

# CHIEF OURAY: UTE PEACEMAKER

PRESENTED BY

COLORFUL  
HISTORY

STORY & ART BY  
ARIGON STARR

Manitou Springs, Colorado, 1912.

My name is Chipeta.

Mrs. Adams thought I might enjoy a drive, though I scarcely recognize the place. My people used to live here. I miss my beloved Ouray. Oh, to hear his laugh again.

Thanks for the help, brother.

Taos, New Mexico, 1845.

Always.

From the day he was born in 1833, Ouray walked in many worlds.

He was born during a meteor shower and his parents foresaw great things for him.

Ouray means 'arrow' in the Ute language. He wasn't just Ute, he was also Apache. He spoke many languages and was devoted to his family.

Ouray was in Taos when the Mexican and Indian revolt of 1846 erupted.

He saw firsthand that war could never be the solution for his people.

Ouray's parents asked him to return home to the Uncompahgre lands.

Son, our world is changing. We need you.

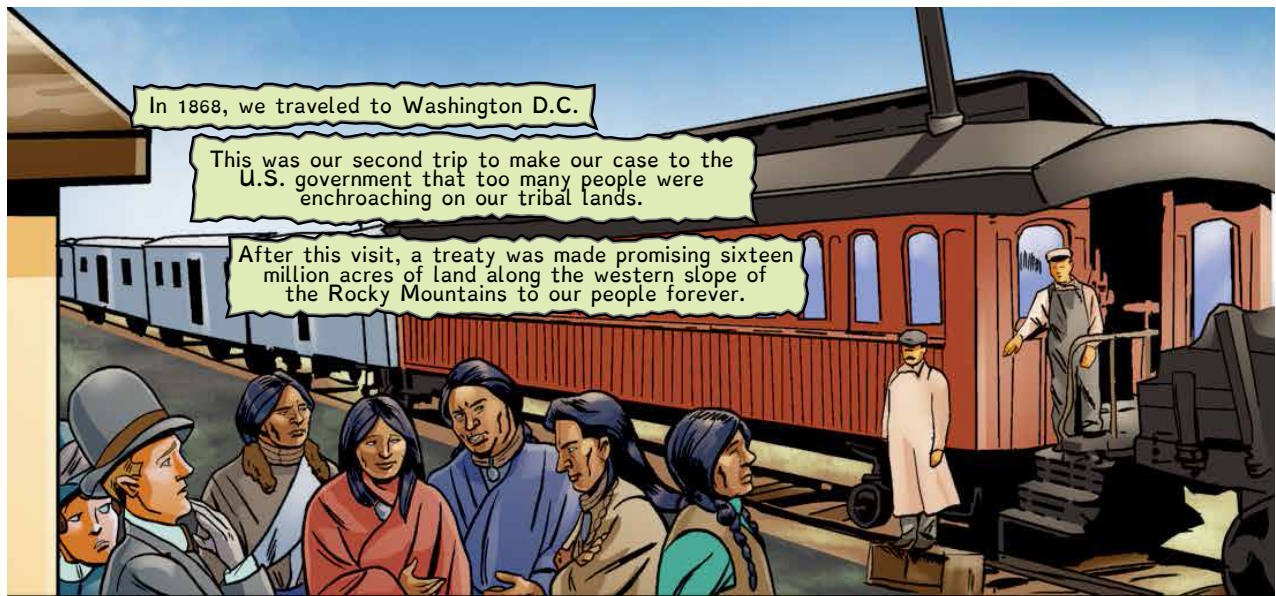
Marry Black Water. She's a good woman.

Black Water died after giving birth to Ouray's son. His family asked me to look after the boy.

Who knew I would become Ouray's wife and partner?

He listened to me and valued my opinions.

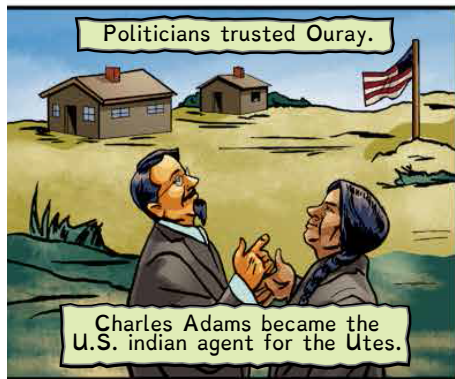




In 1868, we traveled to Washington D.C.

