

## Wanapum Notes

Wanapums--Translated, River People [Wana, the ~~Columbia~~ River;  
pums, people or literally from the heart, the sound of the heart]

Source information, which however contains some obvious inaccuracies,  
is found, as you know in Fourteenth Annual Report, Bureau of Ethnology  
Pt. II, 1892-93, Washington, Government Printing office, commonly  
known as the Mooney [J.W.] report or The Ghost-Dance Religion and  
the Sioux Outbreak of 1890.

p. 708-- reference to "Smohalla," the dreamer prophet, subsequent  
pages, "The Beginning of Smowhalla."

p. 716--Chapter VII "Smohalla and His Doctrine," continues p. 731.

p. 735, "Tribes of the Columbia," see Palus reference to Wanapum  
merging.

p. 735--<sup>See</sup> Wanapum.

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The factual differences in the Mooney account and those known to  
be correct are rather complicated <sup>to</sup> ~~and explained~~ and of no consequence  
in these notes.

Chiefly however is the name, "Smowhala," and the difference of  
spelling with that used by Mooney. I believe he must have used  
Yakima sources considerably for his information.

I have gone over this very carefully and have tape recordings of  
the pronunciation. I have determined upon "Smowhala," which agrees  
with old men who knew him rather intimately.

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### About myself

I began my Indian studies ~~xxxxxxxxxx25xxxxxxxxxx~~ in California  
some 30 years ago, living at Visalia in the San Joaquin Valley,  
nearly the center of the land formerly occupied by the non-ward  
Yokuts.

The Yokuts consisted of approximately 50 sub-tribes, many of them extinct as of 25 years ago or perhaps longer. My sources and contacts there were the last survivors of some of the sub tribes, people who spoke a separate dialect, although a Yokut from the extreme south of his territory, below Bakersfield, could understand to an extent a Yokut from the northern part, nearly up to Stockton, roughly 200 miles apart.

My sources were old basket makers, the "last chiefs" of their tribe, old craftsmen. And my guiding hand, as an adviser, was Dr. F.W. Hodge, who has authored more books on the American Indian than any other person. He is a very old man now, in his 90s, and is director of the Southwest Museum at Huntington Park [Pasadena and Los Angeles]

It was my idea to combine my art, sculpture and writing, with preservation of Indian material.

My art studies began in Indiana, at Odenville, near Indianapolis, where as a boy I used ~~many~~ blue clay from the Hendricks county creek banks. My serious studies were continued in California, summer sessions at the Otis Art Institute at Los Angeles, now the Los Angeles County Art Institute. My instructor was the late Julia Bracken Wendt, one of this nation's top sculptors, who herself studied with Lorado Taft at the Chicago Art Institute. She wished me to come to her studio to work as her "protégé" but I obtained a job on a newspaper at Visalia /

I came to the Yakima Valley eight years ago and am city editor of The Yakima Daily Republic.

My studies in art and ethnology have continued on the basis of extensive research, notes etc. and I have developed my own research library, including not only Indian source material but "western Americana in general, having perhaps 3,000 to 4,000 bound vols., several thousand documents and pounds and pounds of notes and



typescript material. This typescript material I believe rather unique and represents a long-continuing project, copying out of old newspaper files all historial material and then filing it with interviews and field trip notes to supplement the documents and books.

For instance I have perhaps 1,500 pages on newspapers done, 2,000 on irrigation, and other files covering founding of cities, gold, cattle, horses, ferry boats, steam boats, etc. a dozen or more file drawers in all. Besides this are maps, photos, microfilm, photo negatives including glass plates etc. etc.

I knew of the Wanapums as a non-treaty remnant group of course before I ever came to Yakima ~~and~~ and have worked with them for five years.

The late L.V. McWhorter ~~was a friend of the~~ was a friend of the Wanapums, did considerable for them such as securing them a fishing right at one of their old locations through state legislation, but he was largely wrapped up with his Nez Perce research, there being remnant Nez Perces coming into this country from Colville after they had ~~gone~~ returned from the Indian country following the Nez Perce war.

