

GREAT
THE SALMON FISHERIES ~~OF THE YAKIMAS~~

~~Primitive Fisheries~~ Along the Columbia River

In the prehistoric past the Columbia River in the vicinity of the Narrows (Dalles) and Great Falls (Celilo Falls) supported many tribes ^{and bands} ~~of Indians~~ whose villages ^{occupied} ~~dotted~~ both the ~~north and south~~ banks of the river. Here, for countless years before white man brought pestilence and civilization ~~to the~~ ~~region~~, the healthy and stalwart Indians of these tribes lived in peaceful surroundings and ^{aboriginal} ~~luxury~~. The salmon that migrated up the river in the spring, summer and fall abounded in untold numbers. ^{Removed} ~~The meadows back from the river,~~ ~~banks~~ generously supplied edible roots ~~of various kinds~~ ^{and farther back} in the wooded areas the berries were always available in the late ^{cooling days of} summer and fall. There are no legends in the tribal lore ~~of~~ ^{to} ~~these Indians~~ relating the ~~occurrence of~~ pestilence, famine and want along the river.

The breaking of the river's course into narrow channels by the protruding rocks and small islands, and the rugged falls at the head of the Narrows, ³ ~~provided an~~ ideal location for ~~the~~

* The Pacific salmon spend part of their lives in the streams and part in the ocean where they make over 95 per cent of their entire growth. The eggs are deposited in ~~the~~ gravel beds of the streams in the late summer and fall and hatch ~~out in~~ the following spring. The young salmon remain in the fresh waters from one to two years and then migrate to the ocean at which time they range from one and one-half to four inches in length. While in the ocean the salmon grow ~~very~~ rapidly and, after a two to four-year sojourn ~~there~~, they return as adults to the streams of their origin to spawn and die. The chinook and blue back salmon are the two most abundant species in the Columbia River. The chinooks are the monarchs of the Pacific salmon and weigh from 20 to 75 pounds when mature. The blue backs, ~~are~~ the smallest, ~~of the species~~ and seldom attain a greater weight than 5 pounds.

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catching ~~of the~~ salmon. Primitive spears and grab hooks were used by some fishermen but most ~~of the fishing was done with large dip nets~~ ^{used employed} ~~that were~~ ^{that were} (2 to 5 feet in diameter, attached to poles ~~ranging from 10 to 25 feet in length~~ ^{8 or 9 x}). These nets were fished by moving them through or anchoring them just below the surface in the fast, ~~and~~ boiling-white waters, ^{and the} ~~The~~ salmon were caught in the swift, narrow channels as they darted upstream. They were also ~~caught~~ ^{ensnared} in the boiling churning waters below the falls as they ~~charged~~ ^{struggled} ~~through them~~ ^{upstream} in attempts to jump the falls. Others were caught as they dropped back from the ~~face~~ ^{force} of the falls ~~is~~ ^{after} unsuccessful ~~jumps~~ ^{leaps x} to surmount them. The fishermen ~~worked~~ ^{stood} these nets from projecting ~~rocks and~~ ^{on slippery} ledges along the narrow channels and at the falls, while working the nets.

Fishing from such precarious positions with a hand operated dip net of ~~great~~ ^{such size} proportions required great skill and prowess. ~~The~~ ^{Impounding} and landing ~~of~~ a 30 to 50 and at times 70 pound writhing ~~and fighting~~ salmon was no task for a weakling. Fishing in these waters was very productive ~~for~~ ^{because} when the ~~salmon were~~ ^{runs were} running in great numbers it was a poor fisherman who could not ~~land~~ ^{secure} from (2 to 3) ton of fish in a day. ^{more} The skillful fishermen contributed most of their catches to the members of their tribes and in return received great honors for their daring and achievements. The established fishing locations ~~in the channels and at the falls~~ were indisputably the property of ~~the various tribes~~ ^{those} who pioneered them, ^{and} ~~The~~ property rights ~~to these fishing locations~~ were jealously guarded by the tribes and retained ~~within~~ them from generation to generation. This, however, did not prevent their use by visiting Indians or other tribes ^{or bands} in the area.