This was our second trip to make our case to the U.S. government that too many people were encroaching on our tribal lands.

After this visit, a treaty was made promising sixteen million acres of land along the western slope of the Rocky Mountains to our people forever.

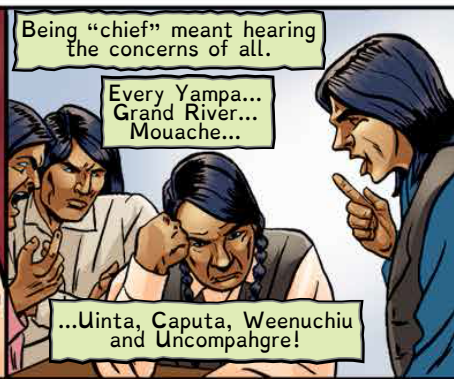


Politicians trusted Ouray.

Charles Adams became the U.S. indian agent for the Utes.



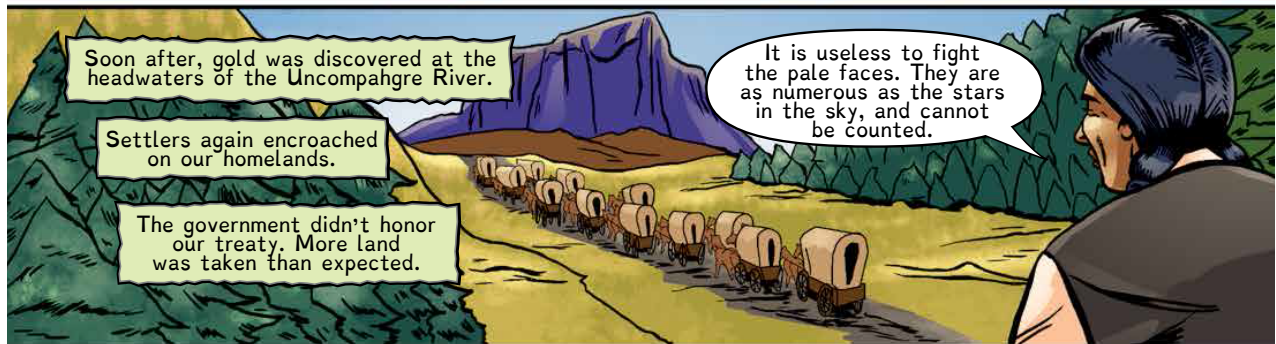
The U.S. trusted Ouray so much, they named him the "chief" of all the Ute bands.



Being "chief" meant hearing the concerns of all.

Every Yampa... Grand River... Mouache...

...Uinta, Caputa, Weenuchiu and Uncompahgre!

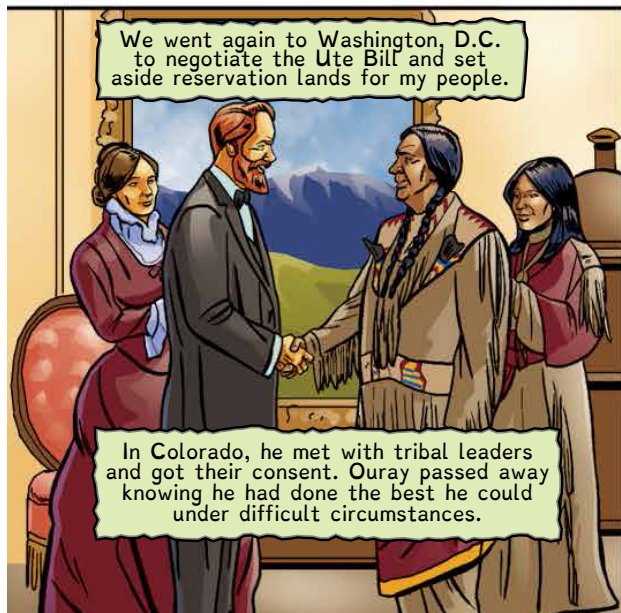


Soon after, gold was discovered at the headwaters of the Uncompahgre River.

Settlers again encroached on our homelands.

