

The Treaty Trail: U. S. - Indian Treaty Councils in the Northwest

Treaties and Councils: What is a Treaty?

Today, all Americans live on what was once Indian land. Treaties transferred that land from Indian to United States control.

Treaties are documents that formalize relationships and understandings between two or more sovereign states. Sovereign states govern themselves, recognizing no superior power. Like the thirteen original states, Indian tribes were originally considered independent nations with established territories and the power of self-governance. Treaties brought Indian tribes into the Union with their inherent sovereignty intact, although federal statutes, court decisions, and administrative policies limited its actual exercise.



Shown here are the "Treaty Trees" at the site of the signing of the Medicine Creek Treaty on December 26, 1854. Photograph by Asahel Curtis and Walter Miller, 1914; Washington State Historical Society Collection.

Long before the American Revolution, Indian tribes formed complex networks of alliances. In 1751, Benjamin Franklin noted the contrast between the masterful alliances within the Iroquois Confederation and the inability of early colonial leaders to do the same:

"It would be a very strange thing if Six Nations of Ignorant Savages should be capable of forming a scheme for such a Union and be able to execute in such a manner, as that it has subsisted for ages, and appears indissoluble, and yet a like Union should be impracticable for ten or a dozen English colonies."

Letter to James Parker, 1751.

President George Washington signed the first treaties with Indian tribes for the newly independent United States. These first negotiations were between two bargaining equals and were treaties of peace. Both sides were militarily powerful.

Indian tribes believed the treaties became effective when they were signed. But United States law required Congress to approve all treaties after they were negotiated. Between 1789 and 1871, the United States negotiated approximately 800 treaties, but Congress ratified, or approved, fewer than 400-including the ten treaties negotiated by Isaac Stevens between 1854 and 1856.

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COLUMBIA RIVER

SNAKE RIVER

WALLA WALLA COUNCIL

CAYUSE, WALLA WALLA & UMATILLA

GRANDE RONDE

SPokane RIVER

SPokane COUNCIL

COLUMBIA RIVER

LAKE PEND D'OREILLE

COEUR D'ALENE MISSION

CLARK'S FORK

BITTER ROOT

FLATHEAD & PEND D'OREILLE MISSION

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Common Hunting Grounds of western and Blackfoot Indians

CASCADE RANGE

ROCKY MOUNTAINS

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THE STEVENS TREATY EXPEDITION, 1836

-  ROUTE OF GOVERNOR STEVENS
-  INDIAN RESERVATIONS ESTABLISHED IN 1855
-  HYDROGRAPHY
-  MODERN STATE BOUNDARIES
-  TERRITORIAL BOUNDARIES

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THE WALLA WALLA TREATY COUNCIL MAY, 1855

From 1854 - 1856, Washington Territory Governor Isaac Stevens traveled hundreds of miles across the modern states of Washington and parts of Montana, Oregon and Idaho negotiating ten treaties that would open the territory for future, ongoing settlement of the region by non-Native people. The American drive for occupation of Western land led to the creation of a reservation system established through the treaty councils.

One of the goals of the Reservation system according to Hazard Stevens, the son of Washington Territory Governor, Isaac Stevens, was to "concentrate the Indians upon a few reservations, and encourage them to cultivate the soil and adopt settled and civilized habits".

To cede:

A term meaning to yield or grant, typically by treaty.

News of the western treaties had quickly passed to the eastern Washington tribes, along with sad tales from the nation's interior and East concerning the plight of the tribes in those regions. The Indians were aware that lands had been ceded, but fair compensation and services had not been received from the U.S. Government in return for those lands. They were understandably wary of Stevens and the treaty proceedings.

Although the Nez Perce, traditionally friendly to the whites, readily agreed to attend the Walla Walla Council, the Yakama, Walla Walla, and Cayuse bands were initially very reluctant to participate.

