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## The Palouse Indians



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**In This Issue**

This issue examines a much-maligned and little understood tribe of Indians—the Palouses. Readers wishing to do a little “homework” in their back issues of the **Bunchgrass Historian** are invited to read, “Salmon Feast Promotes Indian Friendship,” by Lewis Miles (Volume 2 Number 2); “Whitman County Forts,” by Ella Collins; “Mary Pickford’s Story,” by Nicholas J. Manring; “Warpath,” by June Crithfield; and “Palouse Prepares During Panic,” by J. B. West (all in Volume 5 Number 2—the issue entitled **Indian Scares Panic Homesteaders**). These articles deal with the Indian wars and make real a vital dimension of pioneer life. But they do not examine the other side of the issue—the Indian side.

Early white accounts of the Indians leave the reader with the conclusion that settlers did not like the Indians very much—in particular, white men in the Inland Empire did not like the Palouses. For example, Charles Henry Carey, in his **History of Oregon**, declared the Palouses to be, “of all the tribes between the Rocky Mountains and Cascades the most treacherous. They are a thieving lot,” he concluded, “and are held in low esteem, even by those of their own race.” Garrett D. Kincaid, in **Palouse in the Making**, expressed a similar opinion. “The tribe of Indians which took the Palouse name was,” he said, “a nondescript bunch of rank, seedy individuals who settled near Rock Lake after the wars of 1877 . . .”

Displacement of one group of people (in this case the Indians) by another (whites) has always been a sad story of unspeakable tragedy and suffering. We will see it clearly as we follow the Palouse Indians in their attempt to retain land and cultural identity as the hot winds of American manifest destiny blew up over the buttes, and down into the coulees, breaks, and canyons of the Palouse Hills.

We thank Dorothy Matson for allowing us to use her extensive files on Palouse Indian history. Her assistance was invaluable in preparing this issue. We are also grateful for material submitted by Clifford Trafzer and Richard Scheuerman. These gentlemen have taken time to share some of the results of their research on the Palouses. If you wish to learn more about this fascinating tribe we strongly urge you to watch for Trafzer and Scheuerman’s forthcoming book, **The Palouse Indians and the Invasion of the Inland Northwest**, to be published by the University of Oklahoma Press in early 1982.

# The First People of the Palouse Country

by

Richard Scheuerman and Clifford Trafzer

Archaeologists excavating a site at the mouth of the Palouse River in southeastern Washington unearthed a rare medallion in 1964. Though worn through the decades, they recognized it as a Lewis and Clark peace medal on which was faintly inscribed; "Peace and Friendship." Following the initial contact of the Palouse with the expedition of 1805, the realization of these two ideals was shortlived. Within eight years relations between this tribe and the United States entered a tragic era of hatred and hostility which culminated in the Indian wars of the Inland Northwest. This caused the eventual dispersion of many Palouses to reservations throughout the Pacific Northwest in the mid-nineteenth century. Their role in the dramatic history of the Palouse Country, too long unappreciated, was indeed great.

The Palouse were a tribe composed of several Sahaptin-speaking, autonomous bands who wintered along the lower Snake River from Alpowa to the Snake's confluence with the Columbia. In the historic period, over forty winter villages were located along the river between these two points and in adjacent areas, usually on sandy terraces or in sheltered canyons. They called themselves simply **Na-ha-um**, or "The People of the River." The word "Palouse" likely stemmed from the Sahaptin **Palus** which is geographic in origin. It referred to "Standing Rock" which was the name of a massive basaltic outcropping located in the Snake River near their main village, also known as **Palus**, at the mouth of the Palouse River. In their cosmology, it was variously explained as being a remnant of a wicked woman whose defiance led to her transformation into stone, the heart of giant Beaver, or the boat of the mythical trickster, Coyote.

In the nineteenth century the domain of the Palouses could be divided into three general areas on the lower Snake River. Although they shared a common history, culture, and language, each geographic area was characterized by a slight difference in dialect as well as climate. This latter factor may explain the preponderance of villages among the upper Palouse since the surrounding area from Almota to Alpowa receives about one-third more annual precipitation than the drier district inhabited by the lower Palouse along the Snake River portion of the present Franklin County boundary. This led to a corresponding increase in available food and animal resources in the vicinities of the upper Palouse villages which supported larger populations.

The lower Palouse inhabited such villages as **Qosispah** (At the Point) at the mouth of the Snake, **Ychemak** (Big Island), and **Tasawiks** (Whirlpool) further up the river. **Palus**, a large village of great historical importance, was inhabited by middle Palouse as were such neighboring villages as **Qainakpa** (Narrow Passage) and **Wapnitpa** (Confluence), the latter located at the mouth of the Tucannon River. **Apatap** was an excellent fishing site near the base of the Palouse Falls, known to the Palouse as **Taqapalele**, or "Falling Water." The domain of the upper Palouse contained over a dozen winter villages, including **Alamotin** (Soaring Flame), **Wawawi** (Fishing Place), **Witkispā** (from **with**, or "alder") and **Alpowa**. The upper Palouse shared the lands

jointly with the Nez Perce of the region while the lower Palouse were in close contact with the Wanapums. The village of **Maxmaxc** was located on the North Fork of the Palouse River near Steptoe Butte (**Eomoshross**) and, while rather isolated from the other Palouse villages, it was in an area abundant with roots, berries and game and frequented by friendly Coeur d'Alenes. Numerous seasonal campsites could be found along Union Flat Creek, the upper Palouse River, Pine Creek and at the foot of Rock Lake, where Chief Kamiakin spent his last years.

The territory utilized by the Palouse in their seasonal rounds was immense. The Palouse were an independent people, and each band ranged freely across the Columbia Plateau, usually leaving their winter lodges for the rootgrounds in March, or **Woshaitashme**, the "Time of the Moving Out." Some groups traveled most to Soap Lake [**Patlach Wakon** (Medicine Lake),] Badger Mountain and lower Crab Creek during the spring to dig kouse, camas and other roots. Returning to their fishing villages on the Snake before the summer salmon runs, they caught and preserved enough of this important staple to insure an ample supply through the winter. In the fall, many bands moved south to the Blue Mountains. Other groups traveled east to the Clearwater country or westward to Mount Adams to hunt, dig roots, and gather berries. The Palouse had many seasonal campsites in the region where they found an abundance of game, waterfowl, and camas. From their hunting, fishing and gathering, the Palouse developed a lifeway which was well adapted to the environmental conditions of the Columbia Plateau. They lived in harmony with the land which they considered sacred.

As was the case throughout the Plateau, the acquisition of horses by the Palouse prior to 1750 influenced the availability of food supplies, contact with the Plains tribes, and measures of wealth and leadership. The very region of their habitation became synonymous with superior stock, and the Indians were known throughout the West for their excellent horses. Indeed, the vast herds maintained by the Palouse frequently attracted raiding parties of Shoshones (Snakes) and other distant people. The grassy, rolling hills of the Palouse Country and sheltered Snake River Valley provided an ideal environment for horse raising throughout the year. Racing, gambling, dancing, drumming, and singing came to be an important part of the cultural makeup of the Palouse and the other Plateau tribes. Inter-marriage bound through the tribes together though social and economic ties and a close relationship evolved between the Palouse and other Plateau peoples.

Lewis and Clark reached **Palus** on October 13, 1805. The explorers found the village site deserted, but noted the presence of scaffoldings, fish caches, split timbers, and beams for housing. They incorporated the Palouse into their estimate of 2300 for the number of Nez Perce (Chopunnish) inhabiting the region below the Clearwater River. It is likely that many of the Palouse were encamped on their fall hunting grounds to the southeast. It was later learned from an Indian from **Palus**, that the two captains had presented his father, Ke-pow-han, with one of the Jefferson medals—perhaps the one that was excavated in 1964. Amiable relations developed between the whites and the Palouse. In 1811 the villagers at **Palus** "forced a gift of 8 horses" on David Thompson of the North West Company. Enroute to Spokane House, Thompson found the Palouse friendly and eager to trade. Their first encounter with the Astorians a year later led to bitter consequences that set a hostile tone for Palouse relations with all white men for some time to come.

