

3613 NE 84th St.  
Seattle 15, Wash.  
April 6, 1964.

Mr. Click Relander, City Editor  
Yakima Daily Republic  
Republic Publishing Co.,  
114 No. Fourth St.  
Yakima, Wash.

Dear Mr. Relander,

I am an adult student of anthropology and art history here at the University of Washington, and for the past two years have been doing research for a detailed study of the cornhusk bags made by the Sahaptin tribes and their neighbors. Dr. Erna Gunther is my adviser on this project.

Some good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Ted Weld, loaned me their copy of Drummers and Dreamers, which you had autographed for them, shortly before Mrs. Weld's tragic death a year ago. Last summer I purchased a copy of Strangers on the Land, and have found both books invaluable as background material on the Wanapums, Yakimas, etc., and also because you mention the uses and manufacture of cornhusk bags specifically in several places. I wonder if you would mind if I quoted these passages, giving you full credit of course, in my forthcoming paper?

I also have some questions regarding the ceremonies at which cornhusk bags were given for gifts that perhaps you can answer. Mr. Dean Guie was kind enough to reply to my letter to him several years ago, and suggested that you might be able to answer some of the questions he was not positive about. Mrs. Weld directed me to Mrs. Alba (Nettie) Showaway and Mrs. Frank (Julia) Schappy when I needed first-hand information on the making of cornhusk bags. I spent a very pleasant and interesting afternoon with each of them, and they were very generous in telling me what they could remember. Since this was my first experience in interviewing Indian women about their culture, I was somewhat bashful in asking about their family and their ages, so did not get all the information that is desirable in a standard ethnologic report. Therefore I find I have a list of questions to send you, and regret there are so many.

However, to make things more convenient I have listed them on a separate sheet of paper with space between for your reply. If you have a chance to answer them it would certainly be a great help in making my report fuller and more accurate. I know we share a great interest in recording and explaining the culture, beliefs, and accomplishments of the Plateau people before it is too late.

I am also enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope. If you would prefer to reply by phone you can reach me at my home phone collect, LA 5-3738, during the day or evening. Hope this is not a great inconvenience, and will look forward to hearing from you,

Yours truly,

*Linda Kimball (Mrs. Charles B.)*



# GENEALOGICAL INFORMATION

## Showaways

Could you give me an approximate age for Mrs. Nettie Showaway?

Is she the narrator you identify in Drummers and Dreamers as Showaway: Umatilla, daughter of (Jim) Billy?

Who is the Mrs. Louise Showaway interviewed at Mission, Ore. in Aug. 1951? --is this Nettie, her mother, or someone else?

I met Nettie's mother briefly when I stopped at Parker a second time. She is from the Warm Springs Reservation, but I didn't get her name, tribe, or age. Do you know these?

Is the Showaway Cotieahkun mentioned in Drummers and Dreamers Nettie's husband Alba Showaway?

Is Alba Showaway a son of Cotieahkun?

To what tribe did Alba Showaway's mother belong?

Which is the more correct spelling, Showaway or Shawaway--I've seen both used?

## Sohappys

To what tribe did Julia Sohappy's mother and father belong?

Could you give me an approximate age for Mrs. Julia Sohappy? (I know she and her husband celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary not too long ago)

Is Frank Sohappy the son of George Sohappy, or what relationship is he to George Sohappy?

To what tribe did Frank Sohappy's mother belong?

# QUESTIONS ON BAGS AND MATERIALS

Were the Nez Perce the first to use cornhusk for false embroidery on bags?---Any ideas as to how, when, and where the Indians got the idea of doing this?

Were cornhusk bags called Nez Perce bags because the Nez Perce made them first, or for some other reason, or for so



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them first, made the best bags, or for some other reason?

Do you know when and where the first corn was grown in the Yakima area?

What was "hop cord" or "hop twine" used for tying up the vines (and by the Indians for the warp or weft of bags) made of, and do you know the manufacturer?

When did the hop growers begin using Indians as pickers, both in the Yakima area and Puyallup?

Were cornhusk bags used in root collection as well as root storage?

What roots besides bitterroot would be stored in a cornhusk bag?

(I have received conflicting reports concerning the above + below questions and would very much appreciate your opinions, although I realize it may be difficult to give a definite answer to many of these. You can just leave the ones blank you don't want to bother with or don't have any information on. This paper, although a little hard to write on, is the erasable kind.)

#### QUESTIONS ON CEREMONIES

Were a deceased woman's cornhusk bags distributed after her death either after the funeral, at a memorial feast, or in some other manner?

Was the baby gift giving or marriage validation ceremony mentioned in Strangers on the Land (p.31) the same or a different ceremony than the one where gifts are exchanged after marriage (described to me by Mrs. Sohappay and Mrs. Showaway) ?

