

January 27, 1953

Congressman Hal Holmes,
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

After discussing the matter of the Wanapum Indians of Priest Rapids with Dean Guie, and suggesting he drop you a note, we reached the conclusion that I, having the pertinent information at finger-tip, should communicate with you.

The problem:

Providing a non-treaty homeless people, a small band, with a place to spend their last days; perpetuate their old culture and rectify a mistake, made long ago by the government. This, to be done without interference with progress or development along the Columbia River, the home of these people.

This is an exploratory letter, asking your advice as to what tact should be now pursued.

The matter has been broached in years past, both by the late L.V. McWhorter and myself with the Department of Interior, Indian Bureau. It has also been broached with the Army Engineers. They are all sympathetic but, that is as far as they can go. No one just wants to trouble themselves with these people.

I have copies of some past letters, showing a file set up by the Department of Indian Affairs, or rather, can strike off copies for you.

I have made an exhaustive study of these people and can qualify as an expert witness, I believe, from the ethnological standpoint.

We have lately been occupied with "usual protests" against such things as dam construction (result of PUD hearing set by Federal Power Commission).

We will be glad to follow any suggestions you may have to offer

that would, if possible, lead toward congressional intercession , for a few sections of vacant land, their old home land, protection of their graveyard or for any other congressional relief that could be given to human beings.

I can interview the agent at Toppenish, Perry Skarra and clear finally those who might be involved by marriage with Indians holding allotments, just so we will know where we stand.

I can rally some support from the press and handle stories throughout this section where the people are well and favorably known.

I can provide (unknown quantity depending upon my own personal resources and time) petitions signed by valley residents asking for relief for the Wanapums.

I have completed a manuscript, "Drummers and Dreamers," which has cleared the readers of Caxton Printers, Ltd. at Caldwell, Idaho and am now having that re-typed by an expert typist and adding ethnological footnotes etc. I was told, when that was done, I would be given a publishing contract on it, but that there would be no money in it for either the author or the publisher. ~~I know~~ This house has 1,000 manuscripts submitted to them each year and selects 25 only for publication. It would be a year before this could be published, even if I hit no more delays. (I am keeping the matter rather confidential at the present time.

I can site you ethnological references pertaining to these people, provide you with clippings of some stories we have had, photographs etc., to give you back round for a more extensive study before determining possibilities. And, since Lloyd Wiehl knows them, I am sure he will intervene with Sen. Magnuson. But I thought it wise to ask you first.

I'm enclosing some notes based on communications, as a starter.

If you have some suggestions, please let me know and I will get busy building up a file for you.

Sincerely