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April 13, 1964

Mrs. Charles B. Kimball,
3613 NE 84th St.,
Seattle, Wash.

Dear Mrs. Kimball:

Your project of cornhusk bags is a large one, and certainly a subject which has not received a proper amount of attention. I have never gone into the subject, specifically, but I have had the general feeling that the "origin" might be linked pretty close to the Flathead before spreading to the Nez Perce.

I have been expecting to see the Shawaways, and therefore have not a specific age at this time. I however believe she is now about 57 years old. That is my recollection, without digging up a big carton of notebooks still "in transit!" Several months ago we began a rather gigantic task of moving, my first move here in 15 years, and now in a suitable location, with library space, files, writing room, studio etc. I am still "straightening" around. And for that same reason some of the family backgrounds will be missing at this time, although I'll catch up as I can on them.

Shawaway is the correct spelling of Nettie and Alba. Her Indian name is Toonestonmy. She is an enrolled Warm Springs woman. Alba's Indian name is, as he spells it on agency records and his own spelling, Kooatyakhén. This is spelled by Mooney and others in some half a dozen or more ways, Cootiaken, etc. He is the son of the now dead Alex Cootiaken Shawaway, who was the son of Kooatyakhén or Cootiaken, a contemporary of Smownalla. (Reference to this Kooatyakhén in Mooney, who has the relationships with others somewhat mixed.

The Showaway or Shawaway family near Mission on the Umatilla Reservation, according to both Alba and Mrs. Louise Showaway or Shawaway, is no relation. Jim Billy is dead. Death date not determined,

The Showaway Coteahkun mentioned in Drummers and Dreamers is Alba. Alex and Alba, before Alex' death gave it that way. When Alex died and after Alba made Coteahkun a matter of record on his enrollment, he used it Kooatyakhén.

Alba's mother was a Yakima.

At present I do not specifically know Mrs. Julia Schappy's age, but will find out from a daughter when I see her. As to her family, this particular group has been "reticent" to being pinned down on that question and I've not pressed. This is because of the various government claims cases, some still active, and the various anthropologists, ethnologists and attorneys who have worked either for tribes or the government, and cautioned them against

specific answers to specific questions. This has been one of the troublesome things for "amateurs" to work against or for students who are seeking specific answers to specific questions. In other words some enrolled Yakimas are the required one-fourth Yakima, might be one-fourth Nez Perce, and one-fourth "Colville". They are still playing the cards to see where the government payoffs come. Of course the matter of changing enrollments from one reservation to another is becoming complicated. For instance, many Yakimas have necessary blood degree for enrollment as Warm Springs, but the Warm Springs tribe won't accept them although they 'd like to change to obtain that \$800 or more a year per capita, paid not on a monthly basis. There are other land claims and compensations to be paid, heirship lands etc. that make this inquiry into specific blood lines a delicate matter. My note books are full of information given voluntarily by individuals, and other information from enrollment officers. And one enrollment officer, if I can catch him by himself, can answer some of the questions. I will try and remember to do so.

Frank Sohapp is not the son of George Sohapp. There was a relationship here but not too close. Here again you get into a matter of ~~mak~~ polygamy as exercised and practiced in the old days, or of the custom of a man falling heir to a brother's wives. For instance, it would take a long study to unravel the relationship of the several sons of Kamiakin, most of them sons by different wives, and some of the wives were sisters.

Frank Sohapp's mother was a Yakima. You ask "what tribe?" The Yakimas as a tribe were one thing, various bands of Yakimas, or family clans was something else. The Wanapum or Priest Rapids were a band it would be assumed, although they were undoubtedly Sokulks of the Lewis and Clark reference, but they were all Yakimas. So far as I know there has never been a clear cut definition as to tribe or band. Here you get into villages, chieftainships, heredity, etc. etc. And how far back can you trace a certain group, band or tribe before it loses its identity, or in reverse? You are bordering on a ground that is still, and will for some time be a matter of determination by various government claims courts. Ethnologists, historians, anthropologists etc. have argued these matters and submitted thousands of words in substantiation of their theories, and they are only theories, and in courts of claim are accepted as such and the merits proven ~~axxx~~ on such grounds. From that you go into the classification of your "tribes" by root stock and linguistics, and that's another big field. I am merely trying to explain why the variables and why some of these matters cannot be pinpointed as a professor would wish them to be, sometimes because these people themselves cannot gain the information.

