

Mr. Albert H. Culverwell, historian,  
State Parks and Recreation Commission,  
100 Dexter Ave.

1212 N. 32nd Ave.,  
Yakima, Wash.

[1954?]

Dear Al:

Still snowed under from projects I wish to get at and cannot for lack of time, I'm turning your way for a little backer up on one of them. When that is done, then to other things.

I have some more stories coming up on the Columbia River (Mid-Columbia) especially around the "ishram country.

Made a hurried trip in and out of there yesterday with a photog who had some work to do down at Maryhill. We grabbed a few shots of the Wakemap mound. No time for an investigation at the Dalles but picked up rumors about the rock artifacts on the Washington side. Heard that attempts were made to take them out or some of them, but they were destroyed through crumbling or fracture.

I recollect your problem in that connection and that you were working on something. So I wonder what were the results, and if anything concrete has been done toward removing them, or what is being done. I guess you have had considerable correspondence with people down in that region @@@ regarding them. And, do you have any photos of any of them that could be used in my upcoming stories which touch lightly on such things but include material on the Wakemap mound, which some people there say IS NOT going underwater, and which others say WILL GO under water. I would assure protection of the photos, just one or two good illustrations, and return them quickly.

Another reason for inquiring about this rock salvage is my own situation at Priest Rapids. I have discussed that with you before.

The permit granted by the Federal Power Commission to the Grant County PUD for sub-surface exploratory work at the Priest Rapids Dam site included a proviso for the protection of the grave and historical artifacts of the Wanapum Indians. You will recall that I explained to you that these rocks concerned the genesis of those people. While the Indians have wanted them left on the island when and if a dam is built, I have convinced them that the important ones at least should be preserved; that certain ones they are especially interested in by removed to the shore by their home there, and that others be removed and be permitted to go up by barge etc. and preserved for all time.

We have had @@ a consultation with the Engineers, who before they did any kind of work complied with the terms of the proviso and in doing this we accomplished in one afternoon what Indians all up and down the Columbia river have and the Army Engineers have not accomplished in 10 years of wrangling. And much money was saved the exploration, since the Wanapums are very practical people.

Later there will be other consultations. Some of the core drilling will be right on this island where the artifacts are located. Some are too immense perhaps to move, some in the bed rock @@@ itself, etc. And again, we will be practical and there will be no objections or blocks of any kind put in the way of progress and development that must come along the river.



I have communicated with Dr. Gunther and Dr. Osborne and should real cultural material of a very old age be disclosed by the exploration, contact with Dr. Osborne will be made for a proper survey or look see, and again, there will be no bar from the Wanapums, even though it may involve some of their very remote ancestors.

I understand of course as many not familiar with those people, only by ~~hearsay~~ hearsay etc. that this is the home and the birthplace of the Wanapums and that when it comes to losing your final home, your last foothold on the river, the things that concern burials and your ancestors do not become property for salvage for museums etc. But we also have a deep understanding of history and the necessity of preserving it, and in these matters the Wanapums are asking the cooperation of all concerned, just as they give cooperation that is unusual for Indians.

I believe it would be well for me to have information on hand concerning removal procedure as relates to this system you mentioned to me, and whether or not it was practicable down around the Dalles.

And are long, when the barges are on the scene, it may be that your good office will be called upon to consult in this matter on the scene. This would be on the basis that in time to come there might be some type of historical marker there, and that these rocks might be a part of it, because of the historical significance of this prophet, Mowhala, at whose home the explorations are under way. There are some 80 to 100 rocks on this island. The Wanapums are interested in only a few. Those that can be moved with expediency I am sure, will be moved to shore by our request for such at the proper time and from there on they would be for distribution toantage or elsewhere, keeping in mind good public relations and keeping everyone happy. But their preservation is our first concern and our request of the exploration party would be to remove them only from the island to the shore and then only such rocks as are proper and practical to move. I have yet to discuss this matter more thoroughly with the old man, the leader of these people. I believe too that the exploration party will fence the Wanapum graveyard and take other protective measures of the scattering graves, this in conformance with their conversation with us at the dam site a week ago.

The explorations will be carried on during the winter, on the island, in the river bed and on the shore and will be concluded next May or thereabouts. It may not be possible because of weather to visit the island until early next spring, because I do not believe the barges will be on hand for another month or more.

After the legislative session and with completion of the Ahluke Slope mid-state road, a crossing selected below the dam site etc. I believe you will see the importance of P.R. in future planning. And also I believe you will appreciate the far distant approach that has been taken of this subject by the Wanapums--quite different than the situation on the Mid-Columbia?

Hope things have been going well with you. And, incidentally, hope you've heard from Joel F. about the History Conference next spring at Spokane. If not, let me know or look him up a0000dd00 next time you are there. They are getting to work on it now.

kindest of regards

Click Reinder

Now Tow Look (of the Wanapums) La Not (of the Wampums)