Were cornhusk bags distributed at naming ceremonies, and if so, at the ceremony of a girl only, or to women present at either type?



I have information on cornhusks being used at first foods feasts, baby gift giving and/or marriage ceremonies, memorial feasts, and sometimes placed in burials. Are there any other ceremonies (besides the naming one asked in the previous question) in which they were used or played a part?

In which ceremonial situations would the bags normally be used filled with roots, other than the first foods feasts, where of course this was the case?

In any of these ceremonies were the bags filled with other things, and if so which ceremonies, and what articles?

P.S. If you get this far, thank you very much for your help! From all the inquiries Dr. Gunther gets, I know questions like this can sometimes be a pain in the neck for busy people. Since you are one of the best-informed persons on the culture of the Indians in the Yakima area, I thought you might be interested in hearing of this project. If all goes well, the summary of my study plus the efforts of Mr. Dick Conn at the Eastern Wash. State Historical Society Museum in Spokane may be combined for an article in American Indian Tradition Magazine, possibly illustrated by the excellent photos Mr. and Mrs. T.M. Widrig of Seattle took of the Showaways demonstrating cornhusk bag making, and published in the Seattle Times Pictorial Section on Sunday, Jan. 12 of this year. None of us are getting any money for this, but we are having fun, and would appreciate your co-operation!



3613 NE 84th St.  
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April 22, 1964

Dear Mr. Relander,

Thank you so much for your very interesting and informative letter. I'm sorry that I didn't leave more room on the sheets I sent, so you had to type all those pages, but as you said, you answered all my questions and then some. The information will be a great help to me in making my paper accurate and interesting, and I will be sure to give you credit as the source of that material.

There certainly are a lot of groups that are now lumped under the category of "Yakima" Indians. Your Strangers on the Land and Mr. Guie's Tribal Days of the Yakimas have been particularly helpful in identifying and locating these groups so I could understand the names used in other literature. The reprint of the Yakima Treaty of 1855 was also the first such copy I had seen and very interesting because of the list of groups signing it, and the original boundaries of the Yakima Reservation. I must confess that my reading at the University Library so far has been mainly among the ethnographies, so I have not searched out many of the government documents. The ones I have located have not been too pertinent in regard to cornhusk bags!

The anthropologists here at the University have often mentioned to us how they wished they had been able to devote more time to studying the Plateau. Dr. Jacobs got file cabinets full of linguistic and folklore information in the '30s which he has not had time to publish. He says he still hopes to be able to do so, but if he can't, at least the material has been recorded for students to sort out in the future. Dr. Ray is in the same position, as he was sidetracked for many years by studies in Mexico, and administrative and anthropological society duties, but he is now back working full-time on Plateau material. He just published the information he got on the Modoc in 1936 or thereabouts, and I think plans to have something on the Umatilla and then Nez Perce next. Dr. Gunther did some field work among the Umatilla in the 1940's, and I know feels that much more should be done on Plateau material culture, one reason why she suggested this particular topic to me. Fortunately the archaeological work by Osborne, Daugherty, Greengo, Swanson, Cressman, etc. in the Plateau and adjacent areas has pointed up the need for equating what is known of the Indian cultures since white contact with what the archaeologists are finding from earlier levels. A lot of the archaeology students here who have been on digs in the Plateau seem to be very interested in obtaining a broader picture of the Plateau cultures. For the life of me I can't understand why there isn't a specific course on the Plateau, although we do get mentions of the area in courses on Primitive Art, Technology, and Literature, Archaeology, Linguistics, etc.

If you see the Shawaways and the Sohannys in the near future, please give them my warmest greetings. The reason I haven't kept in closer touch with them since 1962 when I met them



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is that I became pregnant not long after and subsequently the mother of twins, surprising not only my husband and myself but also my doctor, who had not X-rayed me before the day of delivery. The twins were born nine weeks early and required a lot of care both before and after coming home. They and their five year old brother have kept me house-bound for quite some time now so I haven't been able to get over to Yakima since my first "field trip", which was pretty short at that. However, the babies, Christopher and Christine (Chris and Tina are their nicknames) are now fourteen months old and doing beautifully, so we hope to be able to do more traveling this summer. I just want the Shawaways and Sohappys to know how much I enjoyed talking with them and what a help they were to me. I am so glad that you and other articulate and influential people in the area are trying to help them protect their rights.

After reading about the abuses and exploitation they have suffered in the past, I am overwhelmed that they could be so hospitable and friendly to a stranger. Good luck to you in further efforts on their behalf and thank you so much for your letter,

Yours truly,

*Linda Kimball*

P.S. If you do happen to find out the ages of Mrs. Sohappy and Mrs. Shawaway, I would be interested in recording them for the paper, but what you've already told me is actually sufficient to give a good description of their family background. I imagine they are not so coy about giving their ages as the general run of women in our youth-oriented society!