Specifically Frank Sohapp's mother, to the old way of thinking and the Indian way, was a Chamnapum. These were Yakimas. They lived, as you no doubt know, at the confluence of the Yakima River with the Columbia. The older Indians would call it Chamnapum, here you get your pum, or people, the pa or pah such as Skeinpah (down near Celilo, is a locative. Even now some of the old timers will call a Palouse a Palousepum.

You can dig up dozens of names of groups living along the Columbia which are unknown to all but a few very old people today, and you can dig up dozens of descendants of these people, and they are all Yakimas.

I have been thoroughly disgusted at timesto find that the "last" old man or woman of one of these groups , who I have had contact with, has died. I have fragmentary material from several and I have often felt that the University of Oregon, now working in the country, the University of Washington, Washington State University etc. , had they worked the field more intensively 10 and 20 years ago instead of other regions, would have done a fine service to all. But for some reason or other "coast" Indians etc. appealed more, whereas in reality coast Indians were so badly intermixed that it has been many years excepting in rare cases where such close links with the past as existed among the Yakima, Umatilla, Colville etc. in later years, existed. Facial characteristics alone show that, so do costumes, hand craft knowledge etc.

As to cornhusk bags:

I would suspect they were called Nez Perce bags because of trade. Don't forget that Celilo was the trading mart for the Northwest interior. When Celilo went, all main links with the past trade also went. This was more than a gathering place. It was an industrial trading center. The trade extended to the coast, into the Colville country and north, into California, and into the Nez Perce country. Your 'shaptaki" or Nez Perce "suitcases" the parafleche work, ~~was~~ were a parallel so to speak of the Nez Perce bag, and here you have the Flathead and especially the Blackfoot influence, which by "theory" indicates the innovation from the Flathead and Blackfoot country?

Indian ear or husk corn was unknown to the Yakimas. I have stories of Haller's invasion of the Yakima country and the battle of Toppenish Creek, 1855, in which the Yakima warriors slashed the bags of mule-packs, during the running battle and when mules were captured, and seeing grains of corn or the kernels spout out, were frightened, thinking they were teeth of dead people.

There are accounts in old Wanapum stories from Priest Rapids where explorers and fur traders, the first known along Priest Rapids, which would place the date from 1811 (Alexander Ross) and later, left camp sites. These were shaken down by the Indians after the departure, and again appears reference to fright at corn kernels, thought at first to be teeth of dead persons.

Yet on the other hand, in the Wenas country, north of Yakima, when Doty, and ~~Watan~~ also A.J. Bolon came through, before the Treaty of 1855 (year before) accounts of squash, potatoes, corn being grown there. This branch of the Yakima traded with the Hudson's Bay Co. post at Vancouver. So corn was not unknown, although it was apparently not well known.

Also, I don't know what the Whitman and Spalding "agricultural" accounts show regarding corn. Both had mills as you know, but whether for just wheat alone I do not know. I would suspect not.

Corn was grown , to a small extent, by soldiers under Maj. Robert Selden Garnett, and later Capt. James J. Archer at Fort Simcoe, and grain and corn, both, were purchased "in the field" when the military turned the fort over to become an Indian agency in 1859. So with the Indian agent era at Fort Simcoe, and agricultural records starting notⁿ long afterwards and more specifically in 1860, 61 and 62, corn was grown there, at Simcoe.

I have never seen, in all my reading of day books, Indian reports, agency reports etc., to my recollection, any reference to corn being issued as annuity goods.

As for false embroidery, and while I've never looked for it on old bags, I don't see why the Yakimas, if corn husk bags were very old among them, did not use the colored porcupine quills as they did for their "capas" and buckskins. If you know of this use on bag decorations, I should think it would be a good lead as to "dating" the usage.

