



4 Generations: Carmelita Evans DeLucchi (bottom center), her daughter, Bernadette DeLucchi (top right), granddaughter, Kellie Harry (top left), and great-grandchildren, Kylie (left) and Jace Harry (bottom right).

Photo courtesy of Kellie Harry.

Honoring Our Ancestors: Sierra Valley Wel-mel-ti



NASMC
Native American
Studies
Model Curriculum

Honoring Our Ancestors: Sierra Valley Wel-mel-ti

Authors:

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Lesson partner: Rebecca Lowry, Humboldt County Office of Education

Grade Level:

2

Subjects:

History-Social Science / ELA & Literacy

Time Frame:

3 lessons (approx. 70-90 minutes each; Lesson 1 has homework)






Unit Slides:

 **Slides: Honoring Our Ancestors**

Printable Student Workbook:

 **Workbook-Encyclopedia-Sierra Valley Wel-mel-ti**

Other Materials Needed:

- Lesson 1 Biography:  Biography-Carmelita Evans DeLucchi
- Lesson 2 Biography:  Biography-Marvin Sam
- Lesson 3 Biography:  Biography-Wilbur Smith
- Video clips and transcripts:
 - [Lithic Technology: Connecting to the earth through traditional and academic knowledge](#) (Video)
 -  Transcript- Pinto Video Clip: Washoe Culture Camp 2009
 - [Mask-Making: Culture education strengthening youth](#) (Video)
 -  Transcript: Middleton Video Clip_Washoe Culture Camp 2009
 - [Traditional Foods of Sierra Valley Wel-mel-ti](#) (Video)
 -  Transcript: Sam Video Clip_Traditional Foods of Sierra Valley Wel-...
 - [Bow & Arrow Making: The benefits of learning traditional archery](#) (Video)
 -  Transcript-Bennett Video Clip_Washoe Culture Camp 2009



Curriculum Themes

- ☒ History
- ☒ Cultural Strengths
- ☐ Law/Government
- ☒ Relationship to Place
- ☒ Cross-Curricular Integration

Unit Overview

This unit introduces students to the Northern Washoe Indians, or Wel-mel-ti, who lived in Loyalton, California, and throughout the Sierra Valley.

Students will benefit from this rare example of Wel-mel-ti perspectives on an important time and place, through the tangible stories of actual Wel-mel-ti people, shared by those individuals and their family members. Too often, Native American voices have been missing from the social studies and historical records taught in U.S. schools. This has led to a warped understanding of American peoples' history, present, and future together, and allows erasure and negative stereotypes to harm Native students.

Through the following lessons, all students have the opportunity to 1) learn some California history and Sierra Valley Washoe values and traditions, 2) build vocabulary and strengthen reading comprehension, critical thinking, and discussion skills, and 3) increase their empathy and feelings of belonging in the classroom.

Unit Learning Goals

- Students will:
 - Name the Tribal group and place described in the unit
 - Describe the 3 Wel-mel-ti individuals featured in the unit
 - State how each individual represents/represented aspects of Wel-mel-ti culture
 - State how each individual made a difference in the world or in the lives of others
 - Compare and contrast the lifeways of these current and historical Native American people with their own cultures/experiences
 - Understand and begin to apply new vocabulary for the topics

Background for Educators

I grew up listening to my grandmother Carmelita's stories about life in the Sierra Valley. This oral tradition was more than entertainment -- the specific knowledge and values passed from elder to child have sustained our Tribes in challenging environments for many thousands of



years. So, I always paid close attention, knowing it was my responsibility to practice what I'd learned and continue to pass it on to the next generations.

"Elders in the tribe also had special status and wisdom that they accumulated as they grew older. They were the keepers of the fire, and they taught the Washoe traditions that they had learned from their grandparents. For this reason, the old ones were treated with great respect. No one ever passed by an elder without saying something, and during a feast, elders were always fed before anyone else." (Dodds, 2009, p. 10)

The oral tradition was becoming harder to maintain by the time Carmelita was born in the 1930s. This is a reason the knowledge she's shared is so precious, and a reason my family and I are now sharing some of that knowledge in written form and with other teachers. By the turn of the 20th century, European-American settlers had pushed most Washoes off their homelands, and the U.S. government had taken many Washoe children away to the repressive and abusive Indian boarding schools. This disconnection from the land and our families disrupted Washoe oral history and cultural teachings, including traditional practices like hunting, gathering, fishing, and healing.

The three bands of Washoe (Northern, Southern, and Eastern) had always lived in different areas around Lake Tahoe, with some differences in customs and dialects. Some of the ancient knowledge of the Sierra Valley Northern Washoe -- who we are in relation to the world, how and why we do things -- has been maintained only within families like Carmelita's, and is unknown to younger generations of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada & California. So, as an adult, I interviewed my grandmother on topics she wanted to share about before her passing. These lessons are based on her account, with additional perspective from some family members and supplementary documents.