ARRIVAL OF THE TRIBES

On May 24, 1855, the Nez Perce Indians rode towards Isaac Stevens and his



treaty-negotiating delegation (a party of about 35 people) in Walla Walla, Washington. According to Hazard Stevens who accompanied his father on this trip at the age of thirteen:

"Hearing of their approach, the commissioners drew up their little party on a knoll commanding a fine view of the unbroken level of the valley. The standard of the Nez Perce, the large American flag given them by the officers engaged in the Cayuse war, was sent forward and planted on a knoll. Soon their cavalcade came in sight, a thousand warriors mounted on fine horses and riding at a gallop, two abreast... They advanced at a gallop still nearer then halted, while the head chief, Lawyer, and two other chiefs rode slowly forward to the knoll, dismounted and shook hands with the commissioners, and then took post in rear of them. The other chiefs, twenty five in number, then rode forward, and went through the same ceremony."

Stevens anxiously awaited the arrival of the Yakama who it was rumored would refuse to accept any gifts or provisions during the council. On May 27th the Yakama arrived along with some Palouse; the later group's presence was unexpected. Stevens and his fellow commissioners braced themselves for

difficult negotiations with all but the Nez Perce who seemed more willing to negotiate.

THE COUNCIL BEGINS

The council officially convened on May 29th with well over 1,800 Indians present. The Indians obviously well outnumbered Stevens' party. First order of business was to name interpreters. Rain required early adjournment until the next day. The next day Governor Stevens and Joel Palmer, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon Territory, sat on a bench under an arbor erected for the council ceremonies with official reporters stationed behind them to record the events.

The Indians sat in semicircles facing the governor. Palmer introduced the Governor who spoke for several hours about Indian-white relations. At this point in the proceedings, both Stevens and Palmer doubted whether or not a treaty signing would be possible given the reservations of the Cayuse and Yakama. However, at the ceremonial feast, all the principle leaders joined the white commissioners for a meal.

On June 4th the treaty making entered into a phase of aggressive bargaining. Lawyer, one of the Nez Perce leaders, endorsed the general words spoken by the white commissioners. Timothy added to Lawyer's statements by saying:

While we were assembled here yesterday, we heard that lands were staked off and white men were taking our homes. We tell you that this must stop. The country is still ours and our children's.

The Yakama leaders pressed the commissioners for specifics. Stevens proposed two land reservations - one in Nez Perce country that was to be shared by the Nez Perce, Walla Walla, Umatilla and Cayuse. The other to the south would be reserved for the Yakama, Palouse, and

Klickitats. Only the Nez Perce seemed pleased with the proposal, at least at first.

Then, with the dramatic entrance of the Nez Perce leader, Looking Glass (see portrait on right), who had been hunting buffalo for three years added to the tension. Looking Glass reportedly told the assembled crowd:

My people what have you done? While I was gone, you sold my country.



The chiefs at the Walla Walla Council were firm, businesslike negotiators, sure of their strength and confident in their negotiating skills. When faced with the encroaching pressure from white settlers, they sought to gain the best treaty terms possible. Stevens was forced to make compromises, and the Walla Walla Treaty was signed by all the tribes present.

AFTER THE TREATY

Ultimately, the treaties signed at Walla Walla allowed an influx of settlers and miners. It was anticipated that gold recently discovered near Colville around the time of the Walla Walla council would entice 8,000 miners to the area. With the signed Walla Walla treaty en route to Washington D.C. for ratification or approval, Stevens mistakenly thought that the treaty was a way to create lasting peaceful relations between whites and Indians.

Sources:

Joseph, Alvin M. *The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997.

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TEACHER AND STUDENT READING BIOGRAPHY OF GUSTAV SOHON



Photograph of artist Gustav Sohon. As an artist, Sohon was a product of his time and his depictions of treaty events reflect this. His drawings and watercolor paintings allow everyone who views them to see, through his eyes, the treaty councils between the United States Government and Indian tribes of the Pacific Northwest.

COURTESY OF THE SOHON PRIVATE COLLECTION.

Born in 1825 in Belgium, Gustav Sohon was educated in Tilsit, Germany. He immigrated to the United States in 1842, and in the early 1850s, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. Upon his enlistment he was stationed in the west, and eventually found his way to Fort Steilacoom, Washington Territory. One of his first assignments was with Lieutenant John Mullan, who was surveying the country between the Rocky and Bitterroot Mountains for the railroad survey led by Isaac Stevens.