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In fact, ~~the tribes~~ along the north banks ~~of the river~~ permitted ~~residents~~ ~~those~~ along the south banks to use their fishing locations and vice versa. This grew out of the seasonal change in the availability of the fishing places from one side of the river to the other due to the decreasing flow in the ~~river~~ ^{stream} from spring to fall. Furthermore, these tribes mingled ~~together~~ in a peaceful co-existence and frequent intermarriage among them cemented ~~this~~ friendly ~~communication~~ ^{connections}.

The salmon meant more ~~to the Indians~~ than just a source of food. They were looked upon as a gift from the Divine Maker, ~~is a~~ token of ^H ~~his~~ love for the Indian people. ~~The~~ ^{for} ~~salmon were~~ ^{were a} sacred food, ~~second~~ ^{secondary} only to the life-giving waters, in the "Washeat" religion of the ~~tribes along the river~~ ^{RIVER}. The most colorful and spiritual celebration of the year was the "Feast of the Salmon" ~~(Cahwit)~~ held in the spring when these noble fish made their first appearance in the river. The "Washeat" religion is known ^{to} ~~in~~ white ~~men's~~ ^{men} ~~language~~ as the Pom Pom religion. It is still ~~the religion of~~ ^{followed by} many Indian families who revere the salmon in their worship as did their ancestors in ~~the primitive days of the past~~ ^{long ago}. The "Feast of the Salmon" is likewise still celebrated each year at the Falls. ^{where it is called "Cahwit."}

~~The Great Fishing and Trading Center~~

^{food fish}

The ~~salmon~~ were so abundant at this spot ~~on the river~~ that ~~the resident~~ ^{sedentary} tribes not only preserved large ~~numbers of them~~ ^{quantities} for their own use but tons of them for trade with the tribes from ~~far~~ distant places. The ~~salmon~~ ^{fish} were dried and then pounded into a fine meal, commonly known as pemmican. This was stored in grass

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baskets lined with fish skins, ^{each basket containing} which contained from 50 to 100 pounds of the meal. Some of the pemmican ^{was mixed with} ~~had~~ ground roots and berries ^{and} ~~added to it~~ and formed a very delectable ~~as well as~~ nutritious food. When Lewis and Clark arrived at the Narrows and Great Falls ^{people} they found the ~~Indian tribes~~ there dealing in a commerce of barter and trade of extensive proportions. Trading was carried on at both the Narrows and Great Falls. ^{S (A SHORT GRASS)} The powerful Wasco ~~Indian tribe~~ controlled the trading on the south side of the Narrows at a location near ~~the present city of The~~ Dalles, Oregon. On the north side of the Narrows the Wishram ^S ~~Indians~~ owned one of the largest trading centers ^S ~~in the area~~. The Wyam ^S ~~Indians~~ on the south banks at the Great Falls carried on trade with the visiting tribes and were known for their religious and recreational activities. The Skin-pah ^S or Skein Indians occupied a large village on the north ^{shore} ~~banks of the river~~ just below the Great Falls. Here, active trade took place with ~~the Indian~~ tribes from the north country. While at these great gathering places the ^{visitors} ~~visiting Indians~~ took part in religious celebrations, war dances and the spectacular "hand ["] ~~games~~" or "bone ["] ~~game~~" which provided ~~for~~ large scale recreation ["] ~~among~~ ~~the tribes~~.