Because the Loyalton area Wel-mel-ti are no longer living there, Carmelita, her brother Wilbur Smith, and her cousin Marvin Sam are honored in these lessons. It is important to their descendants to pass on their teachings to future generations of Sierra Valley residents and California students, for a complete understanding of history and place, and pride in the attributes of the Sierra Valley Washoe people.

–Kellie Harry, with Jesse Blackburn

Curriculum Standards

History-Social Science Standards

- *H-SS.2.1*: Students differentiate between things that happened long ago and things that happened yesterday.
 - 1) Trace the history of a family through the use of primary and secondary sources, including artifacts, photographs, interviews, and documents.



- 2) Compare and contrast their daily lives with those of their parents, grandparents, and/or guardians.
- H-SS.2.5: Students understand the importance of individual action and character and explain how heroes from long ago and the recent past have made a difference in others' lives

English Language Arts & Literacy Standards

- *RF.2.4*: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
(c) Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
- *RL.2.1*: Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate an understanding of key details in a text.
- *RL.2.2*: Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.
- *RL.2.3*: Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

English Language Development Standards:

- *2.A.1*: Exchanging information and ideas with others through oral collaborative conversations on a range of social and academic topics. (SL.2.1, 6; L.2.1, 3,6)
- *2B.5*: Listening actively to spoken English in a range of social and academic contexts. (SL.2.1-3; L.2.3)
- *2.B.6*: Reading closely literary and informational texts and viewing multimedia to determine how meaning is conveyed explicitly and implicitly through language. (RL.2.1-7, 9-10; RI.2.1.-7, 9-10; SL.2.2-3; L.2.3, 4, 6)

****This unit could be adapted to the third and fourth grades.***

Unit Scaffolding

For guidance in confidently, effectively, and respectfully teaching this unit on Native Americans:

- Review California's 7 Essential Questions (especially #1 and 2, Diversity of Tribes and Individuals) and 6 Ps (especially Presence and Perspectives), below in Additional Resources.
- Remember that all students will benefit from a "windows and mirrors" curriculum, and an anti-bias approach, exercising respectful curiosity, empathy, and critical thinking about the effect of social systems on people's circumstances and ability to thrive in the way they have for thousands of years.



- Be mindful of othering, erasure, or stereotyping of Native Americans and the harm these cause, especially to Native American students. Do not expect your Native students to teach the class about their heritage culture, unless they want to share.
- See the perspective of education consultant and youth mentor Robert Pinto on teaching that combines traditional and academic knowledge, in this short (01:33) video from the 2009 Washoe Culture Camp:
 - [Lithic Technology: Connecting to the earth through traditional and academic knowledge](#) (Video)
 - [Transcript Pinto Video Clip Washoe Culture Camp 2009](#)

For multilingual students less proficient in English, facilitate their belonging and engagement, comprehension, and language development by:

- Soliciting their ideas early in the lesson;
- Encouraging **translanguaging** during their first turn-n-talk, for communicating ideas utilizing their full linguistic repertoire (García & Wei, 2025); and
- Providing additional repetition, additional processing time, and English sentence stems for discussions.
- More guidance can be found in the Professional Learning for Successful Implementation section of the *California English Language Development Standards* (2014), especially pp. 148-151, on “Interacting in Meaningful and Intellectually Challenging Ways,” and “Scaffolding.” This document and a video webinar are available below, in Additional Resources. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/eldstandards.asp>

Additional Resources for Teachers

California Department of Education. (2024, February 28). *Webinar 2: Professional Learning for Successful Implementation of the California English Language Development Standards* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/R4tcuGgPXSA?feature=shared>

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Unit Authors, Researchers, and Contributors

Kellie Harry, Generation Red

Kellie Harry is an enrolled member of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. She is a descendant of the individuals featured in this unit. Kellie has 20 years of experience as an educator specializing in Native education and culturally responsive teaching. With a Master's in Teaching, Elementary Education, and a Master of Jurisprudence in Indian Law, Kellie is the Executive Director and founder of Generation Red, an education consulting firm dedicated to improving academic outcomes for American Indian students.

Jesse Blackburn, Jesse Blackburn Consulting

Jesse Blackburn is an education consultant in Portland, Oregon, partnering for whole child success through culturally sustaining schools and language programs. Drawing on more than 2 decades in linguistics, language education, R&D, and systems for PreK through adult learning,

Jesse is an ally to Native communities for language revitalization and Indigenized public education for well-being. Her priorities include family-engaged schools, policy for education sovereignty, and Native educator workforce development for strong students, families, and communities.