Sohon Reaches the Northwest

From that moment on, Sohon witnessed and contributed to some of the most important events in the history of the Northwest. As an army private, he served with the Stevens railroad survey for over a year before Washington Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens noticed his artistic ability. Sohon traveled with

Governor Isaac Stevens on his historic campaign of 1855: the Treaty Trail, where he documented events of the journey and treaty councils with Native American tribes. Sohon proved to have a flair for languages, and was soon fluent in the Flathead and Pend d'Oreille languages. He could communicate with the Native peoples, and many allowed him to draw pictures of them.

Sohon was also a talented painter, who produced accurate landscapes and vivid scenes from native life, including the first panoramic view of the Rocky Mountains and the earliest-known sketch of the Great Falls of the Missouri.

What is a landscape?

To an artist, a **landscape** is art that represents a place in the natural environment.

The End of Army Life

Sohon's five-year enlistment ended in July 1857. He then sought out his earlier friend and mentor, Lieutenant John Mullan. Mullan was leading the construction of a military road from Walla Walla to Fort Benton, and Sohon surveyed routes and kept track of the construction progress. In 1860 Sohon guided the first wagon party to cross the Rocky and Bitterroot Mountains to the Columbia Plateau by a route other than the more commonly used Overland Trail. When Mullan's Road was complete, Sohon went with him to Washington, DC, to assist in the preparation of topographical data, maps, and illustrations for a report on the road's construction. He never returned to the Northwest.

Marriage and Family

In April 1863, Gustav Sohon and Julianna

Groh were married. For a brief time they lived in San Francisco, where Sohon ran a photography studio. Several years later, they returned to Washington, DC, where Sohon disappeared from public life, running a shoe business and raising a large family with Julianna. He died on September 9, 1903.

As an artist, Sohon was a product of his time and his depictions of treaty events reflect this. His drawings and watercolor paintings allow everyone who views them to see, through his eyes, the treaty councils between the United States Government and Indian tribes of the Pacific Northwest.

Sources:

Buerge, David M. "Big Little Man: Isaac Stevens (1818-1861)," *Washingtonians: A biographical Portrait of the State*. Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 1988.

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BIOGRAPHY OF ISAAC INGALLS STEVENS



Portrait of Isaac Stevens, first Governor of Washington Territory (March 25, 1818—September 1, 1862). Courtesy Washington State Historical Society.

A small man of large ambition and keen intelligence, Isaac Stevens made a large

impact on the military and political institutions of the 19th century. Although his family was among the earliest settlers of Andover and the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and played a prominent role in colonial society, Stevens insisted that "he rose from humble but honest circumstances to win education, forge a career, and emerge as a figure of national prominence."

Education and Early Military Experience

Following his education at Phillips Academy in Massachusetts, Stevens attended West Point Academy, where he graduated in 1839, first in his class. His skills in mathematics, engineering, surveying, military strategy, and politics earned him a job in the prestigious Corps of Engineers, a government agency responsible at that time for the largest public works projects.

As an officer in the War with Mexico (1846-48), he had his first taste of combat. He returned home with a commission promoting him to the rank of major, and convinced of his country's

"manifest destiny." Stevens returned to the Corps of Engineers for a time, later

joining the newly established U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. This was the agency destined to map the nation and its newly acquired territories.

Stevens' Political Career Begins

His active support of Democrat Franklin Pierce's 1852 candidacy for President launched his own political career. In 1853 Stevens successfully applied to President Pierce for the governorship of the new Washington Territory, a post that also carried the title of Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Not content with just two jobs, Stevens also lobbied for a position with the proposed transcontinental railroad survey. Secretary of War Jefferson Davis placed him in command of the survey of the northern route.

Stevens's survey expedition left Minnesota in June 1853. The expedition was responsible for documenting the potential route of the railroad, and recording information about the flora, fauna, and the Native American tribes whose homelands were being surveyed.

