

THE FUNERAL OF CHIEF JIM JAMES

BY GULL A. WHITE.

The funeral of 88 year old Hereditary Chief Jim James of the San Poil Tribe, was held Tuesday, May 12, at his Keller Jas. home. Attendance was largest on record in Ferry County and on a par with the funeral of Chief Joseph, 57 years ago in Besselen, Okanogan County. Participants of each affair, say that all present felt they were honoring two truly great men, marking the end of an era which people would long remember.

From his youth, Chief James, felt destined to lead his people. He planned his life on this pattern & worked hard to fit himself for this position. His sincerity & adherence to a strict code of living, gained him prestige which increased thru the years. As with Joseph, his decisions were not questioned. An old friend and admirer for many years, the Rev Father Jos. J. Balfe, S.J. Head of St Mary's Mission near Osk, conducted mass & gave the principal address. He effectively pointed out the splendid qualities, which had so endeared Jim to so many people in varied walks of life. Father *Raymond Talbot* S.J. recently of Alaska, was the assisting priest.

Two of the most eloquent & distinguished Indian leaders in the North West, Albert Sam, of the Spokane Reservation & John Cleveland, brilliant council member from Okanogan, paid tribute in their native tongue and then in English. Cleveland recalled trips to Washington D.C with Jim who by impromptu speeches before Senate hearings, won cases for the Indians. Last August 27 at the dedication of St. Okanogan Museum, Jim proved this ability, when suddenly called from the audience by Gov Rossellini to speak to the thousands gathered there. Jim's speech is well remembered by all who heard him, including notables from England & Montreal.

Joining in final tribute Tuesday, were Indians from British Columbia, & Northwestern States & Pacific Coast areas, along with prominent business men & ranchers who had known & admired Jim for 50 years. All came early & stayed late to join in the Indian tradition of dropping a handful of earth on the grave as a parting gesture to an old friend. This lightened the sober, depressed feeling of personal loss, felt by all of us.

Returning for the feast & Potlach, old friends, realizing that they might never meet again tried to extract the utmost from visiting. Taped recordings of early Hudson Bay days, would be rich in source material. Those who have not attended these feasts & Potlaches, have missed some ~~valuable~~ experiences. Better examples of community effort & accomplishment to find and could solve many world problems today. So

## James #2

So great was the desire of young & old to do honor to the deceased, that relays competed in dishwashing, serving & entertaining. No task was too menial to receive support. A huge Pavilion had been erected seating 150 people. Added to modern delicacies & pastyy, were various forms of venison, fish, camas, bitterroot, baked moss ( Cooked underground) and quantities of huckleberries.

In keeping with best traditions, The Potlach which followed was directed by the widow Lucy James. Despite ruinous house fires which destroyed many fine old heirlooms in recent years, Lucy & Jim had many precious articles from garments to riding equipment. These she gave as impartially as possible to closest friends & relatives. Only last month the writer had taken his grandchildren to call on Jim & Lucy. He insisted on her showing his fine collection of large hats, porcupine, beaded buckskin shirt, belts, bags, gloves, with suitable descriptions. These the children will never forget, nor will any one ever see this collection as it was that day in April/.

Historical Societies will deeply miss the James family and their overgenerous readiness to help with small museums or meetings. On the long <sup>tr</sup>trips hauling their effects to & from these exhibits, it has been my privilege to hear tales of Jim's childhood before the whiteman came to the BIG Bend. As John Cleveland said: " This Funeral was just as Jim would have wished it to be".