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Dear Elon:

Aug. 15, 1964

Glad of the opportunity of writing again, even in length, which you will see is pardonable.

First, for background. I am convinced there is no truly "Yakima" tongue now, that the various mixings of Klickitat, "River People" such as Wishram, Rock Creek and others; and the Kittitas, has become so interwoven with the old true Yakima (from the gap south through Wapato and Toppenish) there are dozens of terms and words for the same thing. In this Bruce Higsby, a graduate student who has worked two years in linguistics on the Umatilla and Yakima Reservation and who is a professor in anthropology at Toronto this fall, concurs. And he is fluent in speaking and interpreting the language.

I tried to get the true Yakima, which some do not even know. This was true for friend and friendship, si-num-wah and nimo-num-wah.

Cecilia Lotus, who speaks pure Yakima gives, for friendship or "you are my friend" en-mi et towit. (the et towit being the friend part, en-mi designating you and me)

An old term for friend, used to designate someone you are trading with or sealing a bargain with as a friend is Y-Yallept. Incidentally there was a chief in the Upper Valley, the Cowiche country in pioneer days before the founding of North Yakima (1885) with a name like that or close to it.

Hut-wy is a friend-relative in the dialect of the Lower Valley Yakima. But Joe Meninick, one of the best of the interpreters, can well be relied upon for the old term.

As for hillsides, the true Yakima word was thapnish, pronounced thap-nigh (with tongue in roof of mouth for the "thap." Another Yakima word for it was huna nuckin. Siah caught is another, pronounced sighah or sigh-yah caught, with a German cluttural or down in the throat. Incidentally too thapnish is the origin of your Toppenish. It is also interpreted as sloping down. The origin of the country from up around Simcoe sloping down to the valley with many hillsides.

Even Wahluke (Wahluke Slope) is a word for hillsides, meaning a gentle slope, a long one. Mooli-mooli, pronounced moo-lee-moo-lee, means little stacked hills, like those up by Mt. Cleman.

One time I brought up the definition of Umptanum (Umptanum Ridge) and half a dozen old men discussed its meaning several hours, coming up with all kinds of attempts at finding a definition. Some said it meant like running up a hillside until your heart pounded; like working hard up a side of a mountain to gain the top; like working for your heart's desire, and that seemed to be the final conclusion.

I have a copy of Pandosy's Dictionary of the Yakima. There were some 100 copies only of this printed. He compiled the dictionary early in 1850



at Ahtanum Mission. I sat in a library three days making a typed copy of this. He was a good grammarian, declined words, parsed them, etc. and had a Yakima alphabet. In his preface he explains it is the Klickitat tongue, being the tongue most commonly spoken, but he calls it the "Yakama" (spelled Yakama) It was always spelled Yakama until late in the 1880s, even in the Fort Simcoe correspondence. I used to take that and work with men and women I knew very well and many of the words were unfamiliar to them. Many of the words have changed and a new type of dialect so to speak has evolved, though many words are unchanged.

Work like Bruce Migsby is doing will be of real value. (He has my typed copy now but it is overdue for return).

Incidentally Horse Heaven Hills is Petcano Koosi. Petcano, pronounced ~~Petkxexxane~~ peut cauno is the almost universal word for mountain. Koosi, a Nez Perce word is the universal word for horse. (dog is koosi-koosi) literally, little horse. Like Walla Walla means many little rivers.

So pardon the long letter but it may be of some interest to you.

Incidentally my friend Irving Petite of Issaquah, who wrote Mr. B, about the Bear Cub, has just sent me his latest book which Doubleday is issuing Aug. 21. It is The Elderberry Tree and is a beautifully written book, a series of nature observations, animal and bird life stories he has been closely in touch with in his mountain home on Tiger Mountain. Readers Digest has already used some of the stories and English and other rights have been sold. (Mr. B is even being printed in Japanese). I think it will emerge as one of the best of Western Washington and the Cascades nature and wild life books.

Most Sincerely

Glick Belander