The hop twine (specimen of some, several years old, not over six, enclosed, I know nothing of except accounts of Indians who have long worked for hop growers. One man, now dead eight years, worked for one grower 48 years. He worked throughout the hop season, tying the hop vines when they started, to the hop poles or trellises. I've never tried to "date" use of hop twine, or origin, but it has been used since near the origin of commercial hop growing, requiring Indian labor, in the Yakima Valley. Does the rare Ezra Meeker, Hop Culture book, published around 1870 give you any clues? This is the top Meeker item. I foolishly "traded" off my copy for some \$30 worth of other books about ten years ago, have never seen another since, but the U must have one in the library. You would have some good material there on Puyallup hops, since this is, as I noted, the top Meeker item and far from the level of his other works, and is so recognized.

I would suspect it is the common manila hemp. The hop twine of later years, and which I've seen used in bags if more like a heavy cord. Hardware stores all over here sell it but I don't know their source, nor do I think it could be narrowed to "one source."

I have encountered use of cornhusk bags, "Klickitat" or imbricated baskets, and Yakima baskets in gathering roots, bitterroots, wild potatoes, wild carrots, the various varieties of camas. Choke cherries, (dried) were stored in them. They were also used for picking, carrying and storing huckleberries, but the basket was preferred, and the old-timers used the cedar bark basket with conface bottom.

Ceremonies

As to give-away distributions. There was no set time. Primarily "women's things" such as bags, but not always, were distributed to women. The time depended upon circumstances. Sometimes it is immediately after the funeral, when the mourners return to the long house, or the home. They are usually given as a kind of payment to relatives, being kept in the family. They, as you know, are not used until they are brought out and displayed at a later memorial dinner or lamentation feast. Then they may be used. If the family is not "financially" able at the time of death to pay "pay" other obligations adequately, there is usually just a dinner. Then at some community gathering, a favorite time is Fourth of July at White Swan, families provide the dinner, several being the sponsors. Bags and such, even horses are brought out and displayed and then become the property to be used in public, of the recipient. Tepees or tipis are even handled in this manner, an empty tipi of the dead man or woman being set up and left unoccupied until after the memorial dinner. And the dinner is augmented by newly purchased shawls, blankets and yardage or piece goods, beads and what have you to pay relatives, close and distant and friends according to service rendered;

Dollar bills or \$5 bills, silver money etc. is sometimes added.

I have seen a pile of such material five feet high distributed immediately after a funeral, although it is not used until a lamentation feast six months later. And I have known such feasts to be delayed for one or two years.

The "presiding man" usually the religious leader, stands up and orates, telling of the life of the dead one; then he holds up item by item. Seated women will cry and wail into handkerchiefs, the louder the more respect they show for the dead. Then helpers will take the item and pass it to intended person who has been designated.

If it is the clothing of a child, or bags belonging to a girl, some child the same size will be "hired" to wear that clothing and carry the bags in a procession around the long house; someone will be "hired" to ride a horse of the dead person around the "parade" grounds. And for the past five years automobiles have been added to the things in a parade, although I have noticed that there is apparently no taboo on use of the car or horse of a dead person. The general rule is that this "giving" is delayed until the family can handle it suitably. And such dinners have become "social intercourse" occasions for Indians. There seems to be a misconception here between this type of "giveaway" and the coast potlatch and it would take several pages to spell the difference out, and I would be handicapped by lack of sufficient knowledge on a true potlatch. But the old Indians here did not look on a potlatch as the same.

(Skipping back to Indians and hops. From my interviews, I know use of Indians as hop workers existed since at least the mid 80s, and probably to a smaller extent before. The use reached its height after 1900 and the decline started in the 1930s and 1940s and dropped sharply with advent of the mechanical hop picker. The Yakima Chief Ranch at Mabton Dr. William Gannon is manager (he is Bill Gannon who has the Mabton Wagon Museum. And if you've not seen that, it is worth the visit, sometime. Incidentally he took his doctorate a few years ago at Iowa I believe, stagecoaches, art history of deforestation etc. And he would I am sure answer some questions that might occur to you. He might also have some information on "bags." In connection with the Wagon Museum, he has a sales outlet in the front of the building and the best buys I know of. Incidentally, too, he has some regular museum pieces, with specific histories for his own, Nez Perce saddles he acquired from the Idaho country, probably the largest collection in existence, costumes and relics of historic Indians etc.)