Lesson Contributors

The authors and researchers deeply appreciate the informative contributions to this lesson from:

- Marvin Sam (Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California)
- Bernadette DeLucchi (Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California)
- Marty Meeden (Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California)
- Krystal Blackowl (Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California)
- Darrel Cruz (Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California)
- Dwight Bennett (Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California)
- Brian Wallace (Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California)
- Beth Rose Middleton, Ph.D., Professor and Yocha Dehe Endowed Chair, Dept. of Native American Studies, University of California - Davis
- Robert O. Pinto (Huichol - Meso American / Iberian Peninsula), education consultant in forestry, anthropology & traditional ecological knowledge

Grateful acknowledgment is also extended to additional contributors who prefer to remain unnamed, from the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, and the Northern Sierra Partnership.

California Native American Studies Model Curriculum

The California Native American Studies Model Curriculum (NASMC) will support the design and development of open-source lesson plans, primary source documents, planning resources, teaching strategies, and professional development activities to assist California K-12 educators in teaching about California Native American Studies. Per AB 167, the NASMC is defined as lesson plans, primary source documents, planning resources, teaching strategies, and professional development activities to assist educators in teaching about Native American Studies. The traditional cultural knowledge within lessons, including Native language, art, media, and stories, is owned by the respective Tribal nations, Native knowledge keepers, artists, producers, and authors of the curriculum as indicated in each lesson.

Unit Lessons

Lessons

1. Carmelita Evans DeLucchi: Preserving Wel-mel-ti culture and traditions through oral history
2. Marvin Sam: Changes for land mean changes for traditional foods
3. Wilbur Smith: Wel-mel-ti values across places, cultures, and change

Lesson 1 - Carmelita Evans DeLucchi: Preserving Wel-mel-ti culture and traditions through oral history

Time Required: 75-80 minutes, plus homework

Materials Needed:

- Slides, workbook, Lesson 1 biography

Learning Goals:

- Label locations on a map of California
- Apply new vocabulary terms
- Summarize the biography of Carmelita “Herbie” Evans DeLucchi
- Create a family tree
- Reflect on a family tradition, with a written response and illustration

Lesson Overview

Students will learn about Carmelita Evans DeLucchi, who was one of the last Northern Washoes born and raised in the “Old Indian Camp” on the hill above the town of Loyalton. Through a biography written by her granddaughter, students will learn a little about Carmelita’s life across “two worlds” – the traditional lifeways of her Wel-mel-ti family, and the settler-constructed town life of the 1930s and beyond. Carmelita survived a challenging start and early loss and recalled many happy memories of childhood. She embodied her culture’s values throughout college, her career, raising a family, and her return to Loyalton as her final resting place.

Lesson Background for Educators

Not only is the Northern Washoe / Wel-mel-ti band culturally distinct among the Washoes, but the “Old Indian Camp” at Loyalton was also unique for the Wel-mel-ti. This was a small group of mostly traditional healer families who’d always lived in that area, far away from other Washoe camps, and they had successfully avoided the forced enrollment of their children in boarding school. This meant my grandmother Carmelita had a different experience than many Washoe children of her time. She grew up in a family with Wel-mel-ti traditions still intact, and by attending a mainstream public school in Loyalton, she had curricular, extracurricular, and social opportunities to dream big for her role in the new settler-dominated society.

My grandmother exemplified several cultural values of the Sierra Valley Wel-mel-ti. They had traditionally always taken pride in their athletic ability and physical prowess when competing in games among the surrounding Tribes, and later, surrounding towns. Carmelita, too, was an enthusiastic athlete and cheerleader at Loyalton High School and went on to become a coach and physical education teacher.



Education, multilingual skills, and cooperative cross-cultural living were also highly valued by the Loyalton Wel-mel-ti. As they migrated and settled throughout the Sierra Valley, the ability to speak more than one language was key in relations with the surrounding Tribes and townspeople. They took pride in maintaining positive relationships with everyone with whom they worked or partnered. They believed in decorum and maintaining their Washoe identity but being able to live successfully in “two worlds” as the “new” world settled the West. One of Carmelita’s cherished memories was being able to give her grandmother a ride in a car for the very first time!

Carmelita excelled in school and became an educator herself, living these values by example as she worked in Monterey’s Colton Junior High School. She taught students of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and instilled these virtues of character, individual identity, physical health, and sportsmanship. I believe her teachings made students feel valued, safe, and confident -- As a little girl going with her to school, I witnessed her students’ eagerness to learn and achieve.