Gradually the Wanapums came to look upon me as an adviser, a ~~rather~~ virtual Indian agent I guess you would say and my various intercessions for them have resulted in turning out at least 2,000 letters, considerable newspaper writing and much research.

In this connection, and to obtain recognition for these people, I have written Drummers and Dreamers of Priest Rapids which is to be published by the Caxton Printers of Caldwell Idaho [No publication date yet set]

This is the story of Smowhala the Prophet and his nephew, Puck Hyah Foot, the Last Prophet, but more than that it is the story of what is in store for ~~and~~ Indians who have to make their own way



in a strange world, against handicaps...in other words, the future of a big percentage of those now on reservations, if government controls are terminated abruptly and without careful planning to see that individual cases are attended to. It is also the story of development along the Columbia River, the big hydroelectric dams and development of the Columbia Basin, a part of which was once Wanapum territory.

The Wanapums ranged from present Vantage southward to Pasco and along both sides of the river, merging at the edges with the adjoining people such as the Kawachin or Moses' people on the north, the Palouse on the east, the numerous bands and tribes on the south and the Yakimas on the east.

Many of the Wanapums went onto the reservation in the old days, but the Smowhala band remained at Priest Rapids, the present ~~91000~~ dam site, refusing to become reservation people because their ~~ancestors~~ ancestors, because of their religion and because they would not desert their home land, refused to sign a treaty. They were not subjects of the Yakima war chiefs and refused to recognize them.

The Yakima County Commissioners, at upon petition of the Wanapums in connection with my work, passed resolution creating a grave yard of their old burial grounds on the bluffs near Priest Rapids to preserve it from vandalism, looting, etc.

Now there are eight "full blood" Wanapums left, Although ~~there are~~ the two sons of Puck Hyah Toot [also known as Johnny Buck] have married enrolled women, one enrolled with Yakimas, another with Warm Springs, and have children who have enrolled, they have refused to enroll. Puck Hyah Toot's daughter has enrolled, and while these enrolled people are regarded as relatives, they are now regarded as the Wanapum band or tribe by the old men and the few other old leaders,



I have encouraged them to retain ~~their~~ the good parts of their old culture, but work on the following lines:

I do not advise them to do anything . I merely put myself in the position of helping them do what they want. As per:

They came to me wanting eagle feathers. I thought that would be easy. Then I found eagles were protected by both state and federal law. I built up an eagle feather file, letters from senators, Game and "ild Life Dept. etc. , quoting law, excerpts from it, proclamat on making eagle the national bird, etc.

I thought they could be procured in Alaska where they are "bounty birds," but found they could not be exported, sought ~~0000~~ Congressional aid to that effect without success. Found you can get live eagles from Alaska if you have a zoo or something like that so Wanapums are looking toward the time they have their own place (and own zoo)

They have given me an Indian name, Now Tow Look. [A kind of small hawk, hovering]

Giving Indian names is fairly common, but the Wanapums have never given one to anyone but me. This is because they do it in the proper old way. The others just give a name, ~~a00~~ any kind of a name. They had to figure out some name covering a long-dead Wanapum that had my characteristics. They can't give a Yakima name or Umatilla, Walla Walla name to me, or even a name outside of their family without throwing themselves open, as was the old custom, to paying the descendants of that family for the name. That is why true names stay in families excepting in very ~~000~~ rare cases.

Many whites, who have worked with Indians, like rodeo heads etc. have got Indian names, not formal ones, but just a general designation to please the individual, in other words, a name without tradition or significance.

I have sculptured the old man and some of the other old Indians, since knowledge of these people had led me into acquaintanceship with many others, like Tommy Thompson, but I am making no particular reference to sculpture at this time as my idea is to make heads of many of the last of their races.

I have been invited to show at Maryhill Museum of Fine Arts and will, eventually, when I have a proper amount of heads, etc. But this is a long, slow process.