Don't know how Mrs. Schappy and Mrs. Shawawxy described the "baby gift" ceremony, but the account in Strangers is from the Priest Rapids people and the group noted for following the old custom. It paralleled the account of the late Sophia Wakwak who kept the old customs and was a granddaughter of Kamiakin. She has been dead several years, I'd have to check my notes, but I think at least eight years.

Concerning distribution at naming ceremonies: Sometimes yes, sometimes no. I've seen naming ceremonies at which no gifts were distributed. But here again the general rule of women's things for women was followed. (Exception: I've seen a son of an old woman, where there was no daughter or other closely related women folk, receive "women's things." Generally, it is "kept in the family."

There are bags made for "sale", and apparently have been for some time; made for trade, and that has been the case for years; and then there were other bags, with no design that was explainable too well, but regarded as "heirloom" bags. These later were identifiable by others as the property of so and so. And in times of stress, even these kind found and find their way into stores like Abe Lincoln's at Toppenish, as pawn material. People like that will tell you of an heirloom bag or costume they've loaned money on a dozen times over a year or two years time. They keep those kind to be redeemed as to sell them would lose the Indian business. And sometimes the "owner" dies while the bags, costumes, or beads are "in hock." There's no pawn tickets involved, just a knowledge of the store owner and his customer. It was the same at The Dalles Trading Post. Smith (don't know his first name) had a back room full of such things. I often wondered how these things were taken care of after his death and the room full passed into an estate!

And there are "naming ceremonies" and naming ceremonies. Sometimes these take place at "initiation" dances and these are at such gatherings as the White Swan Fourth of July deal. This always opens with a Memorial dinner. The second day there are initiation dances, dances for young people making their first dance appearance. The general pattern is followed at the Washington Birthday celebration at Toppenish, held this year at Wapato because the Toppenish Long House burned down in 1960.

Then there might be an occasion like Mrs. Frank Schappy's 50th wedding anniversary (I don't know where that idea came from) and some family will hold a naming ceremony, in typical old style, as a part of one of the night festivities.

As to other ceremonies, which it appears you have pretty well lined out, I have seen bags used at funerals, by that I mean actually placed in coffins, before burial of the body. Sometimes just plain bags (in man's, woman's or child's coffin), and sometimes with beads in them, never food. One time the bag contained the man's hair combings, here again a lengthy deal. Combed hair is not destroyed from the old-timer's viewpoint by anything but fire, and as the old men comb out their braids and they grow thin, the combings are kept in a cornhusk or leather bag, and buried with them. But this custom was followed in only a few cases, of the real believers in the old things.

And if you wish to call gambling a ceremony, corn husk bags were used, and sometimes still are, as wagers. Money is matched, dollar for dollar and I've seen bags put up the same way. (Stick and bone games) and in women's card playing, Monte and poker or dice. And I've seen them used for payment of shamans or medicine men. In one case I saw bags, blankets and saddle, also some money used to pay a medicine man. And a week later when the man who was ill was up working and cut himself with a hop knife and developed an infection, he came to me to borrow \$6. It was used to pay a medical doctor in Yakima for a penicillin (sp) shot. I know, because I went with him to the doctor! This latter is an example of the Indian way of thinking and doing things I guess. Enough of such ways of doing things and after a while you realize that they are very practicable and have more knowledge of various things than we realize; that they appreciate both cultures; and that many perpetuations of

old cultures are efforts to find occasions for "togetherness" I personally think that one of the most regrettable situations confronting Indians on reservations and those on perimeters of reservations is that when reservations are sold off and broken up, and socialization is ended, that the future of the people is glum. Where are they going to meet those of their kind, get acquainted, become married, etc? In beer joints, where many have already drifted? At schools where few white girls would accept or be permitted to accept Indian youths as boy friends and allowed to marry them? Even "gambling," the dances etc. (Indian dances) have their place in socialization.

Sorry I can't be specific about the questions you've asked but hope I've explained why. Sorry too I've rambled on and on but I think you'll find a good deal you asked covered herein, and more besides. Your project is a good one. The magazine article sounds interesting. I hope I have been of some small help to you. Let me know how things come out.

Sincerely

Click Relander

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