“The approved disciplinary technique for children is described by the Washoes as, “...tell them to behave and speak kindly to them.” (Dodds, 2009, p. 12)

Students can see broader California and U.S. history through my grandmother’s experience, as well. Carmelita was born in 1934 when tuberculosis was still deadly and not uncommon. The disease claimed the lives of her father and two baby brothers, but young Carmelita was lucky to survive the infection at the age of 5. She was sent to the Weimar Joint Sanatorium in Weimar, California, during that infection. Weimar opened in 1919 and was jointly operated by up to eleven counties in California for the care of tuberculosis patients who were unable to pay for treatment. (UC Berkeley, 2019). Carmelita’s younger siblings are among her family members buried in the Loyalton cemetery, and at the end of her long life, she returned to Loyalton and joined them.

– Kellie Harry, with Jesse Blackburn

Lesson Scaffolding

- Plan ahead for the family tree assignment in this lesson, as student confidence in knowing / sharing “who they come from” is a key part of the emotional safety that’s foundational for any learning. To maximize student opportunity to complete this assignment with their family, notify caregivers in advance and follow up, especially during any phone / in-person meetings. Consider making it an activity during any Open House / Community Night, and allow a sufficient number of weeks for all families to complete.
- See also the tips in Unit Scaffolding.



Additional Resources

Legacy. (2023). *Carmelita DeLucchi Obituary*. Monterey Herald, CA.

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/montereyherald/name/carmelita-delucchi-obituary?id=52097304>

Teacher Directions

Step 1: Print and distribute the student workbook to each member of the class.

Step 2: Display Slide #1 of the Unit Slide Deck, “Honoring our Ancestors.”

Step 3: (Slide #2) Introduce the topic with this script (or similar, adapted for students’ existing knowledge).

“Have you ever wondered what life was like for your grandparents growing up? Would you like to hear their stories? How about the grandparents of your grandparents? Those are your ancestors, and some of them lived a long, long time ago. Did they grow up around here, or did your family come from another place?”

In our part of the United States (which we call California now), people were living here for thousands of years before American settlers arrived. We don’t often talk about these people, but these are the ancestors of living relatives today. In the Sierra Valley part of California, the very first people were called the Northern Washoe, or Wel-mel-ti.

Today we’ll get to know one of the last Wel-mel-ti Indians born and raised in Loyalton, CA. Her name is Carmelita “Herbie” Evans DeLucchi. [pronounced deh-LOO-ki] She’s no longer alive, but her granddaughter is -- and that granddaughter wrote a biography for us about Carmelita!

It’s important for us to know about Carmelita’s time in history because it was a time of big, drastic change for the Wel-mel-ti. This was not long after American settlers took over Wel-mel-ti homelands, which made it hard to live as they had always lived -- harvesting plants and animals of the area for their food, clothing, medicine, shelter, and trading.

How do you like to honor your family and family traditions? Will you someday share with your children your ways of living? Because the Wel-mel-ti are nearly gone now, we need to learn more about their experience, so we can honor them, their living relatives, and the land – we can help keep alive their history and ways of life. When we learn a more complete and accurate history of this place, we can also better understand the environment that sustained the Washoe Indians of the Sierra Valley for thousands of years. This will help all of us live well today.



So, let's learn about Carmelita DeLucchi..."

Step 4: Walk students through the Student Workbook - Encyclopedia.

Say: "We will be creating an encyclopedia of the Sierra Valley Wel-mel-ti people. An encyclopedia is a book that gives information on many aspects of one subject."

- A. Have students write their names on their student workbook.
- B. Read the cover, and introduce them to the table of contents.
- C. Explain that students will complete these information pages as they learn during the unit, and this will build the encyclopedia.

Step 5: (Slide #3) To engage students with the concept of oral history and learning cultural traditions, play this short video clip (01:22) from the 2009 Washoe Culture Camp. Introduce the clip by saying something similar to this:

"Much of what we're going to learn about Carmelita and the Sierra Valley Wel-mel-ti isn't in any history book for kids, and this is one of the first times it's been in a classroom. The way this knowledge has been saved and shared over many years is through oral history, where adults in a community show younger relatives how things have always been done, and tell stories of their people's history. Here's a video of Washoe kids learning in this way in a culture camp. How does the teacher in this video think this kind of learning will help the Washoe kids?"

- [Mask-Making: Culture education strengthening youth](#) (Video)

Step 6: (Slide #4) Read aloud the Lesson Objectives.

Step 7: (Slide #5) Read the Essential Questions that students will build understanding to answer.

Step 8: (Slide #6, Workbook p. 3) Have students label and compare home areas on the California map.

Say: "Sierra Valley is where Carmelita was born and raised with her family. Let's label her home area and our home area on the California map. Do we live near or far from Carmelita's home?"