^{exchange}
The articles of ~~trade at these marts~~ consisted of deer and buffalo skins, furs of many kinds, various articles of clothing, feathers, shells and trinkets, dried deer and buffalo meat, pemmican and slaves and horses. The Indian tribes to the east and north as well as those from the south and west traveled great distances to this ^{mart} ~~trading center~~ for the purpose of trade in fish and other articles not available to them locally. Trading was

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carried on mostly in the late summer and fall. ~~The securing of~~ ^{visitors} food for the ~~visiting Indians~~ was no problem at such times. ~~The~~ Salmon were abundant in the river, and roots and berries were available on the hills. The resident tribes permitted the visitors to use their fishing places and also provided them with gear ~~to~~ ~~catch the salmon.~~ At no time, however, did the visiting Indians ever assume any property rights in the fisheries; ~~those belonged~~ exclusively to the resident tribes. (Faint signature)

People

The ~~Indian tribes~~ from the eastern country who regularly visited this great fishing and trading center were the Nez Perce, Walla Walla, Cayuse and Umatilla tribes. [Alexander Ross in relating the adventures of the early white settlers in Oregon from 1810 to 1813 made the following statement: "...the main camp of the Indians is situated at the head of the Narrows, and may contain during the salmon season, 3,000 souls, or more; but the constant inhabitants of the place do not exceed 100 persons, and are called the ~~Wy-am-pams~~ ^{Wy-am-pams;} the rest are all foreigners from different tribes throughout the country, who resort hither, not for the purpose of catching salmon, but chiefly for gambling and speculation; for trade and traffic,..."

The Yakimas Share in the Great Fishery

Those

The ~~Indian tribes~~ to the north who lived in the Yakima river valley and who were collectively known as the Yakimas also took part in this great fishery at ~~The~~ Dalles and Falls. They were related to the tribes at the falls through intermarriage and participated in their religious celebrations and recreational

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activities. They made a pilgrimage to the Falls each spring to celebrate the "Feast of the Salmon" with the ^{river dwellers.} ~~resident tribes there.~~ George Gibbs in his report on the Indians of the Washington Territory in 1852 made reference to the Yakimas fishing at The Dalles. ^{le} ~~Gibbs states:~~ "Besides the fisheries at The Dalles, the Yakimas have others in their river, up which the salmon run without interruption far into the mountains."

In the Yakima Treaty of June 9, 1855 the United States included the Yakimas with (13) other tribes and collectively called them the Yakima Nation. All the tribes along the north bank of the Columbia River in the vicinity of The Dalles and Celilo Falls were included in the Yakima Treaty. ~~The names of these tribes and the conditions of the Treaty are given in the first pages of this booklet.~~ All these tribes composing the Yakima Nation are commonly referred to at the present time as the Yakima Tribe.

~~United States Treaties with the Indians~~ (85) stet

June 25,

In the same year, ~~1855~~, the United States ~~made a treaty with the 14 tribes composing the Yakima Nation,~~ it also made a treaty with the ~~Indian~~ tribes along the south banks of the Columbia river in the vicinity of The Dalles and Celilo Falls and collectively referred to them ^{as the tribes and bands of middle Oregon.} ~~as the Warm Springs Indians.~~ In these treaties ~~of~~ ~~1855~~ the United States guaranteed the Indians the right to fish at their usual and accustomed fishing places along the Columbia river. The language of the Yakima Treaty is as follows:

6 Pt. B.F. { "The exclusive right of taking fish in all the streams, where running through or bordering said reservation, is further secured to said confederated Indians, as also the right of taking fish at all usual and accustomed fishing

6 Pt. 2
places, in common with the citizens of the territory and of erecting temporary buildings for curing them; together with the privilege of hunting, gathering roots and berries, and pasturing their horses and cattle upon open and unclaimed land."

Although the United States guaranteed the Indian tribes at The Dalles and Celilo Falls the right to continue to fish there, they were expected to move ~~their residence~~ to the reservations set aside for them in the interior of the country. Here, the United States endeavored to assist ~~the Indians~~ ^{them} in changing from a life of hunting and fishing to one of farming and stock raising with the hope that they would become self-supporting and follow white man's ways of living.