The Old Man agreed to tell me the story of his people, the Dreamer religion and about Mowhala so that these things could be preserved. He said that this his death most of this information would perish, and that was the belief held by the other Wanapum old men. So, over a period of years we went to work preserving it.

~~Understandable as it is, it is not~~

And to end the Indian belief that the white man makes a fortune from the Indian, and to possibly create a nest-egg for purchase of government land in the old home site of these people, the old man was made a one-third partner in Drummers and Dreamers, realizing as I explained to him that the returns from such a book would be few and far between.

This matter has not become a welfare matter, since we do not approach things on that basis, even with the other Indians. However there is room for much on that score, --kids at Christmas time who need toys etc. I try to enlist aid of groups for this kind of Christmas work, but it is slow and few want to take hold of it. There is a big need all over the reservation and down on the Columbia around Celilo for that. There in Oregon Mrs. Martha Ferguson McKeown of Hood River, (MacMillan Author) has done a good work and organized "Bundles for Celilo" with aid of the Daughters of the American "evolution of Oregon.



I can't ~~aford~~ afford to do much of that, but have hopes of getting it organized a little better not ~~only~~ for the Wanapums but for the needy families all over the reservation, at Christmas time. You can't approach this like charity. But there are many organizations who send things overseas that could do lots more right close to home.

The contacts and work with the Wanapums have been too numerous but a few excerpts from letters might give you the feeling of the work:

locate old burial ground on Atomic Energy Commission holdings near White Bluffs and other areas in the Atomic Project. This was arranged through AEC who took old men into areas, so they could point out grave places that in turn would not be destroyed by AEC project development, road construction, etc.

Assisting Bureau of Indian Affairs, Portland Regional Office in locating and determining graveyard locations along the river.

Written stories pointing out that graveyards are "protected by law" [all along the river] and not subject to looting by rock hounds, etc.

Communicated, as result of Wanapum Council with <sup>Priest Rapids</sup> Federal Power Commission pointing out that is home of the people, their graveyard is there, etc. and that while they will not oppose construction of dam, they wish their graveyard protected, and wish compensating home in nearby territory if and when dam is constructed. G.."should an application for license be filed you will be advised, and at that time you may recommend special conditions for inclusion in the license for the protection of the Indians,.... Leon M. Fuquay, secretary Federal Power Commission..."

"...both the golden eagle and the bald eagle are protected by federal and state law in the state of Washington... Dan C. Barnett, District Game Biologist, Dept of Game, Seattle, March 18, 1952."

<sup>Priest Rapids</sup>  
"Now To-look... I am very happy to know that you are looking up old records about what happened in the past about Smowhala.. We may move out before next Sunday. We haven't taken down our long house



where we held our feast, we'll do that one of these days. I am not well but I try to help. I do just a little of this and that.. I am losing one suitcase of things in Moxee, so I'm rather worried about it. All the pictures that you gave me, one blanket and one beaded outfit. This is all, from Puck Hyah Foot, answer me to Moxee " [suitcase was later found, had been stored in another place.]

"....The Wanapums are still gathered here, mourning over the loss of our dear brother. I am always worried over our problem here...

"I have noticed just some of the roots are coming out but I can't say when or whether we'll have our usual root feast, but I'll let you know soon or either I can come to see you personal. We can't decide yet since the death. ... I hope to hear from you soon again..."

"...received your letter but never answered cause I thought you would be over here before the hope harvest was over, now its over and I got hurt. Well, one night I came back one time from Moxee (the day of harvest was over) and got off the car and tripped over something and hit myself on an end of a cement and cut myself on the right side of my head and was unconscious and they, my sons, took me to the doctor and he put some stiches in for me. It hurts pretty bad and I can't go any place so I stay here in Moxee. You know lots of people get mad at me for talking to you but of course that's my business. My two sons and I are going to spend the winter at home on the Columbia river again so I'll still expecting letters from you and I'll write often to let you know how we are. Answer soon..."