Step 9: (Slides #7-9, Workbook pp. 4-5) Vocabulary

- A. As a whole class, review the vocabulary words, definitions, and context, Slides #7-9.
- B. Students write the vocabulary words and definitions in their student workbook, pages 4-5.



Step 10: (Slide #10, Workbook pp. 6-8) Biography Read-aloud

- A. Explain that a biography is a story about a person's life. Display Slide #10 so students can have an image of Carmelita before / during the reading.
- B. Read aloud to the class the Carmelita "Herbie" Evans DeLucchi biography, while students follow along in their workbooks. Use the dialogic reading technique as needed to support engagement or comprehension.

Step 11: (Slide #10, Workbook pp. 9-11) Reading Comprehension Questions

- A. Talk through the first question or two, formulating answers as a whole class. Demonstrate how to find textual evidence to support those answers.
- B. Students write the answers in their student workbooks, pages 9-11.
- C. For the remaining questions, assist students to find and write answers themselves, going back into the biography to re-read and find textual evidence to support their answers.

Step 12: (Slide #11, Workbook p. 12) Explore Carmelita's Family Tree.

- A. Share the important information on the slide about Washoe traditional introductions.
- B. Note for students that these family members of Carmelita's were alive when European immigrants first moved in and settled in their traditional homelands. They saw their traditional way of life change rapidly. Today, those who lived that life are now gone, and so it's important for us to honor them by remembering the lives that were here on this land first, and the changing world they lived in.
- C. Ask: "Do you think we'll learn more about any of these family members in another lesson? Who?"

Step 13: (Workbook p. 12) Assign students the blank Family Tree to be completed with their parents / family, so students can later practice Washoe-style introductions.

- A. Acknowledge that sometimes people don't know all this information about their family, and that's ok – Celebrate students in taking on this important role as oral historians, interviewing others to learn the story of their family.
- B. Be mindful of different family structures (e.g., foster families, same-gender parents, single parents with an absent or unknown other parent, blended families with several parents), and acknowledge that there are lots of ways to form a loving family. Encourage students to adapt the labels on their tree in any way that feels fitting to them.
- C. As students return with completed family trees, they can share with the class. This is a great way to practice the traditional Washoe introductions, stating who they come from.

Step 14: (Slides #12-16) Gallery Walk of Carmelita "Herbie" Evans DeLucchi pictures.

- A. Tell students that they are going to view pictures of Carmelita's life.

- B. Read aloud each caption on slides #12-16 to the whole class, and discuss a few in relation to student interest and new learning.

Step 15: (Slide #17, Workbook p. 13) Apply new knowledge in the student choice Family Traditions assignment.

- A. Students discuss what family traditions are important in their families, as partners or in small groups.
- B. Each student then chooses one of their family traditions that they want to continue with their children / future generations. Students illustrate their chosen tradition in the box on p. 13 of the Workbook, and write an answer to the question below.

Step 16: (Slide #18) Review the lesson objectives and essential questions.

- A. Encourage responses from students to demonstrate comprehension and learning as a formative assessment, and to help build and consolidate that learning in a collaborative way.
- B. For more individual and comprehensive feedback on learning and instructional success (including from shy students), do some / all of this as a brief exit ticket / slip instead of, or in addition to, a whole group discussion.
- C. Encourage sustained engagement with the topic and new concepts by including a question about what part of the lesson students found most interesting, or want to know more about.



Lesson 2 - Marvin Sam: Changes for land mean changes for traditional foods

Time Required: 65-70 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Slides, workbook, Lesson 2 Biography

Learning Goals:

- Apply new vocabulary terms
- Summarize the biography of Marvin Sam
- Identify traditional foods and methods of harvest
- Illustrate a camas plant
- Reflect on maintaining food and celebration traditions in one's family
- Design and label a traditional foods garden

Lesson Overview

This lesson provides insight into how life changed for the Wel-mel-ti in Sierra Valley as their traditional foods and practices were impacted by the influx of immigrant settlers. Historically, the Wel-mel-ti thrived in a reciprocal relationship with their environment, caring for the plants and animals that provided nutritious sustenance, medicine, economy, and more for them. However, current land use practices have made harvesting traditional foods much more difficult. Students will design a garden with some of these traditional plants, considering how this not only helps the grower with a harvest, but also begins to restore natural landscapes.

Knowledge keeper Marvin Sam is the last living Wel-mel-ti of the area who experienced this time of extreme change in lifestyles, and Mr. Sam provided primary source information for this lesson, including an interview video.