As might be expected, many ~~of the Indians~~ from these river ~~tribes~~ moved to the reservations, but some remained because tradition was too strong to tear them away from their native haunts. Those who moved to the reservations eventually tired of the restrictions and arduous tasks imposed upon them by their white guardians. Few of the economic and social benefits promised them ever materialized. Furthermore, ~~white man's~~ religion, regardless of creed, was forced upon them with punitive measures. Their long hair was ordered cut by an Act of Congress with the hope that it would turn them away from their native worship. The leaders of their religious gatherings were often imprisoned and hobbled with ball and chain. While teaching the Ten Commandments of the Bible, their white guardians ~~robbed~~ ^{dispossessed} them of their lands and ~~the~~ ^g government ~~materials~~ ^{goods} sent to the reservations for their use. The Indian is by nature a realist and expects actions to agree with teachings.

It is no wonder that many ~~of the Indians~~ slipped away from the reservations and returned to their native haunts along the river.

~~Settlers Challenge the Indian's Rights to their Fisheries~~ ^{the} 8B

Spot

Settlement ~~by the white man~~ took place very rapidly along the Oregon banks of the river in the vicinity of ~~The Dalles~~, ^{This creating} ~~created~~ an ever-increasing conflict between the Warm Springs Indians ^(the Tribes of Middle Oregon) who returned to the river to fish, and the white settlers. The lands adjacent to the Indian's fishing locations were deeded to the settlers. This made it necessary for the Indians to trespass on them in order to get to their fisheries. ^{They} ~~The Indians~~ also set up their camps and drying sheds on these lands. Since many ~~Indians~~ brought their horses with them, these likewise were imposed upon the pastures of the settlers. ^{This} ~~The Indians~~ unwittingly created a nuisance ^{that} and the settlers refused to tolerate ~~them~~. Furthermore, the settlers claimed exclusive right to the fishing locations ^{adjoining} ~~adjacent~~ to their lands and ^{commenced} ~~began~~ to use them to catch salmon for commercial purposes. ^{Protested} ~~A protest was made by the settlers to the~~ government ^{that the} ~~on the trespassing of the Warm Springs Indians.~~ ^{were trespassing.} To relieve the situation the United States made another treaty with the Warm Springs Indians in 1865 known as the Huntington Treaty. This treaty forced the Warm Springs Indians to sell their inherited fishing sites at ~~The Dalles~~ and Celilo Falls to the United States and remain on the reservation. For this transaction, the Indians received 3,500 ~~dollars~~. The Huntington ~~Treaty~~, then, left the Yakimas as the only Indians retaining rights to these

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fishing places ~~along the river since they had formerly shared them~~
with the Warm Springs.

The Yakimas likewise had their troubles with the white settlers along the Washington banks of the river. The first large scale ~~conflict~~ ^{Controversy} with the settlers came at their Tum Water fishery ~~at The Dalles~~. O. D. Taylor having secured deeds to the lands embracing this ~~fishery~~ ^{location} proceeded to prevent the Indians from crossing these lands and maintaining their camps on them ~~at the fishery~~. The Yakimas appealed to the United States to protect their rights ~~to this fishery~~ as promised ~~them~~ in their Treaty of 1855. In 1886 the United States on behalf of the Yakima tribe instituted action in the Territorial courts of Washington against ~~O. D.~~ Taylor to enjoin him from preventing the ~~Yakima~~ ^S Indians access to their Tum Water fishery. The Supreme Court of the State of Washington in the following year ordered an injunction issued against Taylor restraining him from further ~~interference~~ ^{interfering} with the Yakimas ~~use~~ of this fishery.