Hoping to duplicate the success of the Canadian North West Company on the Great Columbia Plain, John Jacob Astor's party, under Wilson Price Hunt, crossed

the Rockies in 1811 to establish trading posts for the Pacific Fur Company. Inexperience, mismanagement, and the War of 1812 doomed the organization, which withdrew from the interior in 1813. One of their number, an ill-tempered trader named John Clarke, stopped at **Palus** in the spring of 1813. A silver goblet was taken from him and later returned. Clarke responded violently by hanging the Indian. The Palouse could not believe that the trader had killed one of their people. The other traders could not believe it either. When news of the hanging reached the Indians, they reacted with hostility. Misunderstandings and skirmishes followed, and the Palouse henceforth took on a defensive posture toward whites.

After the visit of Lewis and Clark, the Palouse Indians encountered a host of exploring and trading parties. The list would include many notable figures such as Donald McKenzie, Alexander Ross, Ross Cox, Jedediah Smith, Nathaniel Wyeth, David Douglas, Paul Kane and John Mix Stanley. Contact with whites increased as Protestant missionaries including Whitman, Spalding, Walker, and Eells, arrived in the region. This exposure to whites resulted in devastating epidemics of smallpox and measles which took a heavy toll among all Northwest tribes, including the Palouse. In one village near Wawawai during the measles epidemic of 1847, only one boy survived. Never a large tribe, the Palouse numbered about 1500 before their population dwindled dramatically because of disease and war. Estimates of Palouse population are not accurate because of the manner in which the data were collected, but it is known that the Palouse, like other tribes in America, suffered severely from white contact, primarily because of the deadly diseases that spread so quickly up and down the river systems and overland trails of the Pacific Northwest.

As early as 1838 Marcus Whitman and Henry Spalding considered establishing a mission among the Palouse, but following a visit to the area the next year, the latter determined that there was not enough fish or agricultural land available to support such an undertaking. The missionaries were discouraged for other reasons as well, principally the Palouse were not interested in Christianity. They were ardent supporters of a religion long practiced by the Sahaptins and one that was to be formalized into the Dreamer Religion by the charismatic Wanapum Indian known as Smohalla. His message to the Indians was that they should resist the ways of the white man and continue to live as they had traditionally. The growing antagonisms of the Palouse toward the whites found expression in Smohalla's religion and that of other religious leaders who advocated a traditional lifeway. The influence of these men dominated the lower and middle Palouses, who were taught to reject the culture of the "greedy ones" and abhor the cultivation of the soil. Unlike the neighboring Nez Perce, the Palouse never divided into distinct Christian and non-Christian factions but retained their traditional religious beliefs.

The villages of the lower Palouses were within forty miles of Whitman's mission at Waiilatpu, and they frequently passed the mission enroute to their fall hunting grounds. Although the Palouses were not involved in the murders of the Whitmans in November of 1847, two companies of Oregon Volunteers, raised in response to the Whitman killings, encountered a Palouse encampment near the mouth of the Tucannon River on March 14, 1848. A running battle ensued, and some 400 Indians drove the whites back to Fort Waters near Waiilatpu. The tiny Cayuse tribe was eventually compelled to surrender their entire lands, and near the end of the year the Walla Walla Valley was declared open to white settlement. Palouse involvement during the Cayuse War was most important because of the hatred it spawned. The Pacific Northwest, indeed the nation, was shocked over the Whitman killings, and the Palouse were detested for their loyalty and aid to the Cayuse. They were the only tribe to side with the



**This is the only known photograph of Smohalla, leader of the Dreamer Religion. Smohalla is seated in the front row, right, wearing a white robe. The photograph was probably taken in a long house near Priest Rapids in the 1860's.**  
—From the Richard Scheuerman Collection

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Cayuse, but they did so because the troops were invading their lands and stealing their stock.

The strategic location of the Palouse Country led to new developments in the struggle between Indians and whites throughout the troubled decade of the 1850's. Washington's first territorial governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Isaac I. Stevens, arrived in 1853. He and his exploring parties moved through Palouse Country seeking the most feasible route for a proposed northern transcontinental railroad. Three of the exploring groups converged on Palouse lands where fur traders had spread rumors that the army was intending to march against them. On at least one occasion the Palouses refused to permit an expedition passage through their lands until they received reassurances of the army's peaceful intentions. Indian fears were temporarily allayed by this diplomacy, but the Palouse were still viewed warily by the governor who neither liked nor trusted them. The feeling, no doubt, was mutual.

An unexpected consequence of the railroad surveys was the discovery of gold in 1853 by the group working in the Yakima Valley. In the same year similar finds were made by Stevens' own party in the Bitterroot Valley. In order to avert an impending disaster caused by the anticipated flood of miners and in an effort to abolish Indian claims to interior lands sought for the railroad and white settlement, Stevens called a grand treaty council at Walla Walla in the spring of 1855. Though well attended by several thousand Nez Perce, Walla Walla, and Yakimas, the Palouse were noticeably absent. A messenger was dispatched to their principal village at the mouth of the Palouse River but was told by their elderly chief, Kah-lat-toose, that "his people were indifferent to the matter." He alone accepted the invitation to attend, but there is no record of his participation in any of the council proceedings. During the meetings Kamiakin, who was half Palouse and half Yakima, and other chiefs listened to

Stevens's rhetoric. After two weeks of stalemate, several Yakima leaders acquiesced to the governor's demands and threats. Eventually a reluctant Kamiakin was persuaded to sign. The chiefs surrendered 45,000 square miles of their land for reservations. However, it has been suggested that some leaders realized that further negotiations were futile and signed only to gain more time so that they could prepare for war. Yakima chief Owhi, Kamiakin's brother-in-law, later stated that "the war commenced from that moment."

Kamiakin and Tilcoax emerged as the most important Palouse leaders during the 1850's. Famous for his enormous horse herds, Tilcoax was the recognized chief of the lower Palouse in the vicinity of **Qosispah** (Pasco). He was often referred to in both Jesuit and military accounts as the principal instigator of Indian hostility toward the whites. The chiefs at **Palus** were Siah-yat-see and Kah-lat-toose who, being related to Kamiakin, recognized the latter as a major leader of the Palouse. Two other chiefs were prominent among the upper Palouse, Poy-a-kin at Penawawa and Shush-pa-ween at Almota. These were the prominent leaders of the Palouse during the critical war years of the 1850's.

The uneasy peace in the interior was broken in September of 1855 when seven miners, on their way to the Colville gold fields, were slain in Yakima Country. According to the Catholic priests in Yakima, the miners were executed because the daughter of Chief Teias had been raped by these white men. Teias had favored peace until this crime had been committed. From that moment, he favored war. Later in September, Indian Agent A. J. Bolan entered the Yakima Valley to investigate the killings. He was murdered by Kamiakin's nephew, Me-cheel, but whites believed that Kamiakin or another leader, Qualchin, had committed the murder. Several punitive military expeditions followed in the fall and spring. In May of 1856 Kamiakin and a number of warriors withdrew to the Palouse country following a dispute with other Yakima chiefs who sought a peace agreement with the army. Indiscriminate and ruthless raids by the Oregon Volunteers (officially listed as the Washington Territorial Volunteers) under Colonel Thomas R. Cornelius ensued throughout the Walla Walla Country. In March his command entered Palouse Country, moving north across the Snake River and slaughtering both Indians and horses.

