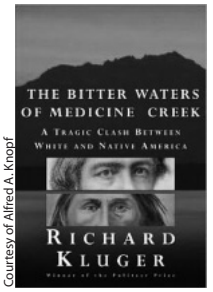
into a coherent proposition that will unsettle readers and sensitize them to a set of developments that do warrant further reflection and closer consideration.



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The Bitter Waters of Medicine Creek

by Richard Kluger

Reviewed by Dr. Clayton K. S. Chun, Chairman, Department of Distance Education, US Army War College

Most readers of American history think of the 19th century Indian Wars taking place on either the Great Plains or deserts of the Southwest. One area that is hardly discussed is the 1855-56 Puget Sound War in the then Washington Territory of the Pacific Northwest. Although small in scope, the cause, conduct, and outcome of the war make a fascinating study. In Richard Kluger's *The Bitter Waters of Medicine Creek*, the events of the conflict between members of the Nisqually tribe and the new settlers of the Washington Territory are told in a fast-paced, extensive exploration of the growing hostility involving land rights that would eventually result in fighting between the Washington militia and the Nisqually tribe led by Chief Leschi.

The Nisquallies were one of several tribes located on Puget Sound. The first white settlers, under the British Hudson Bay Company, seemed to establish amicable relations with the tribes. With the American expansion into the Pacific Northwest, however, squabbles over land rights and further political ambitions by the territorial governor, Isaac Stevens, led to the Nisqually and other tribes being forced to accept relocation to undesirable areas that made life difficult for Leschi and his people. Stevens had personal ambitions to expand his influence in these new lands. Under the Medicine Creek Treaty, Leschi's tribe had to move to lands close to the current border of today's Fort Lewis. The Nisqually had subsisted on salmon fishing, but the area allocated to the tribe was neither suitable for farming nor did it have access to adequate fishing. Leschi protested this treatment and the terms of the treaty. He voiced a desire to renegotiate the treaty. Wanting to avoid a conflict, the acting territorial governor, Charles Mason, ordered Leschi and his brother taken into protective custody.

The "war" resulted from the attempt to capture Leschi. Leschi was not captured and led his tribe and others against the territorial militia and a reluctant US Army. Regular Army officers openly questioned the rationale for the conflict. Stevens had goaded Major General John Wool, Department of the Pacific, to send more forces to fight the Nisqually. Wool was skeptical about the claims made by Stevens concerning the threat by Leschi. Stevens, a West Point graduate, complained vehemently to the Secretary of War Jefferson Davis. Wool reluctantly deployed forces into Washington. During the campaign, a "massacre" of white settlers occurred and a number of skirmishes resulted throughout the region. In one battle, two militiamen died, one was Abram Benton Moses

a former country sheriff, whose demise angered Stevens. Without support and against overwhelming numbers, the Nisqually tribe finally surrendered.

After the Puget Sound War, territorial officials took Leschi into custody. His brother was also captured, and was murdered in Steven's office. Still fuming over the conflict, Stevens had Leschi charged with the murder of Moses. The first trial ended in a hung jury. Questions arose about the charges. If the Nisqually tribe was at war, how could the government try Leschi for murder if he fought as a combatant? The judge in the first trial had clearly instructed the jury that if Leschi did kill Moses during a time of war, then it was not murder. This issue divided the jury. There was also controversy regarding whether Leschi actually killed Moses. Upset about the first trial's results, Stevens changed venues for the second trial. The second trial judge did not instruct the jury that parties fighting as combatants may not be subject to a change of murder during war. A witness also perjured himself and provided crucial evidence to convict Leschi. Additionally, the judge at the second trial did not allow the defense lawyers to present certain pieces of evidence that might have helped Leschi. Not all in the Puget Sound area agreed with the court's verdict. Several supporters of Leschi, including a number of US Army officers, were horrified at the results and the fact that an innocent man would die. Some tried to delay his execution through pardon requests and various public forums, but their attempts failed and Leschi was executed on 19 February 1858.

Kluger's story documents a trying time in American history. The nature of conflict, ethical decisions, and civil-military relations are all touched in his vivid descriptions of the events of the Puget Sound War and Leschi's conviction. Although not strictly a military account of the conflict, it does provide insight into a lesser-known conflict between white settlers and Native Americans. This account will also raise questions about how to treat disputes in unfamiliar cultures.

For a fascinating read into a little known facet of Washington state and American history, this reviewer recommends this book. Kluger uses extensive court records and the personal accounts of witnesses to provide a comprehensive review of the campaign and its aftermath for the struggle in Puget Sound. He also devotes sufficient time to explaining current challenges facing the Nisqually tribe. Despite living in poverty for years, the tribe has achieved some success in economic development through casino revenues. This has provided for improvements in health care, housing, and expansion of economic activities designed to help future tribe members.