In 1905 the Yakimas were again denied access to their fisheries along the ~~banks of the Columbia river~~ at ~~The Dalles~~. Lineas and Audubon Winans operated a fish wheel at this location and had acquired the land ~~adjacent to~~ ^{adjoining} it from the ~~United States~~ ^{Government} by patent. In order to ~~make~~ ^{gain} exclusive use of this fishery which they claimed they were lawfully entitled to, they prevented the Yakimas from crossing their land. The Yakimas applied to the U. S. District Court for an injunction against ~~Winans~~ ^{the}. The ~~Court~~ refused the injunction and the case was taken to the Circuit Court of Appeals which upheld the action of the lower court. The Yakimas then appealed to the United States for the protection of ~~their Treaty~~ ^{under the} fishing rights. The United States on behalf of the Yakimas took

United States That court
their case to the Supreme Court ~~of the Country~~. The U. S. Supreme Court reversed the action of the lower courts and enjoined the Winans from further interfering with the Yakimas' use of this fishery. Justice McKenna in writing ^{an} the opinion ~~of the court~~ stated:

6 PT B.F. IND
"At the time the treaty was made the fishing places were part of the Indian country, subject to the occupancy of the Indians, with all the rights such occupancy gave. The right to resort to the fishing places in controversy was part of the larger rights possessed by the Indians, upon the exercise of which there was not a shadow of impediment, and which were not much less necessary to the existence of the Indians than the atmosphere they breathed. New conditions came into existence, to which those rights had to be accommodated."

In 1916 the Seufert Bros., who operated a cannery at The Dalles on the Oregon side of the river, prevented the Yakimas from using the Wah-sucks or Lone Tree fishery adjacent to their property. The Yakimas claimed this location as one of their usual and accustomed fishing sites. The Seufert Bros. maintained that since this site was on the Oregon side of the river, the Yakimas had no right to it. ⁵ ~~and~~ The United States on behalf of the Yakimas instituted action in the District Court of Oregon against the Seufert Bros. ~~for interfering with the Yakimas' use of the Wah-sucks fishery.~~ The District Court decided in favor of the Yakimas. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States ^{and} In 1919 the Supreme Court upheld the decision of the District Court and stated the following opinion:

6 PT B.F. IND
"The district court found, on what was sufficient evidence, that the Indians living on each side of the river, ever since the treaty was negotiated, had been accustomed to cross to the other side to fish . . . The record also shows . . . that the Yakima Indians were accustomed to resort habitually to the locations

described in the decree for the purposes of fishing at the time the treaty was entered into, and that they continued to do so to the time of the taking of the evidence in the case, HOW the Indians understood this proviso we are considering cannot be doubtful. During all the years since the treaty was signed they have been accustomed habitually to resort for fishing to the places to which the decree of the lower court applies This shows clearly that their understanding of the treaty was that they had the right to resort to these fishing grounds . . . and this is the extent of the right that is secured to them by the decree we are asked to revise. To restrain the Yakima Indians to fishing on the north side and shore of the river would greatly restrict the comprehensive language of the treaty, . . . and would substitute for the natural meaning of the expression used - - for the meaning which it is proved the Indians, for more than fifty years derived from it -- the artificial meaning which might be given to it by the law and by lawyers."

The right of the Yakimas to fish at Celilo Falls on the Oregon side of the Columbia river was ^{also} contested in the Brookfield Fisheries case in 1936. The courts of the State of Oregon decided in favor of the Yakimas in this case. Thus the Treaty rights of the Yakima Indians to their aboriginal fisheries at ~~The~~ Dalles and Celilo Falls have been successfully defended through the years by the Federal and State courts. ~~The~~ Yakimas have also continuously exercised these rights to their fisheries and today are the dominant tribe on the fishing grounds. In 1951 the Yakimas formed 63 per cent of all the Indians fishing in the area. In the same year 78 per cent of all the fish, in pounds, sold to ~~the~~ commercial buyers in the area were caught by the Yakimas.