A second Walla Walla Council convened in September, but, it was poorly attended and ended in fiasco with a wild, largely verbal, attack on Governor Stevens. Stevens concluded that war was unavoidable, and in a letter to Colonel George Wright, newly appointed commander at Fort Dalles, stated that war should commence against Kamiakin who was thought to be residing among the Palouses. Wright, however, established an uneasy truce with the interior tribes throughout 1857 after promising to keep the whites from settling on Indian lands. Of course, neither he nor any other official of the government kept this promise. Stevens wanted the lands of eastern Washington to be settled by whites, and long before his treaties were ratified, he proclaimed in newspapers that the interior was open. The Indians were in the way of "progress" and "civilization" and Stevens demanded that they be punished and confined to the reservations.

Encouraged by Stevens, Lieutenant John Mullan began his survey of a wagon road from Fort Benton, Montana, to old Fort Walla Walla. The route was to pass directly through Palouse and Coeur d'Alene lands. Both Kamiakin and Tilcoax went to Coeur d'Alene Country early in 1858 in an attempt to form an alliance against the whites. Their efforts were frustrated by Jesuit priests who opposed the alliance. It is probable that the two then journeyed to the Nez Perces on a similar mission which also failed.

The situation was further complicated when new gold strikes were made in 1858 at Colville and on the Frazer River. The gold discoveries renewed the onslaught of whites moving onto Indian lands, and the Palouse reacted by killing two miners near present Colfax. Indeed, on the night of April 12 the Palouse raided livestock in the Walla Walla Valley. In an effort "to stop this thieving," Colonel Edward Steptoe and five companies departed Fort Walla Walla after hearing that the hostile Palouses were near Alpowa on the Snake River. Finding only friendly Indians at that crossing, Steptoe proceeded north invading the lands of the Palouse. Eight miles northwest of present Rosalia his small detachment was met by a force of about 1100 mounted warriors, including Palouse, Spokane, Yakima, Coeur d'Alene, Sinkiuse-Columbia, and other tribes. The Indians forced the army to retreat to a small hill near Rosalia where they were assailed throughout the day. The Palouse were instrumental in the fight which they felt had been caused by the movement of troops through their lands. Tilcoax was present from the beginning of the battle, but Kamiakin probably did not arrive until the troops had been surrounded. Although seven of Steptoe's men were killed and thirteen others were wounded, the command managed to escape at night and return to



**Col. Wright's battle against the northern Indians on the Spokane Plain in 1858. Drawn by Gustavus Sohon.**

—Original in the Smithsonian Institution

Fort Walla Walla. The Indians had had their day; they had drawn blood and had demonstrated their determination to defend their lands. The whites were enraged as a result of the fight, and they vowed to punish the Palouse.

Colonel Wright organized a well-equipped expedition during the summer of 1858, and on August 7 he departed Fort Walla Walla with about 570 troops. The army had been embarrassed by the Steptoe defeat, and Colonel Wright set out to avenge the death of Steptoe's men. The colonel crossed the Snake River near the mouth of the Palouse River, but the Indians, usually residing there, had moved north. They kept



their huge horse herds ahead of the military column tried to reach the relative security of the mountainous areas of the Coeur d'Alenes. A series of battles took place in which the Indians were utterly defeated near Four Lakes and on the Spokane Plains. Wright overtook a herd of about 900 Palouse horses which he shot and killed. He concluded his campaign by hanging a number of Indians, particularly the Palouse, who had surrendered to him while encamped on Latah Creek. On his return to Fort Walla Walla, he hastily called a "Palouse council" on the Palouse River in order to hang several more and threaten the extermination of the tribe should they make any future trouble. Kamiakin, injured at the Battle of Four Lakes, escaped to Canada, while Tilcoax sought refuge on the Great Plains with a group of Nez Perce. With their alliances broken, their leaders in hiding, and now denied a reservation of their own, the Palouse looked to an uncertain future.

As early as 1862 white settlers began moving north of the Snake River to graze their livestock on the bunchgrass-covered hills of the Palouse Country. At first they avoided the drier lands of the Snake River Valley, but with the development of steam navigation on the Snake River carrying more miners and settlers to Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho, landings were established in the 1870's near the Palouse village sites of **Tasawiks**, **Palus**, **Pinawawi**, **Alamotin**, and **Wawawai**. In the same decade it was discovered that the Palouse soil was extremely fertile and the climate was well suited for the cultivation of wheat, barley, and other grains. Furthermore, the protected bottom lands of the lower Snake River were ideal for orchard production. Conflict with the remnant Palouse Indians inhabiting the area was inevitable. The Indians were told to move to one of the reservations in the interior: Yakima, Colville, Umatilla, or Nez Perce. Many of the Palouse, however, were determined to stay on their ancestral lands, and some decided to adopt a novel method of preserving their lands by filing homestead claims. Their efforts, however, were largely thwarted by the civil authorities. Others were less fortunate. The upper Palouses, those living in close proximity to the Nez Percés, were drawn into a violent conflict between the United States Army and the Nez Perce in the War of 1877.

The events most immediately leading to the War of 1877 began with the "Thief Treaty" of 1863. Between the Walla Walla Treaty of 1855 and the outbreak of the Civil War, numerous whites moved to the Oregon Country. Some whites occupied lands adjacent to the Nez Perce Reservation while others slowly encroached on Indian lands. The Nez Perce tried to prevent these injustices which were in violation of the Treaty of 1855, but their efforts were unsuccessful. As the white population grew, so did their demands that the Indians be removed from Oregon and concentrated on a smaller reservation in Idaho. To this end, a commission was established to decrease the size of Nez Perce lands and to force those tribes outside the boundaries to move onto the new reservation. Many Nez Percés, including Joseph, White Bird, Eagle From the Light, and others, refused to have anything to do with this treaty, while other Nez Percés, like Lawyer, whose lands were inside the proposed reservation, agreed to sign the document.

Many Palouses were drawn into this controversy from the start. The upper Palouse, those living between the villages of **Wawawi** and **Palus**, were considered by many to be part of the Nez Perce Tribe and thus were expected to move onto the reservation in Idaho. When the government commissioners convened their council in 1863, some Palouses were at Lapwai, Idaho, to hear what the whites had to say. Palouse Indians were considered a defiant people and the commissioners were not pleased to see them arrive. The commissioners feared that the Palouse were there to cause trouble

and stir up ill feelings toward the whites. The government's agents made their feelings known, and it was reported that the Palouse insulted the commissioners. The Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Calvin H. Hales, ordered Colonel Justus Steinberger to send a detachment of soldiers to Chief Big Thunder's camp to eject the unwanted Palouse. No further mention of the Palouse Indians was made by Hale, but it is quite possible that a few remained to witness the conclusion of the council of 1863.

The "Thief Treaty" and its amendments of 1868 not only reduced the size of original Nez Perce holdings, but it permanently split the tribe into treaty and non-treaty factions. It is not known for certain whether the treaty had a similar effect on the Palouse, but it is probably that a similar less intense split occurred within the upper Palouse people. Some Palouses moved onto a reservation, while others stood fast, supporting the non-treaty Nez Perce. The land ceded to the government in the Treaty of 1863 did not include lands that were traditionally recognized as Palouse territory, and yet they were very much concerned about this new development.

Those Palouse who had held out and continued to live as their fathers before them, now feared that the Nez Perce action of 1863 might spell doom for their traditional way of life. If the non-treaty Nez Perce were forced to move onto the reservation, it might well follow that the government would force the Palouse onto reservations. As the years passed into a new decade, this would become all too apparent to the upper Palouse.

Old Joseph, his son, and the other leaders of the non-treaty bands of Nez Perce denounced the treaty as unjust. They found it hard to believe that the government of the United States had proven to be so hypocritical toward a people who had always maintained friendly relations with the white man. Good faith and honesty was betrayed, and Old Joseph showed his disgust for the whites by ripping apart the treaty and destroying his copy of the New Testament. The Nez Perce stubbornly held onto their lands despite the Treaty of 1863, a document they had not signed. The Indians were split also by religion. Some were Christians but many maintained their traditional beliefs. Many Palouses and Nez Perces denounced Christianity and instead embraced the Dreamer religion which, to the whites, was considered a "heathen cult." Christian whites feared that the Indian Dreamers would foment resistance and war. The Dreamers urged their followers not to live like the whites. These Indians were viewed by most whites as backward savages who refused the "light" of Christianity and white civilization. All these conditions made it easier to justify the forced removal of Indians onto a reservation.