Lesson Background for Educators

Marvin Sam is my grandmother's younger cousin. Marvin was born at the Stewart Indian Boarding School in Nevada and raised in the "Old Indian Camp" above Loyalton, California, where his family had lived for many generations before the town existed. When a lumber mill was developed on the property, mill owners for a time permitted the Wel-mel-ti to remain in their homeplace as they worked for the mill. After new owner Sierra Pacific Industries disallowed this residential use of their property, Marvin then lived through the transition of the Wel-mel-ti being forced to move into Loyalton.

Although Indian boarding schools were not mandated in the Sierra Valley, Marvin chose to attend Chemawa Indian Boarding School in Salem, Oregon. He returned after two years, unhappy with the harsh assimilation strategies, especially when students were punished for speaking their Native languages. He completed school in Loyalton and continued to work, later settling in Susanville,



California, with his wife and children. Like Carmelita, Marvin holds on firmly to his cultural values and traditions of the Sierra Valley, believing it's important to both remain Wel-mel-ti and be successful in today's world.

– Kellie Harry, with Jesse Blackburn

Lesson Scaffolding

- Activate prior knowledge: Ask about some favorite food traditions in students' families, and have them recall the traditional foods Carmelita grew up eating.
- See also Unit Scaffolding.

Additional Resources

Romero, E.D. (August 7, 2019). 'If the land's not healthy, we're not healthy': How the Washoe people view climate change. Interview with Helen Fillmore for *TahoeLand Podcast*, capradio. Retrieved January 19, 2025, from <https://www.capradio.org/news/tahoeland/2019/08/07/if-the-lands-not-healthy-were-not-healthy-how-the-washoe-people-view-climate-change/>

Teacher Directions

Step 1: (Slide #19) Display the lesson title page. Introduce the topic with this script or similar:

"What is a favorite meal your family always eats on a holiday? In our last lesson, we learned about Carmelita "Herbie" Evans DeLucchi, a Sierra Valley Wel-mel-ti. Can you remember some of the traditional foods Carmelita grew up eating?"

Carmelita was born and raised during a change from the Wel-mel-ti traditional way of life into today's modern world. Her cousin, Marvin Sam, grew up during this time as well. We're going to hear Marvin speak, and we'll read his biography. He will be telling us about life way back when he was a young kid like you, especially the foods they enjoyed, and his favorites. These foods didn't come from the store! Marvin now lives in Susanville, California, with his family, and still eats traditional Wel-mel-ti foods, but he's sad that it's hard to find much of these anymore. Let's find out why."

Step 2: (Slide #21) Read aloud the Lesson Objectives.

Step 3: (Slide #22, Workbook pp. 14-15) Vocabulary

- A. As a whole class, review the vocabulary words and definitions that will help everyone understand Marvin's stories, Slide #22.
- B. Students write the vocabulary words and definitions in their student workbook, pages 14-15.

Step 4: (Slide #20) Marvin Sam Video Interview (04:30)

- A. Note the topic, and focus student viewing by asking students to listen for some of Marvin's most favorite or least favorite traditional foods.
 - [Traditional Foods of Sierra Valley Wel-mel-ti](#) (Video)

Step 5: (Slide #20, Workbook pp. 16-19) Biography Read-aloud

- Read aloud to the class the Marvin Sam biography, while students follow along in their workbooks. Use the dialogic reading technique as needed to support engagement or comprehension.

Step 6: (Slide #23, Workbook pp. 20-22) Reading Comprehension Questions

- A. Talk through the first question or two, formulating answers as a whole class. Demonstrate how to find textual evidence to support those answers.
- B. Students write the answers in their student workbooks, pages 20-22.
- C. For the remaining questions, assist students to find and write answers themselves, going back into the biography to re-read and find textual evidence to support their answers.

Step 7: (Slide #24, Workbook p. 23) Camas Coloring

- A. Display slide #24 to show a picture example of camas.
- B. Tell students that the camas have a blue or purple flower when the bulbs bloom.
- C. The bulbs are what was harvested by the Wel-mel-ti. They would boil them to eat. This was one of Carmelita's favorite foods.



Step 8: Gallery Walk. Display slides #25-31 and read the captions aloud for the class.

- A. Tell students that they are going to view pictures of Marvin's life.
- B. Read aloud to the whole class each caption on the slides, and discuss a few in relation to student interest and new learning.

Step 9: (Slide #32, Workbook p. 24) Apply new knowledge through discussion and designing a Traditional Foods Garden

- A. Students discuss what food and celebration traditions are important in their family, and how they can ensure their family always has those to enjoy. This can be in pairs or small groups, using Think-Jot-Draw-Talk.
- B. After the discussion, the pairs / groups design a garden that grows traditional foods of the Sierra Valley. These types of gardens are important as traditional foods are not in abundance today. By planting gardens, the native plants and species can begin to flourish again. The Wel-mel-ti believed in caring for the land to ensure they had a plentiful harvest each year.