" Benton City, June 13, 1952.. I will move to Yakima for cherie pickin. We been fishing it all out now so be seeing you pretty soon. I go Wednesday..."



"... they are accusing me of selling out to you because you are a white man, can't trust all whites. A few of us are going to gather some place in near future. When we decide I'll let you know. ...I think it because they just don't try to understand..."

"... just got back from Celilo falls today.. " man was sick and wanted someone to go and sing with them.... the last night they danced and I stayed up all night and all day ...on the way back I sure was sleepy. ..that Indian man is all right noa (sic)...right now she dosen't have the hide ready (to make moccasins) but will make it soon as she works on the hide..."

"...they treat me good and I am well taken care of. I am staying at my relatives home here in Celilo..."

And, from another Indian, a reservat on man:

"My friend. I wish to ask you a favor. There are various different problems confronting me and got me to thinking and I wish to borrow your memoirs of the 1855 Treaty as between the understanding of the few of us, and it will stay within my custody until I am through with it."

And so, on and on, about nothing in particular but things that make up the Indian way of life: get some toys , for which they will pay when they come to town , because they come in at night and the stores will be closed...get a 00 window glazed that someone shot out of their house--just Sunday prowlers up and down the river shooting at old shacks...come to a feast...and an occasional telephone message... one of them has died, come to his funeral.

There was no doctor's certificate, no undertaker...just like that. He was taken out on the bluff overlooking Priest Rapids and buried in the old cemetery... a stickler for the sheriff and a stickler for the coroner..."what shall we do?" they asked.



..."just make a record of the death on your day report," I said,"just so there is arecord."

Then just trips in to see me and little requests, but to them big ones... write a ~~xxxxx~~ letter explaining who they are, so that they are not bothered when they go fishing at their old place. The ~~tax~~ state washed all the Indian fishing laws off with one fell swoop without serving notice to anyone several years ago...the were all killed by number, but they are very good tothese people, letting them continue tofish in their old accustomed place because they do not take the fish and sell them, catching them only for their winter food.

Trips too to the Fish Hatchery where contraband deer and elk have been seized from hunters...thekind of stuff they give out to the jails, hospitals etc. and there an occasional quarter of deer or elk , given for one of their feasts because old time foods, fish, deer or elk and roots must be used at the feasts.

Then , just visiting at their camp where they spend the summer working...the old man has worked over 50 years for one man and has a little easier kind of work to do in the hops as his age increases... sitting around the ~~camp~~ camp outside at night while they tell stories of the old days, "peelyi or "oyote stories...many of them like jokes...the coming of fall and potato digging and their last field work, having sacks of potatoes to carry them through the long winter at Priest Rapids in their old mat house (a mat house that is the last on the Columbia River and will be going one of these days, but that's another story for later use of a free lance friend who has been also a friend of the "anapums)

Then digging in at Priest Rapids and more letter writing. The mail is sent via Beverly and it is carried by the "track walker" who makes a daily trip on a little motor car to inspect the camp. It always seems tobe delivered. And sometimes letters come back,



showing signs of being exposed to rain or snow.

Spring again and preparations for the root feast, ~~the~~ the first of the long succession of feasts, because the camas matures early along their section of the river. The feasts are few and far between now--there was none at all this year, and when feasts are held relatives by marriage have to come in and help as the drummers. And so life goes on, season after season in Smowhala's old village along Priest Rapids, given that name in 1811 by the explorer, Thompson. They live in fear, always, that the time is growing near when there will be a dam on their village site, the last place they have had to turn to along the stretch of over 80 miles of Columbia River, now that the ~~Atomic~~ Atomic Energy hems them in on one side and the Yakima Firing Center almost hems them in on the other.

When the center first started to expand the old man wanted to visit the officer there and tell them about the graveyard so it would not be damaged and I believe the Army has it marked on their maps.

There's not an awful lot to tell, just month after ~~month~~ month of waiting and writing letters to proper sources, which always find sympathetic ears but no action.