The position of the upper Palouse and the non-treaty Nez Perce was intractable. There was increased pressure demanding their removal to the reservation in Idaho, but the leaders held onto the lands they revered as their mother earth. The Palouse understood the situation, and they would have agreed with Old Joseph who, on his dying day, told his son:

Always remember that your father never sold his country, You must stop your ears whenever you are asked to sign a treaty selling your home. A few years more, and white men will be all around you. They have their eyes on this land. My son, never forget my dying words. This country holds your father's body. Never sell the bones of your father and your mother.

During times of intense social stress and rapid cultural change, people turn to their religion for comfort and solace. This was true for the Palouse during the 1870's, as whites increased their demand that the Indians be moved to the reservation. The threat of war was ever present, and the government received increasing pressure to corral the

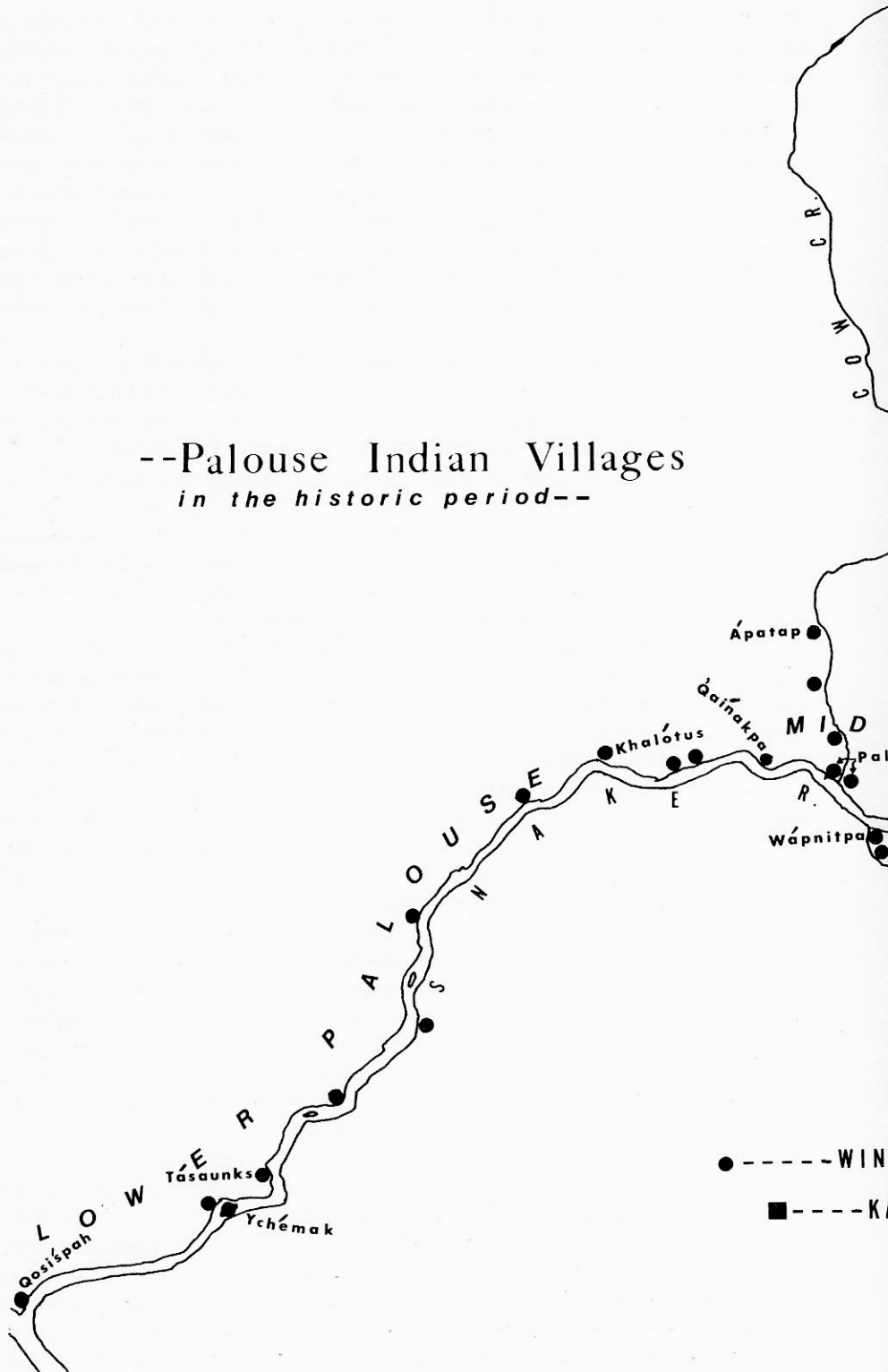
Indians and force them off lands ceded to the whites in the Treaties of 1855 and 1863. Tensions grew to such an intensity that a commission was established to examine the situation. It is not known whether the upper Palouse were represented at the Lapwai Council of 1876, but the results of that meeting would have a bearing on their lives. The whites were convinced that Chief Joseph and the others were under the direct influence of Smohalla, and they were anxious to move the defiant Nez Perce onto the reservation. Joseph's position was simple: he owned the Wallowa region, and since he had never sold it, the land was still his. He refused to sell the land, and he refused to move onto the reservation. The commissioners explained that the Nez Perce had surrendered their rights to the Wallawas when they signed the Treaty of 1863. Joseph countered with a story which illustrated the feelings of the Palouse toward the Walla Walla Treaty of 1855 which ceded their lands to the whites. With regard to the Nez Perce, Joseph said:

If we ever owned the land we own it still, for we never sold it. In the treaty councils the commissioners have claimed that our country had been sold to the Government. Suppose a white man should come to me and say, "Joseph, I like your horses, and I want to buy them." I say to him, "No, my horses suit me, I will not sell them." Then he goes to my neighbor, and says to him: "Joseph has some good horses. I want to buy them, but he refuses to sell." My neighbor answers, "Pay me the money, and I will sell you Joseph's horses." The white man returns to me and says, "Joseph, I have bought your horses, and you must let me have them." If we sold our lands to the Government this is the way they were bought.