The government didn't honor our treaty. More land was taken than expected.

It is useless to fight the pale faces. They are as numerous as the stars in the sky, and cannot be counted.



We went again to Washington, D.C. to negotiate the Ute Bill and set aside reservation lands for my people.

In Colorado, he met with tribal leaders and got their consent. Ouray passed away knowing he had done the best he could under difficult circumstances.



Uintah Reservation, Utah, 1920.

Ahh, sunrise.

I stay to help my people and finish Ouray's work.

He wanted everyone to understand that no matter what, we will always be here.



# Teacher Guide



## Chief Ouray: Ute Peacemaker

Story and Art by Arigon Starr

Teacher Guide by Tim Smyth

### Discussion Questions

#### Elementary

\*"From the day he was born in 1833, Ouray walked in many worlds" – what does this mean? In what ways do you walk in many worlds? Can you think of other figures in history who have had to do the same?

\*If a new friend kept breaking promises to you, what would you do? How would you feel? Then compare to what happened to Native Americans.

\*Why do you think that Ouray's wife, Chipeta, was chosen as the narrator for the comic?

#### MS/HS

\*Knowing the tumultuous and often tragic relationship between Native Americans and the U.S. government, what would you have done as a chief of a powerful tribe to help your people? (Come back to this question after reading the comic and researching the path Ouray took).

\*Why do you think that Ouray's wife, Chipeta, was chosen as the narrator for the comic?

\*\*"From the day he was born in 1833, Ouray walked in many worlds" – what does this mean? In what ways do you walk in many worlds? Can you think of other figures in history who have had to do the same?

\*Was Ouray a hero to his people? Why might some view him as a traitor? Outline positive and negative.

#### Comic Analysis

\*Panel 1.1 – React to the opening of the story about Chief Ouray – is it what you would have expected?

\*Panel 2.1 – How do you think the people in Washington, DC would have viewed Ouray and his party? Why?

\*Panel 2.1 – How do you think Ouray and his party are feeling? What is the evidence for your answer? Do they have much hope for the outcome of their trip to Washington, DC?

Panel 2.4 – Ouray is discussing plans with many tribal leaders – how do they feel about these discussions?

Panel 2.6 – Describe the meeting between President Hayes and Ouray.



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## Lesson Ideas by Content Area

### Social Studies

\*Debate – actions of the Ute tribe in the Meeker Massacre – Debate Ouray as a hero or villain to his people. This could be compared to Nat Turner’s Rebellion and other controversial leaders in history.

\*Mexican and Indian Revolt of 1846, Taos – what happened? Why did Ouray think that armed resistance was not the solution to stopping the “pale faces” from taking Ute lands?

\*Students can use this interactive map to track the loss of Native American lands -

<http://usg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eb6ca76e008543a89349ff2517db47e6>

\*Students can research the recent Standing Rock protests as an insight into ongoing Native American agreements with the US government, such as <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/23/us/standing-rock-protest-dakota-access-pipeline.html>. In the comic, the gold discovery at the Uncompahgre River can be compared to the need for oil and other natural resources.

\*Conduct a biographical study of Ouray’s second wife, Chipeta, and her role in the events of the comic.

### Art

Using <https://heritage.utah.gov/history/ute-images-2> and other sources, students can create their own comic books to explain their chosen picture. Who are they? What are they doing? What is their story?

### Language Arts

\*Write a five-paragraph essay evaluating Ouray as a leader.

\*Using the following speech by Chief Red Cloud, <https://www.commonlit.org/texts/red-cloud-s-speech-after-wounded-knee>, compare his and Ouray’s responses to the Whites. How did these leaders view their relationship with the U.S. leadership in Washington, DC?