Wasting no time, Governor Stevens quickly organized a territorial government, settled claims by the British-owned Hudson's Bay Company, expended \$5,000 for books to set up a territorial library, and petitioned Congress for land on which to build a university. However, it would be his duties as Superintendent of Indian Affairs that would truly define his long-term impact on the future State of Washington.

In June of 1854, leaving acting Governor Charles Mason and the new legislature in charge, Stevens returned to the nation's

capital to lobby for money to cover the remaining debts from the railroad survey expedition, and to secure funding for the Indian treaty councils. He returned home with money to build military roads and funding for the treaty councils.

Stevens immediately plunged into the task of organizing the councils. He intended to make treaties with the Indians to secure the necessary resources for building the railroad and to obtain land sought by the ever-increasing stream of settlers flowing into the region. His agents had already been visiting the various Indian villages, selecting individuals to represent each tribe.

The Medicine Creek Council

On the day after Christmas in 1854, Stevens held his first treaty council at Medicine Creek in the Nisqually Delta. The Nisqually, Puyallup, Steilacoom, Squaxin, and other tribes, were informed in advance of the upcoming negotiations. They were anticipating fair payment for land settlers had already appropriated, and a reservation of land that would sustain their families and future generations.

What the tribes received were several widely separated small reservations. These brought different tribal bands together, but allowed the tribes to continue to fish, hunt, and gather food and other supplies in their usual accustomed places outside the reservations. The government also pledged to provide schools, blacksmith

shops, carpenters, and medical care. In return, the United States acquired 2.5 million acres of tribal land.

Understandably pleased at the positive outcome of the Medicine Creek Treaty, Stevens prematurely speculated that if the whole treaty program proceeded as smoothly, all the tribes would soon be on reservations. However, his lack of understanding of native culture led him to make some serious mistakes. He did not understand that Indian leaders had limited powers to represent their tribes, nor did he recognize that there would be resistance to moving tribes, who had traditionally been enemies, onto a single reservation.

News of the western treaties had quickly passed to the eastern Washington tribes, along with sad tales from the nation's interior and eastern states concerning the plight of the tribes in those regions. The Indians were aware that their lands had been ceded, and that just compensation and the promised services had

not been received from the "Great Father" in Washington, DC. They were understandably wary of Stevens and the treaty proceedings.

The Walla Walla Council

Although the Nez Perce, traditionally friendly to the whites, readily agreed to attend the Walla Walla Council, the Yakama, Walla Walla, and Cayuse bands were initially very reluctant to participate. Despite their misgivings, however, the Council formally convened on May 29,



This pair of epaulets in a metal case once belonged to Isaac Stevens. The epaulets are made of board covered with fabric and leather. A fringe made of coils of gold wire is attached around the outer edges. At the center of each epaulet is the symbol of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the shape of a castle. Courtesy Washington State Historical Society.

1855, with thousands of tribal members in attendance.

Nicandri, David L. *Northwest Chiefs: Gustav Sohon's View of the 1855 Stevens Treaty Councils*. Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1986.