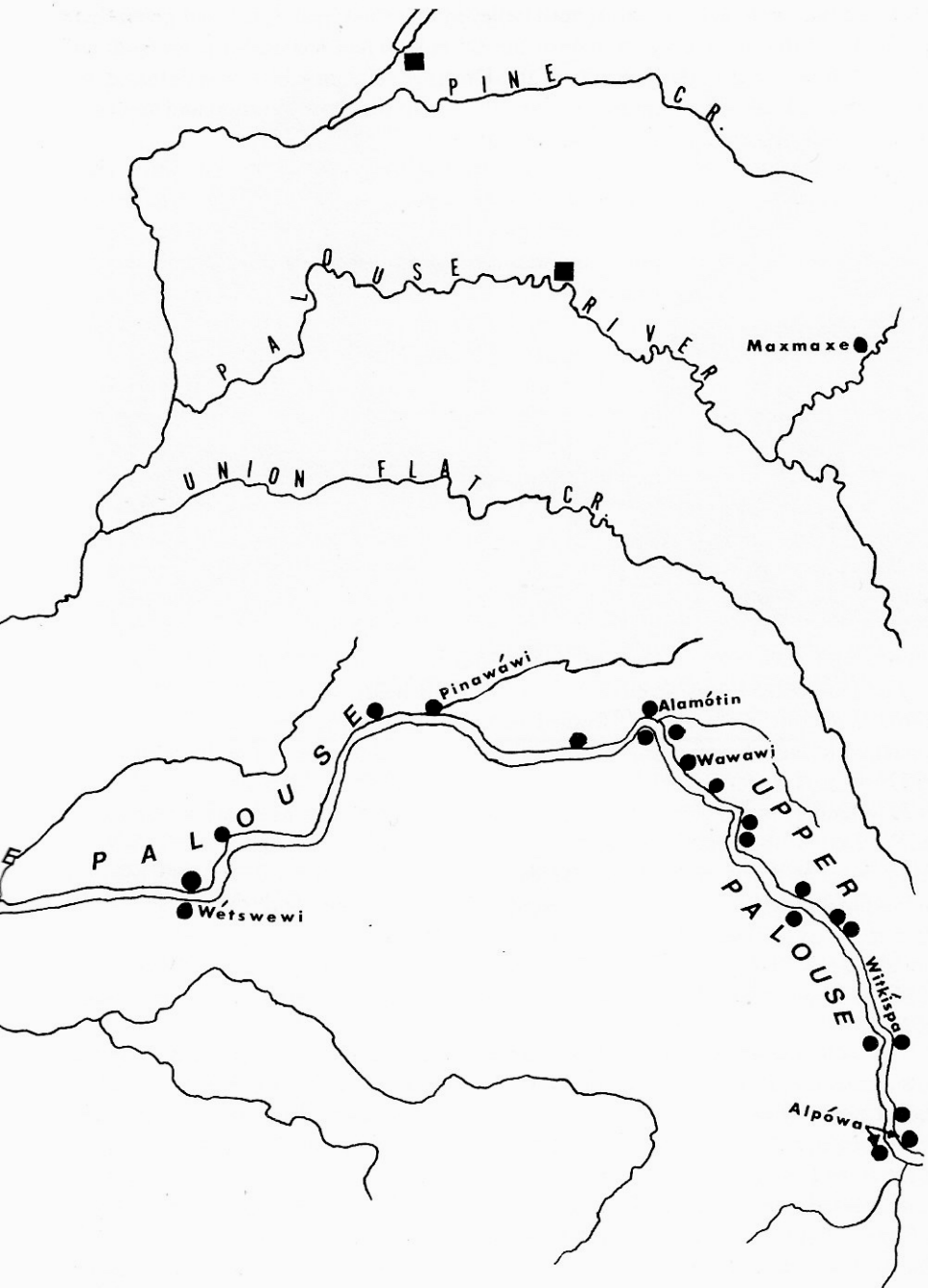
The extent to which the whites feared the Palouse and Nez Perce Dreamers is seen in the recommendations suggested by the commissioners after the Lapwai Council of 1876. Smohalla's "fanaticism" had spread among the Indians, particularly Joseph. The commissioners felt that the leaders of the Dreamers should be confined to the agencies or exiled to the Indian Territory. The Dreamer religion should be suppressed, the commissioner declared, and the non-treaty Indians should be forced to move onto the reservation. If the Indians did not move peacefully onto the reservation, the army would force them at gunpoint. Hostilities grew and war seemed imminent. A few months after the first Lapwai Council, another was convened on May 3, 1877. Two major Palouse chiefs attended this council and supported the position of the non-treaty Nez Perces. Husishusis Kute (Little Baldhead) attended the council and represented the upper Palouse band from **Wawawai**. He was a leader of the Dreamers, and his arrival at the Lapwai Council was not heralded by Oliver O. Howard or Agent John B. Monteith. The government agents feared the 37-year old Dreamer from the Snake River who was recognized as one of the most important religious leaders in the region, second only to Toohoolhoolzote. The other Palouse chief was Hahtalekin, also known as Taktsoukt Ilppip (Red Echo), who was then 34-years old and the leader of the main village of **Palus**. These two leaders represented two major bands of the Palouse.

Neither Husishusis Kute nor Hahtalekin had many Palouses with them. Their influence was not great in comparison to the noted leaders of the Nez Perce. Nevertheless, it is important to note their presence at the council, because they represented a small tribe that was separate and distinct from the Nez Perce. The fate of the Palouse merged with that of the non-treaty Nez Perce, and the Palouse supported the Nez Perce for many reasons. Both shared a common lifeway and geographical setting; both were hunters, gatherers, and fishermen who wanted to live as their ancestors had lived;

--Palouse Indian Villages  
in the historic period--



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VILLAGES  
 IN FAMILY CAMPSITES

PDS/PCB 1980

both loved the earth and the water; both believed that the Great Spirit had given them their land and that no one was to have it but those who had received it from God; and finally, both believed in the precepts of the Dreamer religion which was despised and feared by the whites. The Palouse and Nez Perce had much in common and shared an interest in the proceedings at the Lapwai Council of 1877.

The Palouse did not play a major role in the discussion at the council. Their views were well represented, however, by Toohoolhoolzote, a man General Howard described as a “large, thick-necked, ugly, obstinate savage of the worst type.” This “cross-grained growler” was the most important religious leader at the council, and he forcefully presented the spiritual views of the Palouse and Nez Perce. He explained to Howard that the earth was sacred, that God had given it to the Indians, and that it could not be sold. “You white people get together, measure the earth, and then divide it” Toohoolhoolzote explained. He pointed out to Howard that: “Part of the Indians gave up their land. I never did. The earth is part of my body, and I never gave up the earth.” An argument ensued and the Palouse and Nez Perce became restless and agitated by the turn of events. Toohoolhoolzote exclaimed: “What person pretends to divide the land, and put me on it?” To this, Howard announced, “I am that man.” Facing Howard, the leader said: “The Indians may do what they like, but I am not going on the reservation.” This defiance was too much for Howard who stated that he would punish Toohoolhoolzote by sending him to the Indian Territory: “I will send you there if it takes years and years.” If the leader had not been killed during the war, he too would have been shipped off to the Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma).

Toohoolhoolzote was arrested for speaking his heart. As the Nez Perce warrior, Yellow Wolf put it, “General Howard had showed the Indians the rifle.” Howard threatened to launch a war unless the leaders consented to move onto the reservation, and Husishusis Kute, Hahtalekin, and the Nez Perce leaders well understood the situation. General Howard asked the chief: “Will you go with me to look for reservation land?” None of the leaders responded, and the question was asked again. This time, one by one, the chiefs nodded their heads signifying their willingness to look over the reservation and select lands for their people. All of the Palouse and Nez Perce in attendance at the council would have agreed with Joseph’s assessment of their position: “We were like deer. They were like grizzly bears . . . If I should fight the whites I would lose all. No man in the world would take all his property and burn it in a fire. So it is with me.”

Toohoolhoolzote was released, and most of the chiefs, except for the religious leader, made a tour of the reservation to select lands for their people. Husishusis Kute traveled with Howard, Joseph, and Whitebird. Looking Glass would retain the forested regions on the upper Clearwater River. Whitebird and Joseph selected lands not far from Looking Glass along the Clearwater but farther west. Husishusis Kute was instructed to move the Palouse to the lower Clearwater River a few miles north of the Lapwai Agency. Howard did not trust Husishusis Kute, and he believed that the Palouse chief would cause trouble. For this reason, the general refused to issue the chief his “protection papers” which asked whites not to molest the Indians while they were moving from their homelands to the reservation. Agent Monteith was told to hold Husishusis Kute’s protection papers until the Palouse had “demonstrated his good intentions.”

