

Dr. Mary Avery,  
State College of Washington,  
Library

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Dear Miss Avery:

Perhaps I'll be seeing you at the Pacific Northwest History Conference--I hope so--but I've been thinking I should drop you a note and keep you posted. [Nothing like losing friends when once you've gained them, I suppose] But I don't know exactly who else I could turn to for advice and some assistance.

I'm starting to work out an itinerary for next October, shoving aside a hundred and other things that seem to be piling up on me. Caxtons are of great assistance in a lot of ways and are doing as much as I suppose any publisher of a non-vanity publication could do without the advantage of a promotion department. I determined long ago I'd have to be my own promotion department. I have a strong feeling that I'm over promoting it and that everyone I am successful in arousing will get the idea of a grandiose publication rather than the simple, human story of a plain little group of Indians.

I have completed contacts with all other stores to be included on my tour excepting the one at Pullman, and if you are in a position to advise me as to the store and person to contact there, by letter, or care to make the contact yourself, it would be appreciated.

The book, I'm informed, will be out about 30 days ahead of the publication date, Oct. 6. On that date I'll start here in Yakima and then move to Maryhill Museum for a Sunday afternoon Indian room appearance, then to Portland and Seattle and then back through Wenatchee, Ephrata, Kennewick etc. It's a tight schedule, two weeks [my one and only vacation excepting some bonus days before] so I suppose it would be about Oct. 16 I could be in Pullman, but that perhaps could be changed.

The Old Man, Puck Hyah Toot, who is the direct descendant of Smowhala has promised that he'd go with me and that entails taking an interpreter along and perhaps others. Sounds like I'd have a regular wild west show or something. Anyway I think there will be two or three, enough to drum some of the old songs and if desired, some kind of a tape recording could be made. We might offer to do that at Portland, perhaps at Reed, or perhaps at ~~Washington~~ the UW. However while I'm good friends of the professional ethnologists, they just can't seem to reconcile themselves to the fact that a mere man has such a standing with the Indians. I did however rock some of them back on their heels last spring. Some of them showed up at the root feast at Priest Rapids and had to wait outside while



[1955?]

we finished our "family" or true Wanapum ceremony. Even some of the old time Yakimas were not admitted, nor were the tribal councilmen or high Yakima officials. When we came out of the long house to march around the long house and be counted, all with our blankets pulled around us, there was the rock reef lined with young Yakimas from the reservation snapping pictures galore, and there was Now Tow Look, fifth in line, with a big red blanket and a feather fan! Where their faces ~~addx~~ red! I don't have to argue fine points of custom, tradition etc., nor do I care to. And I don't go around with a chip on my shoulder.

They are making me a buckskin jacket with the sacred Wanapum symbols on it for the "grand tour" or something like that, I suspect from what they've said. I have suggested to one of the sons, who no doubt will succeed as the "head" man upon the death of the Old Man, that we take the sacred relics of "mow hala" along with us, a carved wooden bird, a flag, bell etc. The bird is the one that goes up on the pole and has always been used that way, yet some of the top ethnos from west of the mountains, in their writings, have said that the bird custom passed out of existence long ago. The Old Man may balk at bringing these along, because they are very superstitious about them. For instance, a death in a family or something like that earlier this summer would be taken as a warning sign not to do that, that the very suggestion of so doing was offensive to the Creator.

I'm enclosing some (a sample) of an announcement that was turned out here as my contribution toward the promotion. It is to be used in a spot check of libraries etc. in about a month. Maxtons would have printed this but they are far behind on everything. They are printing up some announcement cards, showing a picture of Puck Hyah Toot and inviting persons to come "meet the Indians," etc. and get a lithograph of the four-color cover. I'll send you one of these in due time. I have a big list of persons in various cities we are going to, excepting Pullman. Here again, while I don't have to do this, I'm sending out 50 to 200 in each of the towns we go to. The book stores will benefit of course. Some of them will send out several hundred of the invitations. They are quiet dignified excepting that there's a small notation that photographs are permitted by the Indians and bring your children. (Who said Buffalo Bill shows were out of existence?)

Also, the photogs here are printing up some large size photos, 20 x 20 or larger. Some of these are the Indians, others scenes around Priest Rapids. These in quantities of three to five will be made available in advance to book stores. Some of the stores will be provided with loan materials like Indian mats, buffalo robes etc. and Wanapum artifacts --not too many of these sad to say--to go into window displays. I think Frederick and Nelson at Seattle is going to put in a downstairs display. I suppose I'll end up by incurring the wrath of all the others who turn out similar books but that's the way I think it should be done to be put over. I'd rather see it go over or create a mild ripple than die a quick death. Additionally, we've still got a fight at Priest Rapids, if the PUD doesn't get the financing through for the dams, then it will revert to the government. And you know how far McWhorter got with the government.

I forgot to mention--and this is confidential-- if construction gets under way, Monitor will be making a tape recording of the Wanapums and the rock removal. That's a coast-to-coast weekend



show. It skips all over the country, picking up a scene here and a scene there.

I've been making quite a few speeches, but hardly make reference to the book. The speech invitations come thick and fast--too thick and fast sometimes--but I keep pegging along enough not to kill my self or what little reputation I have along that line, off. Most of it concerns Fort Simcoe. Everyone is quite surprised when I drag in a reference to the book and afterwards many express their interest in such a publication.

I've seen results of some of your later research that I have read with considerable interest. Shows you are sticking to it. I suppose this summer you'll find time to get in some good licks. I want to hear more about that.

I want to take recognition, as I go along, to the "ground breaking" work of the late Mr. McWhorter with the Wanapums. Sometimes I regret that he spent so little time with them and devoted his interests and attention more to the Nez Perce.

Well, I've rambled along quite extensively to fill you in on the complete situation, and for that I hope you will pardon me. If you have any ideas or suggestions, I shall be most appreciative of them. I hesitate to suggest you show this letter to anyone interested in furthering the interests of the Wanapums (and Drummers and Dreamers) or they'd scare off, thinking talent was completely lacking. Perhaps they'd be right. But do feel free to discuss it, verbally, with anyone you think would have a suggestion. Then I'll complete my itinerary and set out on the thousand and one things yet to be done. Gosh, why did I ever get involved in something like this?

kindest regards

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