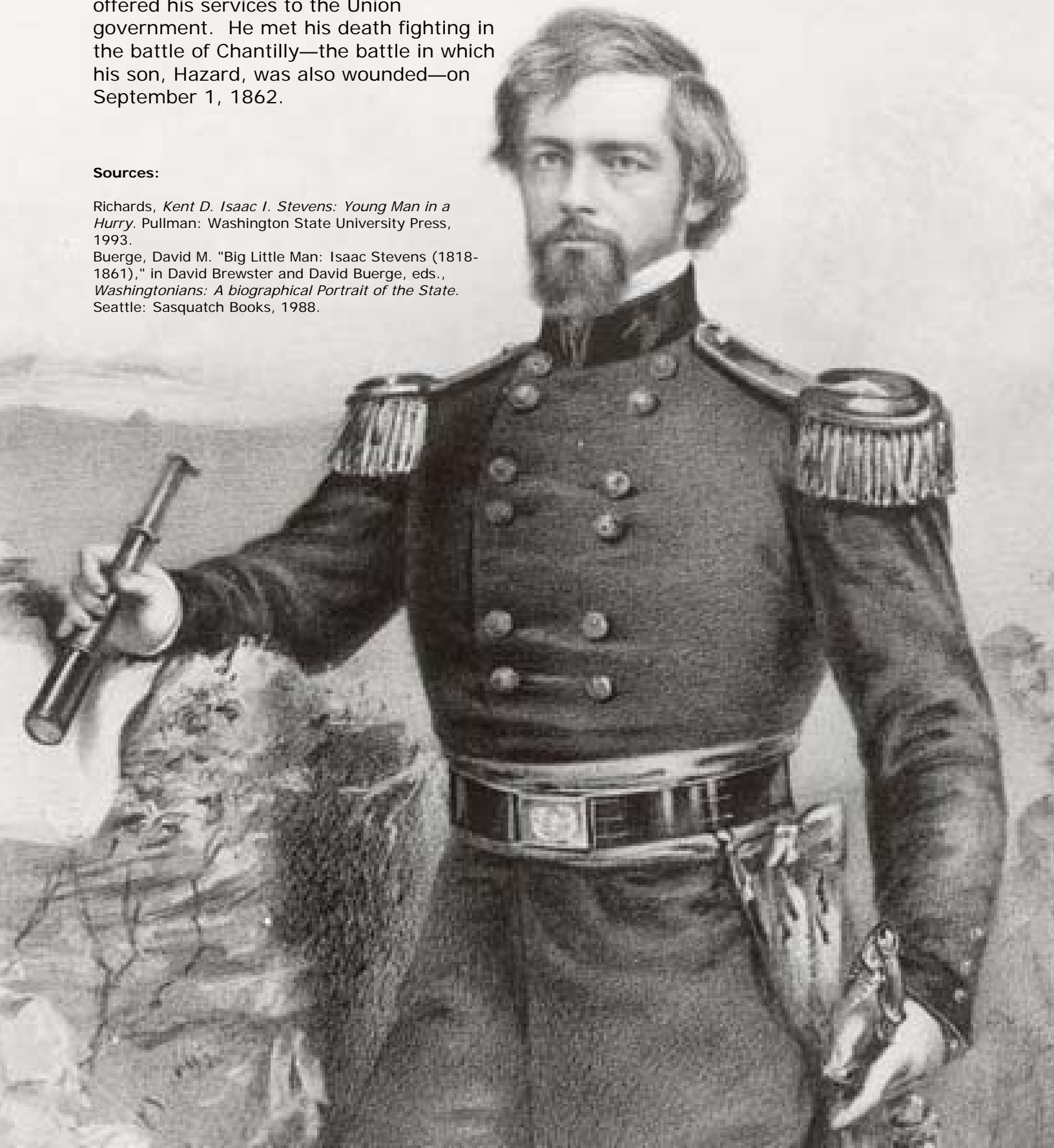
The Civil War

When the Civil War broke out, Stevens offered his services to the Union government. He met his death fighting in the battle of Chantilly—the battle in which his son, Hazard, was also wounded—on September 1, 1862.

Sources:

Richards, Kent D. *Isaac I. Stevens: Young Man in a Hurry*. Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1993.

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STUDENT READING: BIOGRAPHY OF "CHIEF LAWYER" OR HALLALHOTSOOT



Portrait of "Chief Lawyer" or Hallalhotsoot, portrayed as the Nez Perce leader of the Walla Walla Council by artist Gustav Sohon. Lawyer is pictured here wearing a silk top hat, decorated with ostrich plumes held in place by colored bands.
Courtesy of the Washington State Historical Society.

Hallalhotsoot was the son of a Salish-speaking Flathead woman and Twisted Hair, the Nez Perce man who welcomed and befriended Lewis and Clark in the fall of 1805. His father's positive experiences with the white explorers greatly influenced the boy. He firmly believed that the best prospect for the future of the Nez Perce was through friendship with non-native peoples.

"Lawyer" was a nickname given to Hallalhotsoot by the mountain men of the early 1830s. He was known as "the talker," and his speaking abilities and wisdom enabled him to influence both native and non-native peoples.