~~White Man's Progress Destroys the Great Fisheries.~~

From 1847 to the early 1900's there was an ever-increasing march of white men with their families to the great Northwest. The broad valleys of the Columbia river and its tributaries were

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[The Yakima^s ~~Indians~~ were fortunate in having tribal fishing locations at ~~The~~ Dalles and Celilo Falls, for here they could still catch the salmon in large numbers. It was a different story for the Indians in the eastern part of the region. When the salmon ~~population~~ in their local streams became depleted they were forced to seek new fishing locations where they could catch ~~the~~ salmon in sufficient numbers to supply their needs. The only places where the salmon could still be caught in large numbers were at ~~The~~ Dalles and Celilo Falls. Therefore, it was necessary for them to travel each summer to Celilo Falls in order to secure their winter's supply of fish. The Yakima Indians at the Falls became hosts to the visiting Indians and shared their tribal fishing locations with them. In fact, within recent years, Celilo Falls has become a Mecca for the Indians throughout the Northwest. It is the last place on the Columbia river where they can still catch salmon in large numbers with their primitive type of fishing gear.

This once great aboriginal fishing and trading center of the Indians, ~~will~~, like many other ancient landmarks, ^{will} soon be destroyed by white man's progress. In the fall of 1956 a large power and navigation dam which is being constructed by the (U.) (S.) Corps of ~~Army~~ Engineers near the city of The Dalles, Oregon, will be completed. The filling of the pool above this dam during the following winter and spring will completely inundate the Dalles, Celilo Falls and the ancient fishing places there. To be sure, the United States will compensate the Yakimas with American dollars for the loss of this great fishery which has been their inheritance through the ages. (A figure of \$15,019,640 was settled upon). [No amount of money, however, will adequately compensate

soon populated with industrious settlers who turned them into productive agricultural areas. In the valleys east of the Cascade mountains, where rainfall is sparse, the lands were watered through irrigation from the abundant flows in the streams. The use of the streams for this purpose became so extensive that by the turn of the century many ~~of them~~ were completely dried up in the late summer and fall. ^(*) This spelled destruction to the runs of salmon that originally populated them. # The salmon populations of ~~the States of Washington, Oregon and Idaho, through their use for~~ ^{were critically depleted} ~~irrigation, had their salmon populations critically depleted.~~ ^{through} This was especially true of the Yakima river. Large dams for impounding irrigation waters spanned this river at strategic points. These ~~always~~ impeded and at times completely blocked the upstream migration of the salmon. Furthermore, the young salmon moving downstream on their way to the ocean, were led into the irrigation canals and thence into the small ditches in the fields. With the cessation of irrigation in the fall, the young salmon in the canals and ditches had no means of escape and perished by the millions. The salmon runs in the Yakima river, around which the Indians had so closely woven their lives for untold ages, rapidly declined and by 1925 were only a shadow of their original abundance. The many ~~Indian~~ fishing villages originally nestled along the banks of the river were gradually erased from the landscape and became memories of the past.

6 p. t. (*) The Federal Bureau of Reclamation originated in the U. S. Reclamation Act of June 18, 1902. This made Federal assistance possible to the rapidly increasing irrigation developments in the West.

them for the loss they will sustain. Celilo Falls means more to the Yakimas than just a place to catch and dry salmon. They ^{falls} are looked upon as a natural shrine given to the Indians by the ~~Great~~ Creator as a symbol of plenty, and like the salmon are revered in the religious celebrations that have been carried on in the roar and mists of their falling waters for ^{untold} ~~countless~~ ages. In fact, Celilo Falls are as sacred to the ^{red men} ~~Indians~~ as any cherished temple or cathedral ~~is~~ to the white man. It is for this reason that the Yakima tribal chiefs who signed the Treaty in ~~1855~~ insisted that the rights of their people to worship and fish at Celilo Falls be guaranteed them forever, or in the words of the Yakima chiefs, "As long as the mountain stands and the great river flows to the sea."

The intrinsic value of Celilo Falls can never be compensated with white man's gold. Their loss will be a severe blow to the culture and lives of the Yakimas. The wound ~~from which~~ may heal with time but the scar can never be erased. Thus will pass another of the Northwest's famed natural monuments, ~~doomed by the destructive forces in the so-called progress of white man's civilization.~~

Frederick

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