Since the Palouse lived in rough terrain along the Snake River and so far away from Lapwai, they were given thirty-five days to gather their property and settle on the reservation. The Palouse, like the non-treaty Nez Perce, felt that this amount of time was extremely unfair. Not only was the reservation some distance from their home, but



**Two of Kamiakin's sons. "Snake River" Kamiakin (on the left) and Cleveland Kamiakin, the old chief's last surviving son (on the right).**

—Photos from the Richard Scheuerman Collection

it was the spring of the year when the rivers were at flood. Moreover, it was not an easy task to gather all of their belongings, assemble their people, and be on the reservation by the appointed date. Horses were a problem as well, because the Palouse practiced open grazing. The horses were difficult to round up because of the extent of their grazing on both sides of the Snake River. Some of these horses were untamed, for they, like the Palouse, were free spirits who roamed at will across the hills, valleys, and mountains of the Inland Northwest. Many Palouses gathered their belongings and began moving toward a rendezvous with the Nez Perce six miles west of present-day Grangeville, Idaho. Others headed directly toward the reservation. Still others decided not to go to the reservation, but rather to remain on the Snake River and live like their mothers and fathers before them. Many of these people were to reside in their ancestral lands throughout the Nez Perce War of 1877, and a few were to live a traditional life along the river until the middle of the twentieth century.

Those Palouses who traveled to the Camas Prairie joined a large body of non-treaty Nez Perce under the leadership of Joseph, Whitebird, Toohoolhoolzote, and others. Two-thirds of the six hundred Indians who gathered at the Camas Prairie were women, children, and old men. All of the chiefs, except perhaps Toohoolhoolzote, favored peace, because they feared that in a lengthy war with the whites, the Indians would lose. The peaceful and recreational atmosphere that prevailed over the camp at the Camas Prairie was marred after a few young warriors set out to avenge the deaths of members of their family. There were Palouses in camp when word reached Camas Prairie of the killings, precipitated by the young warriors, and more Palouses would join their brothers as the war progressed.

Hushishusis Kute and Hahtalekin, the two Palouse chiefs present at the Lapwai Council of 1877, joined the Nez Perce and supported their cause after hostilities com-

menced. It is known that Palouse Indians were present at the outbreak of the war, and it is quite possible that Husishusis Kute was the leader of the Palouses who were camped on Camas Prairie. Hahtalekin, however, did not join the Nez Perce warriors until after the Battle of the Clearwater when he arrived with sixteen Palouse warriors to bolster the forces of the non-treaty Indians. Hahtalekin had with him an unknown number of women and children. Each Indian band that joined the war effort had its own leadership. This was true of the Palouse bands who were represented by Husishusis Kute and Hahtalekin. However, all of the Indians deferred some of their war power to the most important war chief present—Looking Glass. It was Looking Glass who executed the escape of the Palouse and Nez Perce out of Idaho and into Montana using the Lolo Trail. In addition, Looking Glass was instrumental in the decision to have the people join the Crow Indians in Wyoming. The Palouse Chiefs gave some of their authority to Looking Glass and followed him south to the Big Hole in Montana.

One of the most significant battles of the Nez Perce War of 1877 occurred in western Montana at the Big Hole. Hahtalekin, Husishusis Kute, and the Palouses fought alongside the Nez Perce after the army made a surprise attack on the Indian camp. As the dawn was breaking on August 9, 1877, Hahtalekin and Natalekin were up early tending to their horses. The Palouse chief was one of the first Indians to see the soldiers, and he rushed to the tipis sounding the alarm alerting the camp that it was under attack. The Battle of the Big Hole was one of the bloodiest encounters during the war of 1877, and several Indians were killed or wounded during the fray. Hahtalekin was killed during the battle and so was his son, a popular warrior named Pahka Pahtahank (“Dark Cloudy Days Five Times Repeated” or “Five Fogs”). The great patriot, Yellow Wolf, left an account of Pahka Pahtahank’s death:

An Indian with a white King George blanket about him was standing farthest up the river, alone. Of the Paloos Waiwawai band, his name was Pahka Pahtahank (Five Fogs). Aged about thirty snows, he was of an old-time mind. He did not understand the gun. He was good with the bow, but had only a hunting bow. I thought, “If he had good rifle, he could bring death to the soldiers.”

He was just in front of his own teepee. Soldiers were this side, not far from him. He stood there shooting arrows at the enemies. The soldiers saw, and fired at him. That Indian stepped about a little, but continued sending his arrows. Three times those soldiers fired and missed him. The fourth round killed him.

Although the Indians repulsed the attack on their camp at the Big Hole, they realized that the army had not given up their pursuit. The Palouse and Nez Perce headed south into Yellowstone Park, but turned north toward Canada after realizing that the Crow were not going to provide them protection. In late September the Indians were forty miles from the Canadian border. Looking Glass insisted that the people make camp and rest while other leaders favored moving on across the border. Husishusis Kute probably favored the plan of Looking Glass, for they were friends who chose to camp together. Despite the fact that some of the leaders wanted to go on, Looking Glass had his way just as he had had at the Big Hole. Like his decision to rest at the Big Hole, this was a fatal error. The Indians were intercepted by Colonel Nelson A. Miles who engaged them at the Battle of Bear Paws. Some of the Indians escaped the grasp of General Howard and Colonel Miles, but most of them had to surrender. Such was the case of Husishusis Kute and the surviving Palouse Indians.





**Rufus Wolf, a descendant of the Wolf family. This photograph was taken near Palouse Falls.**

—From the Richard Scheuerman Collection

When the Palouse surrendered, they, like the Nez Perce, believed that they were to be returned to the reservation in Idaho. However, because of the politicians in Washington, D.C., particularly General William T. Sherman, the Palouse and the Nez Perce were sent first to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and then to the Indian Territory. The Palouse, like their Nez Perce brothers, suffered greatly during the years they spent in **Eeikish Pah**, the Hot Place. The fate of the Nez Perce has been documented, but it is significant to note that the events surrounding the exile of the Nez Perce to the Indian Territory also applied to the little-known tribe called the Palouse.

Hahtalekin and his son, Five Fogs, died as patriots fighting for the freedom of their people; other Palouses were killed as well for their just cause, Husishusis Kute survived the war and emerged as one of the great leaders in the Indian Territory not only for the Palouse, but for the Nez Perce as well. On Independence Day of 1884, Senator Henry L. Sawes secured passage of a bill which gave the Secretary of Interior power to decide the fate of the Nez Perce and Palouse. In May of 1885 these two tribes were returned to the Northwest. On May 2, the day Husishusis Kute, Joseph and Yellow Bull boarded the train to begin their journey home, they signed papers surrendering their claim to property in the Indian Territory. Some of the Palouses joined Joseph on the Colville Reservation in Washington, while others under Husishusis Kute, were sent to the Nez Perce Reservation in Idaho. After a long and bloody war and a dismal, homesick exile in the Indian Territory, the Palouse Indians had returned to their native Northwest.

Open hostilities between the Palouse and the white men ended after the War of 1877, but deep resentment continued to linger. Most of the Palouse, like the other Indians of the Inland Northwest, were confined to a reservation. The Palouse who had fought with Joseph were sent to the Colville Reservation. Others, however, were forced onto the Nez Perce, Yakima and Umatilla reservations. Today the descendants of

the Palouse people reside on these as well as the Warm Springs Reservation. They were the first settlers of the rolling Palouse Country, and they were forced to surrender the land they so loved. They were confined to reservations and denied their independence. The Palouse and their descendants have not forgotten that time not so long ago when they were free to hunt, gather, and roam over the land that bears their name to this day.

## SOURCES

There are numerous original sources that deal with the Palouse Indians including explorers' journals, military accounts, documents of the House of Representatives and the Senate, newspapers, and private collections. These can be found in the National Archives, Huntington Library, Yakima Library, and the Eastern Washington University Library. These institutions have been very interested and cooperative in this research endeavor.