The Nez Perce and Christianity

In 1831, six Nez Perce embarked on a journey through the Rocky Mountains to invite Christian teachers to come to the tribes. Two of the party turned back at the mountains, but four proceeded on to St. Louis. The story was reprinted widely

in American newspapers, and set off a frenetic missionary movement to the West, one that changed the course not only of the Nez Perce people, but of the entire Northwest.

What is a missionary?

A **missionary** is a person sent out on a mission; specifically, a person sent out by his or her church to preach, teach and convert, especially those who practice a different religion.

One of these missionaries, Marcus Whitman, hired Lawyer to live at his mission and teach him the Salish and Nez Perce languages. Whitman provided food and clothing to Lawyer's family in return. It was here that Lawyer, once a buffalo hunter, began to adapt to the culture and religion of the white man. Lawyer emerged as a leader of the Nez Perce following the Whitman tragedy on November 29, 1847. He traveled to Salem to meet Joseph Lane, Governor of the Oregon Territory, and requested aid in the capture of the Whitmans' murderers.

The Walla Walla Treaty Council of 1855

Lawyer's friendly attitude toward white culture led Isaac Stevens to select him as the designated leader of the Nez Perce at the Walla Walla Treaty Council of 1855. Lawyer was one of the first chiefs to be sketched by the artist Gustav Sohon at that council, an indication of his importance among non-Native observers. Sohon's inscription describes Lawyer as Head Chief of the Nez Perce Tribe, but some observers believe he only became

the main spokesman after being selected by Isaac Stevens.

"My people, while I was gone, you have sold my country. I have come home, and there is not left me a place on which to pitch my lodge."

- Looking Glass, Nez Perce chief

After the Council

In the years that followed the Walla Walla Council, Lawyer was widely ridiculed by anti-treaty groups within the Nez Perce tribe after the terms of the treaties failed to be honored by the U.S. government. When the promised payments began arriving in the early 1860s, cynical observers would note that they seemed timed to coincide with the government's desire for more land from the Nez Perce. The second treaty, signed by Lawyer in 1863, reduced the area of the tribe's reservation by 90 percent, transferring away the homelands of many Nez Perce bands. This was done without their consent.

Lawyer defended his actions by arguing that resisting white encroachment was useless and that the wise and practical course was to simply adapt to changing circumstances.

Despite his trust that Governor Stevens and the American government had good intentions, Lawyer experienced great disappointment when promises made in the treaties were not honored. In a speech delivered in the goldrush boomtown of Lewiston, Idaho, in 1864, Lawyer spoke eloquently to the failure of the government to live up to its promises:

If [Stevens] had told us that the reservation was to be flooded with white settlers, or that the saw mill was to be used for the exclusive benefit of the Whites, we would never have consented to the treaty. That flour mill and saw mill were pledged to me and my people. All the stipulations of that treaty were pledged to us for our benefit. Nine years

have passed and those stipulations are unfulfilled. [W]e have no church as promised; no schoolhouse as promised; no doctor as promised; no gunsmith as promised; no blacksmith as promised.

Lawyer devoted his life to making peace with the white population and following the terms of the treaties he signed. Nevertheless, in 1870—after holding his post for twenty-five years—he voluntarily stepped down from the leadership of the Nez Perce. His descendants tell the tale of his death on January 3, 1876, in this manner:



On the back of this photograph, possibly taken in 1864, was handwritten the following inscription: "This picture of Lawyer was taken at Walla Walla by Castleman, I think. [signed] E. Evans."

Courtesy of the Washington State Historical Society.

It was Lawyer's custom to fly his American flag from a pole in front of his lodge or house. On the day that he died, knowing that his end was near, he instructed some member to gradually pull down the flag. The flag would be lowered a bit and then Lawyer, after a time would say: "Pull it down a little more." So the flag was lowered a little more. This was repeated several times and when the flag touched the ground, Lawyer died.

Today many Nez Perce people continue to live in their homeland- some on and some off the reservation. Others have moved to cities around the country.

Sources:

Drury, Clifford M. *Chief Lawyer of the Nez Perce Indians*. Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1979.

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JOSEPH (TUEKAKAS): CHIEF OF THE NEZ PERCE 1785—1871



This portrait of Joseph was painted by Gustav Sohon on May 29, 1855. Courtesy Washington State Historical Society.