Step 10: (Slide #33) Review the lesson objectives and essential questions.

- A. Encourage responses from students to demonstrate comprehension and learning as a formative assessment, and to help build and consolidate that learning in a collaborative way.
- B. For more individual and comprehensive feedback on learning and instructional success (including from shy students), do some / all of this as a brief exit ticket / slip instead of, or in addition to, a whole group discussion.
- C. Encourage sustained engagement with the topic and new concepts by including a question about what part of the lesson students found most interesting, or want to know more about.



Lesson 3 - Wilbur Smith: Wel-mel-ti values across places, cultures, and changes

Time Required: 80-85 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Slides, workbook, Lesson 3 Biography

Learning goals:

- Apply new vocabulary terms
- Summarize the biography of Wilbur Smith
- Label locations on a map of California
- Label Washoe traditional homeland maps
- Reflect on the experience of missing family / home, through a written response with illustration

Lesson Overview

This lesson identifies important places that were relevant to this unit's family of the Sierra Valley Wel-mel-ti, and events affecting this family and many Native Americans of this era. Carmelita's older brother, Wilbur Smith, grew up traveling between Loyalton, Long Valley, and Susanville, California. Although not mandated for his area, Wilbur chose to attend Sherman Indian Boarding School, far south in Riverside, California. Students will learn about his challenging experience growing up in these places, and consider the period of Indian boarding schools where children attended far away from their loved ones, as well as the fact of being drafted into World War II at the age of 16. To better understand geography for the Sierra Valley Wel-mel-ti, students will complete mapping activities to become familiar with the traditional Washoe territory, and the 3 different bands of Washoes.

Lesson Background for Educators

Like his younger sister Carmelita, Wilbur Smith lived both as the traditional Wel-mel-ti of the past did, and embraced change during a time of rapid social shifts. His mother was Sierra Valley Wel-mel-ti, and his father was Paiute from nearby Pyramid Lake, Nevada. The two groups of Native Americans had maintained good relations with each other and traded resources for generations. The Sierra Valley Washoe had a yearly abundance of camas and deer, which they would trade the Pyramid Lake Paiute for cui-ui, an ancient fish that can only be found in Pyramid Lake. This long-standing relationship led to Wilbur's mother and father meeting and having two children.

However, his mother, Lorena Wiltse, raised her children with her in the Sierra Valley. Wilbur grew up living with the Wel-mel-ti and took great pride in hunting and fishing throughout his traditional homelands. Later in life, Wilbur, who was an enrolled member of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, established a fishing store that served fishermen at Pyramid Lake. He learned how to make all his



fishing flies, and many would stop by the store just to purchase these unique flies. He and his family ran fishing charters on Pyramid Lake for many years, and they continue to do so after Wilbur's passing, maintaining his home in Loyalton, California, as well.

Wilbur was very worldly, maintaining good relationships with the immigrants that settled the valley, a diversity of people at his Southern California boarding school, and in the Navy during WWII. He found strength in other Sierra Valley Wel-mel-ti values as well, such as eating healthy and staying physically active.

Cultural / Historiographical Note: Paragraph 5 of Wilbur Smith's biography mentions Wel-mel-ti taking the names of their Euro-American employers. This assimilative pressure meant siblings could end up with different family names, and one's name could change if employment changed (cf. Bissonette, 1999, pp. 9-10). The practice not only furthered Native American language and culture loss in the region, but could also make it difficult to track one's ancestry via Euro-American records, further loosening descendants' ties to the anchors of kinship and cultural traditions. (Neither Wilbur nor Carmelita had a birth certificate until after high school.) Wilbur's family was lucky to include a number of community historians who have helped maintain ancestral ties, both by collecting written records and passing down unwritten Wel-mel-ti oral history – mother Lorena, sister Carmelita, and descendants who've contributed to these lessons.

Lesson Scaffolding

- “Leaving Home” activity - This involves a discussion of separation from family / home. The discussion is structured so that the benefit to students (developing empathy, feeling seen and cared for by the community) should be greater than negative emotions, but do ensure mental health supports are ready for any students who may be upset by similar experiences.
- See also Unit Scaffolding.

Additional Resources

Zibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways. (2018, July 26). *American Indian boarding schools: An exploration of global ethnic and cultural cleansing*. The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition.

https://boardingschoolhealing.org/resource_database/american-indian-boarding-schools-an-exploration-of-global-ethnic-and-cultural-cleansing/



Teacher Directions

Step 1: (Slide #34) Display the lesson title slide

Step 2: (Slide #35) Video: To activate prior knowledge and share the importance of learning cultural traditions, show this short video (00:56) from the 2009 Washoe Culture Camp.