Some of the best works dealing with the Palouse Indians include R. G. Thwaites (ed.), **Original Journals of Lewis and Clark**; A. M. Josephy, Jr., **The Nez Perce Indians**; R. I. Burns, **The Jesuits and the Indian Wars of the Northwest**; W. C. Brown, **The Indian Side of the Story**; C. Relander, **Drummers and Dreamers**; R. Sprague, "Aboriginal Burial Practices in the Plateau Region," Ph. D. Dissertation; R. H. Ruby and J. A. Brown, **The Cayuse Indians**; C. Drury, **Marcus Whitman**; K. Richards, **Isaac I. Stevens**; M. Beal, "**I Will Fight No More Forever**"; L. V. McWhorter, **Hear Me, My Chiefs and Yellow Wolf: His Own Story**; A. P. Slickpoo, **Noon-Nee-Me-Poo**; R. Cox, **The Columbia River**; A. Ross, **Adventures of the First Settlers and Fur Hunters**; B. F. Manning, **The Conquest of the Coeur d'Alenes, Spokanes, and Palouses**; D. Meinig, **The Great Columbia Plain**; A. W. Thompson, "The Early History of the Palouse River," **Pacific Northwest Quarterly**, 62 (April, 1971); R. Sprague, "The Meaning of Palouse," **Idaho Yesterdays**, 12 (Summer, 1968).

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## Testament of Yos-yos-tulie-katsen

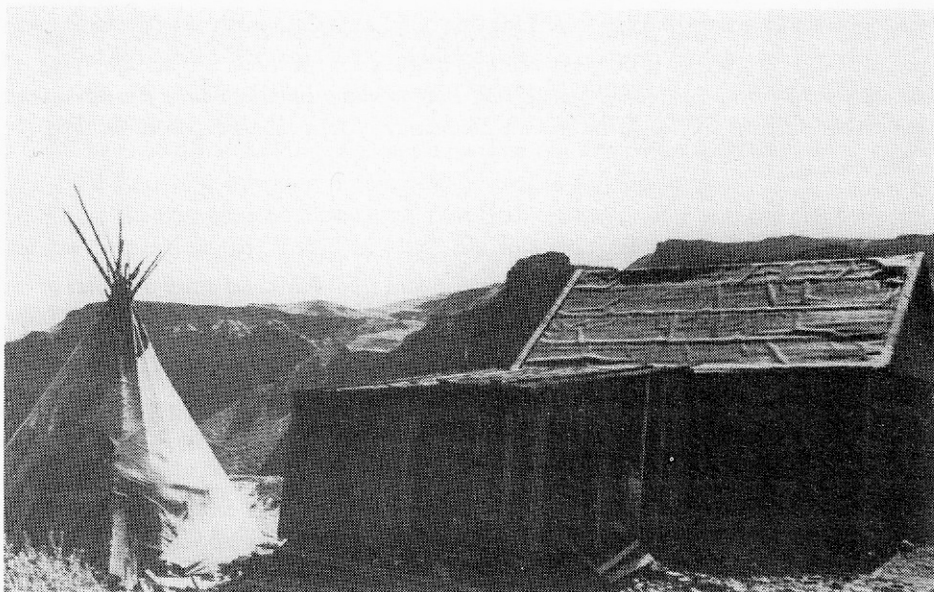
*In February 1936 B. F. Manning published a two part biographical sketch of Sam Fisher, popularly known, because of Manning's article, as "The Last of the Palouses." Sam, whose Indian name was Yos-yos-tulie-katsen, lived at Palouse Falls in the traditional manner, hunting, fishing, and gathering. In 1936, Yos-yos-tulie-katsen ran afoul of the "law." He trapped some beaver, ate the meat, and sold the skins. W. W. Nicley, District Game Warden arrested Yos-yos-tulie-katsen. Included in Manning's article was the statement made by Sam Fisher, Yos-yos-tulie-katsen, the man some call "the last Palouse."*

"My people lived where I lived a long, long time. This was the home of my father and my father's father. They were very old men when they died and were buried here. The history of the Palouses related to us by our old people and which we have told our children, does not go back to the beginning. Before the White man came, we killed deer and other wild animals that were here. There was no one to tell us we could not do so. The meat of the deer was our food and from the skins we took, we made our clothing and some of the teepees in which we lived. Every year the wild animals were

here for the use of the Indians, and we had no thought that they would ever be all destroyed.

“The White Man came and his cattle and sheep ate the grass around our homes, and finally the deer came no more. Yet we took none of the cattle and sheep. I am now accused of killing beaver, which you say, it is unlawful to do. This I did. The flesh of these animals we ate because of our need of food, and the skins I sold. But in this I have stolen no property from the White Man.

—Contributed by Dorothy Matson



**Home of Yos-yos-tulie-katsen (Sam Fisher) near Palouse Falls, where he lived until the early 1940's. Sam was the last of the Palouses to live along the river, hunting and fishing in the traditional manner.**

—Photo Courtesy of Dr. Roy Chatters

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## Whose Land?—

(Dateline May 21, 1873—The **Idaho Signal**, Lewiston, Idaho)

The citizens of Paradise Valley last year were molested by the band of Palouse Indians who came into the valley with their stock and entered their mowing fields for the purpose of digging camas. When ordered out they refused, and pistols were drawn by the Indians and shooting seemed imminent, but the timely arrival of some settlers with rifles held them in check. The present year the settlers have been notified by the Indians that when camas time comes they will go upon the camas fields at all hazards. These fields are the property of the settlers and will be greatly damaged by any trespass of these Indians . . . It is high time that the settlers should know whether they have any rights that are not subject to the arrogance of these Indians. Paradise Valley is Uncle Sam's land, proclaimed open for settlement . . .

—Contributed by Dorothy Matson

# A Palouse Indian Speaks: Mary Jim Remembers

Edited by Richard Scheuerman and Clifford Trafzer

*Mary Jim Chapman is one of the few Palouse Indians still living who once led a traditional life on the Great Columbia Plain. She calls herself, **Na-ha-hum**, meaning one who lives along the Snake River. Her grandfather was Fishhook Jim; her father was Thomas Jim; and her mother was Amtaloot, a Wanapum Indian from Priest Rapids. Mary Jim was born shortly after the turn of this century, and she has spent much of her life living off the land, eating fish, deer, roots, and berries. Like so many Indians, Mary Jim has a deep and reverent feeling for the earth and the abundance of food that was placed on it by the Creator.*

*In 1976 Richard Scheuerman began collecting a series of oral histories on the Palouse Indians. In the process he met Mary Jim Chapman who shared her story and that of her people. In 1979 Cliff Trafzer began working with Scheuerman to gather additional information from Mary Jim on the culture, language, and history of the Palouse Indians. They were aided in their endeavor with assistance from the American Philosophical Society as well as the Department of History and Native American Programs of Washington State University. Over two hundred pages of transcript has emerged. The stories contained in the oral histories span the period of time from the 1840s to the 1980's. Mary Jim's reminiscences include topics of travel, fishing and hunting experiences, relations with white settlers and Chinese miners, horse trading, and enemy raiding. A few of these stories have been edited for this publication. Special appreciation is extended by the editors to Marjorie Grunewald and Cindy DeGrosse for transcribing the oral histories of Mary Jim Chapman.*

*Mary Jim and her people spent each year traveling in a seasonal round. They moved through the Columbia Plateau digging roots and hunting game. Despite the fact she lived near the mouth of the Snake River, she journeyed north to the Spokane River, south to the Blue Mountains, west to Mount Adams, and east to Kooskie, Idaho. On her travels east, she often dug roots and hunted deer near Colfax. In the fall of the year, after the huckleberries were picked, the Palouse began hunting. Mary Jim's people wintered on the Snake River and then set out on the spring march onto the Columbia Plain.*

We would start to move in March. We would move to Soap Lake, dig certain kinds of roots. They used to dig Skokul and some other roots, and then we used to move to Badger Mountain, all over Douglas, and all over that big hill, Badger Mountain. And we used to stay there. That's where people used to gather, play stick games, the Washat, you know, the Seven Drums Religion. We used to race the horses by Badger Mountain. When we were done there, we moved back to Snake River, last of May maybe, and then salmon came up the Snake River. They fished and got all kinds of fish. We got salmon and put it away. They used to dig a hole, big hole and put bunchgrass all around in it, then boards, then sticks. They buried that and

nothing would happen. That's for their spring salmon and eels and other kinds of fish—sturgeon. They used to sell sturgeon. In the fall we went over to Walla Walla to dig kouse. That's where they used to camp and dig. Then we went up the mountains to dig other kinds of roots. You baked some of them which turned black, almost like wild onions, but different. Then they cooked these **tuna-winch-i-kunch**, tree moss, and they baked it and ground it. We traveled alot. You ought to have seen them horses: packin', packin', packin'. No car at that time! We all went to Walla Walla; we got a wagon there; and we loaded that stuff and then moved back to Snake River, almost fall time. And still they used to go fishing at Wallowa and Winahah. Way up on top of the canyon, you know, Kooskooskie Canyon, we used to gather, just like on Badger Mountain. They used to race and used to Washat. They used to gamble, whatever, used to play ball. They had different kind of games long time ago. It's wheat farm there now, and I guess it was long time ago they used to stay up there.