American history first records Tuekakas, principal chief of the Wallowa band of Nez Perce, in 1834, when he welcomed Captain Benjamin Bonneville as he led the first white men into the Wallowa Valley.

Tuekakas, father to the now more widely known Chief Joseph, was in his late forties at that time, and he accepted and greeted the travelers as representatives of a friendly and honorable people. The Nez Perce treated the Bonneville party to a feast of deer, elk, and buffalo meat, served along with fish and roots, before they settled in for a long talk. Tuekakas was eager for news of the United States, and Bonneville described and promoted the merits of the American nation.

Christians Come to Lapwai

When the missionaries Marcus Whitman and Henry Spalding arrived in Lapwai in 1836, they were intent on converting the Indians to Christianity. Tuekakas was drawn to the new religion, and moved to distant Lapwai for long periods of time for instruction. In 1839 Tuekakas and another Nez Perce headman, Timothy were the first Nez Perce to convert to Christianity. Following his conversion,

Tuekakas (now Joseph) and his wife, Khapkhaponimi (who came to be called Asenoth) married again in their new faith in Spalding's church. Their children were also baptized, and given Christian names, including a boy, Ephraim, who was likely the future Chief Joseph of Nez Perce War fame.

Following the Whitman massacre, the influence of the missions was broken, and Joseph returned to Wallowa Valley. By some accounts he then reverted to his native beliefs, but others describe him as a practicing Christian and friend of the whites for at least another fifteen years.

The Whitman Massacre:

This is the term most frequently used in historical records to describe the 1847 attack on the mission at Lapwai that ended in the murder of thirteen people, including Marcus and Narcissa Whitman. Tribes participating at the time considered it retribution for the epidemic of measles in the area and for the Whitmans' housing and perceived preferential treatment of settlers on the Oregon trail.

Treaty Councils

At the Walla Walla Council of 1855, Joseph remained largely quiet, saying only, "I have a good heart, what the (Chief) Lawyer says, let it be." When the call for signatures came, Joseph signed along with the other chiefs. But in the years that followed, he refused to accept treaty payments, insisting that he had given nothing at Walla Walla and expected nothing in return.

At the Lapwai Council in 1863, Joseph refused to sign the treaty drawn up since by that time, the reservation had been so reduced in size that his homelands were now outside its borders. From that point on, Joseph became a leader of the "non-treaty" Nez Perce. He erected boundary monuments to mark his land, and destroyed the Bible given to him by Spalding many years earlier. With this symbolic gesture, Joseph turned his back on the American government he considered dishonest.

By 1869, Joseph had gone blind, although he continued to instruct his sons with regard to his perceptions of white men, treaties, and Mother Earth. He told them:

When you go into council with a white man, always remember your country. Do not give it away. The white man will cheat you out of your home.

In August of 1871, old Joseph told his son while on his deathbed:

When I am gone, think of your country. You are the chief of these people. They look to you to guide them. Always remember that your father never sold the country. You must stop your ears whenever you are asked to sign a treaty selling your home. A few years more, and the white man will be all around you. They have their eyes on this land. My son, never forget my dying words. This country holds your father's body. Never sell the bones of your father and your mother.

He died in a camp at the fork of the Wallowa and Lostine rivers, in the land that had been so important to his people. His son later said of that camp: "I buried him in that beautiful valley of winding waters. I love that land more than the rest of all the world. A man who would not love his father's grave is worse than a wild animal."

Nez Perce War

By 1877, the federal government had tried to force the "non-treaty" bands, including the Wallowa Nez Perce, now led by young Chief Joseph, out of their homelands and onto the



The map above shows three areas involved in the Walla Walla Treaties: Walla Walla (1), the Wallowa Valley (2) and the Lapwai Valley (3). Courtesy Washington Historical Society.



This portrait features young Joseph, the old chief's son, and his family ca. 1877. After their surrender at the end of the Nez Perce war, the family was taken to Kansas. Despite promises made to return them to the Pacific Northwest, they would not return to their homelands until 1885. Courtesy Washington State Historical Society.

more restricted reservation. The Indians' response was the Nez Perce War.