- A. Viewing prompt: “What is knowledge keeper Dwight Bennett teaching the Washoe kids? How can it help make them strong in life?”
- [Bow & Arrow Making: The benefits of learning traditional archery](#) (Video)

Step 3: (Slide #34) Introduce the lesson topic saying something like the following:

“Have you ever camped in a tent, or gone hunting or fishing? Carmelita’s older brother Wilbur Smith did that a lot, and not just for fun... Starting young, Wilbur learned how to help hunt food for the family, and he became an expert, like his famous grandpa Jack Wiltse. Wilbur was brave about lots of other challenges and tough times in his life, too, as a student far from home, a teenager at war, and when starting a new business. We know there were big changes to traditional Wel-mel-ti life with the many immigrant settlers who had moved in. Like his sister Carmelita, Wilbur adapted quickly to changes because he valued living and working with people from many different cultures. Let’s learn more about how carrying on Wel-mel-ti values and traditions kept Wilbur strong in new places with new people and new ways of life.”

Step 4: (Slide #36) Read aloud the Lesson Objectives.

Step 5: (Slide #37, Workbook pp. 25-26) Vocabulary

- A. As a whole class, review the vocabulary words and definitions that will help everyone understand Wilbur’s story, Slide #36.
- B. Students write the vocabulary words and definitions in their student workbook.

Step 6: (Slide #38, Workbook pp. 27-28) Biography Read-aloud

Read aloud to the class the Wilbur Smith biography, while students follow along in their workbooks. Use the dialogic reading technique as needed to support engagement or comprehension.

Step 7: (Slide #38, Workbook pp. 29-30) Reading Comprehension Questions

- A. Talk through the first question or two, formulating answers as a whole class. Demonstrate how to find textual evidence to support those answers.
- B. Students write the answers in their student workbooks.
- C. For the remaining questions, assist students to find and write answers themselves, going back into the biography to re-read and find textual evidence to support their answers.

Step 8: Gallery Walk. Display slides #39-46 and read the captions aloud for the class, discussing a few of student interests.

Step 9: (Slide #47, Workbook p. 3) Add Wilbur's boarding school location to the California map.

"Sierra Valley is where Carmelita was born and raised, and she went to school in Loyaltan. Her older brother Wilbur attended high school in Riverside, California. Let's put Riverside on your California map."

- A. Students mark Riverside on their workbook map to match the teacher's slide.
- B. Direct students to notice the long distance between Sierra Valley and Riverside, California. Point out that although Wilbur went there by choice, many Native American students were sent by the government to schools far away from their homes.
- C. Ask students to reflect and share answers to the question, "How would you feel going to school so far away from home?"

Step 10: (Slide #48, Workbook p. 31) Label and color the map of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada & California.

- A. Students utilize information on Slide #48 to fill in the blank labels on their student worksheet.
- B. Assist students with correct labeling. Point out that the Washoe Tribe is the "Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California" because the state line was established later than the Washoe traditional territory, and it split the Tribe's territory.

Step 11: (Slide #49, Workbook p. 32) Students complete the Washoe Territory Map.

- A. Students utilize information on slide #49 to fill in the blank labels on their student worksheet.
- B. Assist students with correct labeling.

Step 12: (Slide #50, Workbook p. 33) Students complete the Sierra Valley & Washoe Colonies Map.

- A. Students utilize information on slide #50 to fill in the blank labels on their student worksheet
- B. Assist students with correct labeling.



Step 13: (Slide #51, Workbook p. 34) Leaving Home - Apply prior and new knowledge through reflection, discussion, and individual response (illustrated and written)

- A. Ask pairs / small groups to discuss: “How do you think Wilbur felt going to school so far away from home?” Solicit a range of ideas / potential emotions.
- B. Encourage discussion of missing someone / something you love. Ask: “What could we do or say to help Wilbur feel better if we were at school with him? What can we do / say for each other in this class when one of us is missing someone / something we love? What makes you feel better?”
- C. Solicit a range of ideas and reactions to the ideas.
- D. After the discussion, students illustrate a picture of who or what they might miss most, and write their answer to the question.

Step 14: (Slide #52) Review the lesson objectives and essential questions.

- A. Encourage responses from students to demonstrate comprehension and learning as a formative assessment, and to help build and consolidate that learning in a collaborative way.
- B. For more individual and comprehensive feedback on learning and instructional success (including from shy students), do some / all of this as a brief exit ticket / slip instead of, or in addition to, a whole group discussion.
- D. Encourage sustained engagement with the topic and new concepts by including a question about what part of the lesson students found most interesting, or want to know more about.

