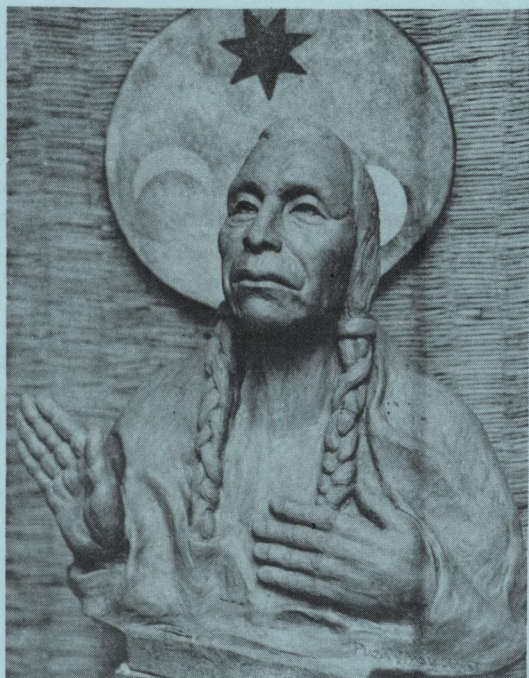


# PRIEST RAPIDS DEVELOPMENT

STORY OF THE WANAPUMS



*Under Construction by*  
**PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT  
OF GRANT COUNTY**  
EPHRATA, WASH.

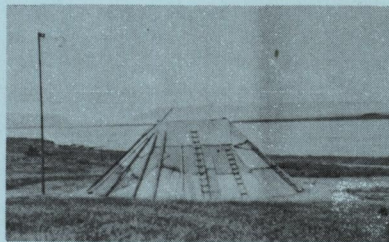


## THE WANAPUM INDIANS

For untold centuries the Wanapums, or River People, lived along the shores of the Columbia River, ranging from Pasco to Vantage, with one of their main winter camps at Priest Rapids.

The Indian legends tell of a time when "the air was filled with fire and ashes." Another relates how water overran the land, and still another tells how "the wind came with talons that tore the earth and crushed the forgetful ones."

And so, for thousands of years, the Wanapums, a happy and contented people, lived along the Columbia. During the summer months they ranged as far north as Soap Lake to gather Skolkol, the bulb root that grows in that area.



MAT HOUSE

In the winter months the Wanapums lived in mat houses built of tules. As late as 1952 a few Wanapums still wintered at Priest Rapids in these primitive homes. Some of the mat coverings have been preserved and are used in erecting shelters for ceremonial occasions.

At the time of the Lewis and Clark Expedition there were about 2500 Wanapums. This number has decreased until today only four members of the band survive - Frank Buck, Rex Buck, Harry Wyena and Bobby Tomanawash. All four are employed on the Priest Rapids Project by the Public Utility District of Grant County. Three of them live on the west side of the river in houses provided for them by the District.

The Wanapums are unique among native peoples in that they never fought the whites - so never signed a treaty.

The Grant County Public Utility District, which is building the Priest Rapids and Wanapum dams, recognized the Wanapums' deep-seated attachment for their river home and assisted them in making a transition from the old to a new era along the river. In addition to furnishing homes and employment for the Indians, the District fenced the burial grounds of the Wanapums and set aside another location for their Long House which is used for religious ceremonials.

Just upstream from the Priest Rapids Dam is Whale Island, which is covered by the waters of the reservoir. On this island are more than 125 rock carvings and paintings depicting hunters, bear paws, deer, sunbursts, circles and many other conventionalized designs.

The District employed the Wanapums to locate these pictures which were interspersed among the thousands of boulders on the island. The pictures were marked on a map, numbered, and photographed so that a record of the past could be preserved. Also, the Wanapums were employed to select and move a representative number of the rock carvings off the island. In conformance with the wishes of the Wanapums' leader, the late Puck Hyah Toot, some of the rocks were taken to the burial ground and set in concrete to protect them from vandalism. Others are now in storage and probably will be exhibited in a permanent museum at a later date so that they can become a permanent part of the history of the river.

Archeologists also have been employed by the District to explore the ancient campsites in the reservoir area. Their findings will help to show as much as possible, at this late date, how and where early man lived along the river.

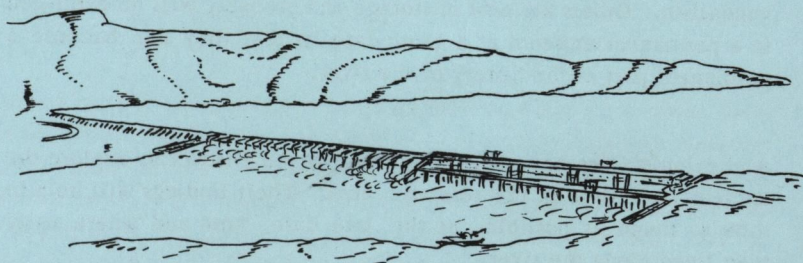


The Wanapums were very fair in their attitude toward the building of the dam. They said that while they regretted having to move their ancient meeting place they realized that progress was inevitable, and they would not attempt in any way to halt construction.

In appreciation of the attitude of the Indians and their leader, Puck Hyah Toot, the upper dam has been named Wanapum.



The Grant County Public Utility District is indebted to Click Relander, author of *DRUMMERS AND DREAMERS*, published by The Caxton Printers, Ltd., Caldwell, Idaho, for much of the information in this booklet.  
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PRIEST RAPIDS HYDROELECTRIC DEVELOPMENT