Great changes occurred in the early twentieth century. Some white settlers wanted the government, or the "Law" as Mary Jim referred to it, to confine Indians to the reservation. The state governments favored the removal of Indians off the Snake River and off the rolling plains. State fish and game officials attempted to restrict Indians fishing as well. Mary Jim recalls that:

We used to catch all kinds of fish and we kept the fish. And like I said, there was no law at that time. You couldn't tell my grandpa, "You gonna get out of the fishin place. It's our law." We didn't have that law.

Before Indian fishing rights became a major political and economic issue in the Northwest, governmental officials and private individuals used the fishing issue against the Indians, demanding that they be placed on reservations. Indian agents visited the Snake River people and tried to convince them to move to the reservation. Mary Jim remembered what an elder of her family thought of the idea.

My grandpa's brother, his name was Tomash. He was a chief and he told the white people, "you not gonna take my people, no, no reservation. My people want to keep their (cultural) background. They want to stay here." And they took him to jail, and they put him in jail. Pretty soon they tell him, "Tomash, you gotta big head. You don't wanna move no place. Now you take your people back, and they gonna get homestead, and nobody's gonna bother them." And they came down and got a homestead on the other side of Ice Harbor. That's why we got that land. They wouldn't give it up.

Like most people throughout the world, the Palouse Indians loved their ancestors. From the earliest written records and from oral histories, it is apparent that the Indians revered their dead and cared for their cemeteries. Mary Jim recalled the night she was awakened to learn that white people had landed on Big Island to excavate an Indian grave. The grave was that of Fishhook Jim, Mary's grandfather, who was buried in a canoe that has been cut in half. The family believed that archaeologists dug up the grave and made off with the remains. They came at night in an amphibious vehicle.

"Wake up, Mom, wake up! They took our grandpa." Now they took him. They went across. And they took that grave. They dug a hole and we hollered at him. Charlie Jim went out to tell them to stop. We waved red flags at them, telling them, stop. Then the car (amphibious vehicle) went through the water and on the ground too. We didn't know how to chase



**One of Kamiakin's two daughters.** —From the Richard Scheuerman Collection

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them or where they went. And we reported this to the agency but they never helped us.

The archaeologists who took Mary Jim's grandfather may have done so "legally" under a contract with the Corps of Engineers. Nevertheless, to Mary and her people it was a ghoulish deed.

One of Mary Jim's greatest concerns is for her children and her grandchildren. She knows that most of them will grow up not knowing their "background." They will not make seasonal rounds, but she hopes that they will all grow up speaking Sahaptin and worshipping in a traditional manner. She "reaches out" for her past and would like her children to know about life on the Snake River. About the children of Palouse descendants she says:

I like to reach out for my children and their children, because some children now own no homes. They have to go hoboing around all over. And our land just wastes away without us. Sometimes I cry, feel sorry. Fishhook Jim has maybe two or three hundred children. Many young ones, and they don't know what to do. They got no place to stay; they got no background; they got no land. That's why we would like to have a piece of our ground and have our houses again.

Mary Jim Chapman laments the loss of the land and the loss of the life she once knew. Unlike many of her generation, however, she did not grow up on a reservation and was not forced to conform to the way of white society. Today she has little except a humble home on the Yakima Reservation. She is a wealthy woman in one respect, for she has accumulated a lifetime of memories, treasures which she has shared about her life as a Palouse Indian.

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## **T. W. Martin, Last Know Survivor of Indian War Dead**

T. W. Martin, uncle of T. C. Martin, Pullman businessman at that time, was a member of the Oregon Volunteers and participated in the Battle of Walla Walla.

When T. W. was only nineteen, he went west to mine in California. He next went to Oregon where he volunteered in the Oregon Volunteers and participated in the Battle of Walla Walla. He was in command of 500 men in different parts of Washington in quieting the Indians. Col. J. K. Kelly, with the Oregon Volunteers, had been in the field for some time. The command left The Dalles, Oregon late in November 1855, and arrived at Wallula December the second. The fort there was destroyed and the Indians scattered. The command went up the Walla Walla River to Touchet and on December 5th, they were met by Peu peu mox mox, the Walla Walla Chieftan. The Indians carrying a flag of truce stated that if the volunteers wanted peace, the Indians would return the next day with a proposal for a treaty. Peu peu mox mox, known as the "Yellow Serpent", was persuaded to stay with the Volunteers and for him to prepare for peace.

Peu peu mox mox had sent word to his people to clear the camp site in a deep ravine. The camp consisting of men, women, and children were prepared to battle with the white soldiers.

The parley lasted two days. In the meantime, the volunteers were preparing to move to Whitman Mission to camp for the winter.

A four day battle ensued. Peu peu mox mox had been kept a prisoner under guard was massacred by the volunteers. The volunteers unfortunately found an old howitzer in the abandoned wrecked fort a Wallula. It exploded the fourth time it was discharged and killed Captain A. V. Wilson and several others.

Mr. Martin told of the hardships of the winter of 1855 suffered by the volunteers camped on the Snake River. It was sometimes 20 degrees below zero with nothing to eat but wild onions and horse flesh.

T. W. Martin lived in Pullman about six years ago (1910) died August, 1916 and was buried in Washtucna.

—Pullman Herald, August 11, 1916.

—Contributed by Dorothy Matson

## Editor's Notes

Thanks to Roy Chatters, outgoing editor of the **Bunchgrass Historian**, and Bruce Harding, outgoing society president, for the support and encouragement they have given me with this, my first, issue. To the members of the society I offer my appreciation for the opportunity to be the editor of one of the finest local history journals in the Northwest. Former editors June Crithfield and Roy Chatters have set high standards, indeed. Yet, if you give me your support and assistance I will try to maintain these high standards. Whitman County history is your history and you are the source upon which I expect to draw for the **Bunchgrass Historian**.

**Don't miss the very fine exhibit, Our Agricultural Heritage**, now on display at the Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections in Holland Library on the Washington State University Campus. Materials in the exhibit were selected from the Pacific Northwest Agricultural Archives and show through photographs, documents, maps, and memorabilia of the early agricultural history of the region. The manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections division is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The exhibit will be on display through September 30, 1980.

**The cover** of this issue features a striking photograph of Harlish Washomake, also known as Tilcoax the Younger. In an attempt to retain his ancestral lands after the War of 1877, he went by train to Washington, D.C. There he tried to become a U.S. citizen so that he might homestead his land. While in Washington, he wired home for more money, giving instructions to his people as to where his savings were buried. Seeing the message, a dishonest telegraph operator followed Harlish Washomake's friends and stole what remained of the money after they had gone. Meanwhile, Harlish Washomake's attempt to become a citizen failed, he was denied the right to become a homesteader on his own land, and he returned to the Palouse Hills only to find that he was destitute. His father, Tilcoax (the Elder), was the chief who had 900 horses killed by the U.S. Army after the Battle of Spokane Plain in 1858.

—From the Collection of Richard Scheuerman