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## Resources

- <http://legacy.historycolorado.org/museums/ute-indian-museum-0> - Ute Museum in Montrose, CO
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eER2T5yTWXI> – a short video from the Ute Museum introducing the importance of the museum.
- <http://seethesouthwest.com/2306/chief-ouray-and-white-singing-bird/> - biographical information on Ouray and his second wife, Chipeta.
- <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/na-ouray/> - biographical information on Ouray
- <https://history.denverlibrary.org/news/colorado%E2%80%99s-ouray-chief-utes-and-complicated-man> – discusses the ways Ouray straddled both the Native American and White worlds and the surrounding controversy.
- <https://heritage.utah.gov/history/ute-images-2> - pictures of the Ute people
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gV201ILHXhc> – A Ted Talk on Ute Wisdom and Creation. Includes information on Ute religion, culture, language, and storytelling.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lWLdijamdcQ> – PBS documentary on the Ute people, as part of the Colorado Experience. Great use of maps, interviews, pictures, and historical illustrations.
- <https://www.commonlit.org/texts/red-cloud-s-speech-after-wounded-knee> - Chief Red Cloud's speech.
- <http://usg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eb6ca76e008543a89349ff2517db47e6> – interactive map depicting the loss of Native American lands over time.



He was born during a meteor shower and his parents foresaw great things for him. Ouray means 'arrow' in the Ute language. He wasn't just Ute, he was also Apache. He spoke many languages and was devoted to his family.

Panel three:

Wide panel. In the foreground, a distressed Ouray watches from behind a wall the scenes of warfare. The silhouettes of men fight in the distance, backlit from the red glow of buildings aflame. This is the terrible Indian and Mexican Revolt of 1846. Chipeta continues to narrate the story.

CHIPETA:

(NARRATION BOX)

Ouray was in Taos when the Mexican and Indian Revolt of 1846 erupted. He saw first hand how war wasn't the answer for his people.

Panel four:

Medium panel, lower left side of page. An older Ute Indian couple are in the foreground, counseling the young man Ouray. The couple are his parents who have summoned him back to the Uncompahgre homelands. They are dressed in traditional Ute clothing. Their hair is long. Ouray is dressed in contemporary styled clothing, black shirt, vest, his hair in braids. He holds his cowboy hat in his hands, in respect of his elders. The elders sit on some rocks, the background is a blue sky, with green trees and mountains.

CHIPETA:

(NARRATION BOX)

Ouray's parents asked him to come home to the Uncompahgre lands and help his people.

OURAY'S MOTHER:

Marry Black Water. She's a good woman.

OURAY'S FATHER:

Son, our world is changing. We need your skills.

Panel Five:

Medium Panel. Exterior day, the traditional Uncompahgre village. In the foreground is a slightly older Ouray. He is surrounded by other Ute men. They discuss matters. Ouray, however, looks over his shoulder at a young, beautiful woman holding a younger infant boy. She smiles at the infant, who laughs in glee. The young woman is Chipeta.

CHIPETA:

(NARRATION BOX)

Ouray's wife died after giving birth to his son. His family asked me to look after the boy. The tribe had rescued me as a child and I was happy to help. Who knew I would soon become Ouray's wife and partner? He listened to me and valued my opinions.

**PAGE 2: Seven Panels**

Panel one:

Wide panel: Exterior of a train station, with a large locomotive engine in the front, attached to passenger rail cars. A group of Ute men, including Ouray and Chipeta stand in line to board a train. They receive a lot of looks from the other passengers in the train station.

CHIPETA:

(NARRATION BOX)

In 1868, we traveled to Washington, DC. This was our second trip to make our case to the U.S. Government that too many people were encroaching on our tribal lands. After this visit, they made a treaty with us promising sixteen million acres of land along the western slope of the Rocky Mountains to our people forever

Panel two:

Small panel: Exterior, Los Pinos Indian Agency, Day. A small building sits atop a hill. Two men stand in front, the new Indian agent Charles Adams and Ouray.

CHIPETA:

(NARRATION BOX)

Those Washington people loved and trusted Ouray. Charles Adams came to Colorado and become the US Indian Agent for the Utes.

Panel Three:

Small Panel: Close up of Ouray. He wears his finest Ute regalia and looks mostly stoic. There is a slight hint of a smile of satisfaction.

CHIPETA:

(NARRATION BOX)

The US trusted Ouray so much, they named him the "Chief" of all the Ute bands.



Panel Four:

Small panel. Ouray is now surrounded by a bunch of angry Indians. They shout, point, argue with Ouray and themselves. Ouray sits silently, trying to hear everyone.

CHIPETA:

(NARRATION BOX)

Being "Chief" meant hearing the concerns of all of the Yampa, Grand River, Mouache, Uinta, Caputa, Weenuchiu and Uncompahgre bands.

