACT

The 1850s in the Pacific Northwest were marked by conflict between the territorial officials of Oregon and Washington and an apparent majority of the settlers of those two territories, on the one hand, and a small number of federal officials and a very few settlers, on the other. Thus, the historical memory of the Indian Wars of the Pacific Northwest was complicated by controversy almost immediately upon the commencement of hostilities. The struggle to construct and maintain the historical memory of the conflicts of 1855-56 in a way that would support the quest for Congressional funding continued throughout most of the nineteenth century. This struggle resulted in two vastly different accounts of the war, one account very supportive of the war, the other highly critical. The critical, minority, account was excluded from the developing historical memory of the conflict in the Pacific Northwest. This exclusion led to a fundamental lack of honesty in the mainstream historical memory, which shifted the responsibility for the Indian wars away from the settlers.