And that was one of the reasons ~~for~~ the old man wanted the book, ~~edited~~ Drummers and Dreamers of Priest Rapids written. He has told me things that the Wanapums in years past would never tell anyone and he has told them so they can be written for people in proper places to know. There's nothing sensational or all revealing, just a story of a people.



Wanapum Indians, also called, Priest Rapids Band.  
Research by Click Relander, Yakima.

L.V. McWhorter collection in Washington State College, Pullman.

U.S. Department of Interior letter to McWhorter:  
government funds available year to year, under authorized action 5  
of act of June 18, 1934 (48 St.989). No land available for  
many and varient remnants of unorganized bands in Washington.

Letter from John Collier, Commissioner of Indian affairs,  
to McWhorter, April, 1940. There were no Wanapums.

Wanapum census as listed by McWhorter, April 4, 1940  
(McWhorter collection, Washington State College, Pullman.)  
Thirty six people and two head men.

Letter, 1937 to McWhorter: Appealed for aid against order, Sept.  
28, 1937, to E.E. Bennett of Kennewick against and prohibiting  
drying and saving salmon for winter use.

Rothrock (Spokane) map, 1935: Shows Figure 2 ranch across  
river, Borden Spring, gulch deed, state lease, trail road, 8 miles  
to Cold Creek alfalfa fields.

"Indianvillage located in fractional portions of Sections 21  
and 28, not far from mouth of Sourdough Canyon, owned by myself,  
(Rothrock) and associates. We have five or six miles of river  
frontage along Priest Rapids. F.M. Rothrock, March 28, 1940."

Letter from F.M. Rothrock, January 20, 1940: Six sections,  
five sections of state land. My price \$2.50 per acre, concluded  
to make cash price \$2 per acre if made in 90 days."



Letter to McWhorter from Homer L. Morrison, U.S. Department of Interior, superintendent of Indian education, 1940:

"I am reasonably certain nothing will be done."

Letter from M.A. Johnson, superintendent of Yakima Indian Agency to McWhorter: "Happy to help Johnny Duck get located in berry picking area of Mt. Adams."

McWhorter notes in 30's..."Sixty Indians, mostly women and children; three blind, one on crutches, one hunchback crippled man.

F.M. Rothrock, Union Stockyards Spokane, January 19, 1940, letter relative to land near Borden Springs.

Note, 1942: Denied elk meat.

Letter, February 5, 1943: U.S. Department of Interior. "No funds available..to many landless Indians."

Population-<sup>Estimated</sup> by Mooney (1928) at 5,400 in 1780. In 1805 Lewis and Clark gave 1,600. In 1854 they were said to number 500. <sup>The</sup> census of 1910 returned 82.

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Sinkakaius. Meaning "between people."

Connections-The Sinkakaius belonged to the interior division of the Salishan linguistic stock and were composed largely of people from the Tukoratum Band of Sinkaietk and the Moses Columbia people.

Location-Between Columbia River and the Grand Coulee in the latitude of Waterville.

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Columbia or Sinkiuse-Columbia. <sup>So</sup> called because of their former prominent association with Columbia River where some of the most important bands had their homes.

...The Sinkiuse-Columbia lived on the east side of Columbia River from Fort Okanogan to the neighborhood of Point Eaton. Later a reservation was created for them known as Columbia Reservation. In 1870 Winans placed them "on the east and south side of the Columbia River from Grand Coulee down to Priest's Rapids. They are now under the jurisdiction of the Colville Agency and one band, the Moses-Columbia band, is in the southern part of Colville Reservation.

Population-Estimated by Mooney (1928) to have numbered 800 in 1780, but were probably considerably more numerous as Teit(1927) considers this tribe and the Pisquow together must have totaled something like 10,000 before the smallpox reached them. In 1905, 355 were reported; in 1908 299 and in 1909 perhaps including some others, 540 were returned. <sup>The</sup> census of 1910 gave 52.

Connections-They belonged to the inland division of the Salishan linguistic stock, their nearest relatives being the Wenatchee and Methow.