In 1878 a group of Spokane Indians under the leadership of William Three Mountain and with the encouragement of Presbyterian missionary Henry T. Cowley established an agricultural colony near Spokane Falls, Washington Territory, taking up lands under the Indian Homestead Act of 1875. Their efforts to secure legal title to their land were complicated by the fact that some of the claims fell on sections of land Congress had granted to the Northern Pacific Railroad. The colonists also faced opposition from the Catholic agent of the Colville Reservation, John A. Simms, who believed that Cowley, an employee of the Nez Perce agency at Lapwai, in western Idaho Territory, was ministering to Indians under his jurisdiction. Nonetheless, the colony flourished for a decade. In the end, however, the tide of non-Indian settlement proved too strong, and the colony relocated to the Spokane Indian Reservation by 1888.