Panel five:

Long panel. Chief Ouray stands on a bluff watching an unending stream of settler wagons stream through a narrow pass through the San Juan Mountains. Ouray is unsettled and worried.

CHIPETA:

(NARRATION)

Gold was discovered at the headwaters of the Uncompahgre River. Settlers encroached on our homelands. The government didn't honor our treaty. More land was taken than expected.

CHIEF OURAY:

It is useless to fight the pale faces. They are as numerous as the stars in the sky, and cannot be counted.

Panel six:

Medium Panel. Exterior, Washington, DC. The capitol building in the background, blue skies. Ute tribal members (including Chipeta) stand in the background, with white government officials. In the foreground is President Rutherford B. Hayes shaking hands with Chief Ouray.

CHIPETA:

(NARRATION BOX)

We made one more trip to Washington, DC to negotiate on behalf of our people. After we returned with The Ute Bill, we rode the long way from Los Pinos to Ignacio in order to make sure the agreement was signed. My husband met with the council, got their consent and passed away, knowing he had done the best he could under difficult circumstances.

Panel seven:

Medium panel. Exterior, Uintah Reservation in Utah. It's a beautiful desert sunrise. In the foreground, is the older Chipeta, wrapped in a traditional trade blanket. She smiles at the glorious sunrise.

NARRATION:

Unintah Reservation, Utah, 1920.

CHIPETA:

(NARRATION BOX)

I still love the sunrise. Even though they gave me a modern home and a stipend, I choose to stay on the reservation to help my people and finish Ouray's work. He united all of the Utes and wanted white men to understand that no matter what we will always be here.

END.

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HISTORY LOGO

STORY & ART  
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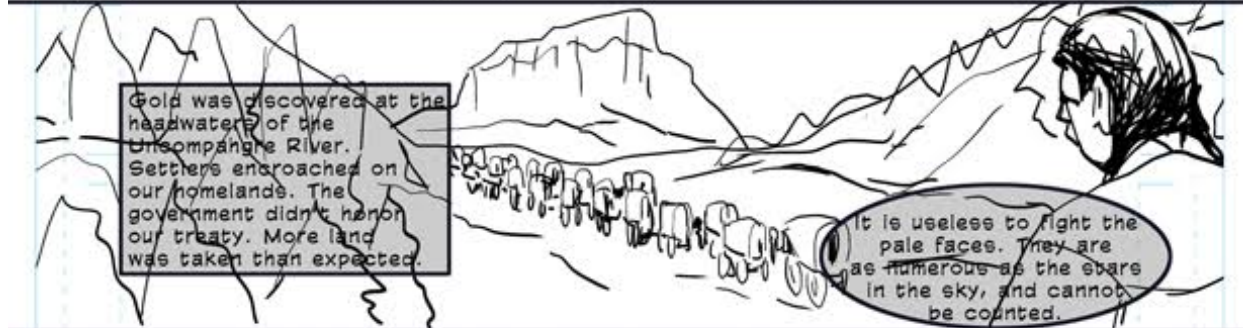


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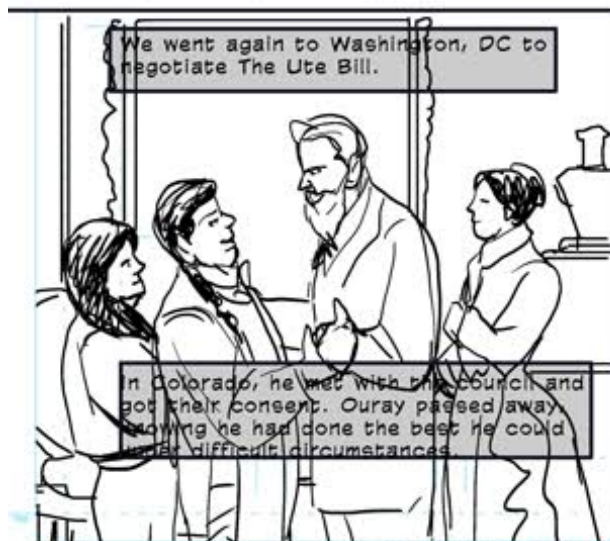
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