"For decades," wrote Robert Ignatius Burns, "the Nez Perce were considered as tame Indians, underrated and even mis-treated despite their unswerving friendship for the Whites. They won fame and respect only when they went to war."

Although young Chief Joseph's

brilliance as a war chief won sympathy from the American public, when defeat came to the defiant Nez Perce, they were nevertheless sent into exile at the Colville and Lapwai agencies.

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JOEL PALMER SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, OREGON OCTOBER 4, 1810 - JUNE 9, 1881



This portrait of Joel Palmer was done by an unknown artist.

Joel Palmer was born in 1810 in Ontario, Canada to Quaker parents. When the War of 1812 began, the family hastily

moved to northern New York, to an unsettled area where Palmer experienced the conditions of frontier life.

Life in Servitude

At the age of twelve, Palmer, the eldest of nine children, was "bound out" for four years—a form of indentured servitude—to a family by the name of Haworth who lived in the Catskill Mountains. During his service, he received three months of schooling—the only education he ever had.

What is an indentured servant?

An **indentured servant** is the term used for a person (often an immigrant to America) who was placed under contract to work for another over a period of time, usually seven years.

Career

In 1836, Palmer moved to the Whitewater Valley in Indiana, where he was given the contract to oversee a long stretch of construction of the Whitewater Canal. Three years later, the project was stopped by the state, leaving Palmer with

"a large force of men and materials" and no means by which to pay the men, nor any use for the materials. The record does not show how Palmer handled the crisis, except that he "took to farming." He later served in the Indiana legislature.

Overland to Oregon

During the spring of 1845, Palmer started overland to Oregon to investigate the possibilities of this new Territory. Like many men making the journey, he left his family behind. He kept a diary of his experiences, which was published in 1847 as *Journal of Travels over the Rocky Mountains*. This became a guidebook to many immigrants for information on equipment and route details, and was instrumental in opening the Barlow Road, an important section of the Oregon Trail located in Oregon Territory.

On March 6th, 1846, he set out on an essentially uneventful crossing to retrieve his family. After a year of preparation following his return he and his family departed Indiana for good, arriving in Oregon in autumn of 1847 to build new lives.

Cayuse War

The native Cayuse population by this time had been decimated to half its original size by measles. The Cayuse were enraged and desperate, and believed the disease had been intentionally spread by the missionary Marcus Whitman, who had settled in Walla Walla.

In retaliation, on November 29, 1847, they attacked the mission, killing Whitman, his wife Narcissa, and eleven associates. They then abducted fifty-three other people, largely women and children. The Whitman Massacre sparked the Cayuse War, and Palmer served as

commissary-general of the volunteer forces. He also served as a peace emissary to persuade neighboring tribes not to join the Cayuse Indians.

Superintendent of Indian Affairs

In 1853, Palmer was appointed Superintendent of Indian affairs for the Oregon Territory. Serving with distinction, Palmer had the difficult task of securing Oregon lands from warring Indian tribes while preventing the outbreak of hostilities. During his tenure, he negotiated numerous treaties.



The painting "Chiefs at Dinner, Walla Walla Council, 1855" shows Gustav Sohon's rendition of a banquet for the native leaders attended by both Palmer and Stevens. He shows both men serving the other leaders on tin plates. Although the chiefs were given provisions each day, this was the only such occasion on which the commissioners were present.

His famous words about the inevitability of settlement:

Three hundred and sixty years shows us that the white man and the red man cannot live happily together... If there were no other whites coming into the country we might get along in peace; You may ask, why do they come? Can you stop the water of the Columbia river from flowing on its course? Can you prevent the wind from blowing? Can you prevent the rain from falling? Can you prevent the whites from coming? You are answered No! Like the grasshoppers on the plains; some years there will be more come than others, you cannot stop them. Our chief

cannot stop them, we cannot stop them... this land was not made for you alone, the air that we breath, the waters that we drink, was made for all. The fish that come up the rivers, and the beasts that roam through the forests and the plains, and the fowls of the air, were alike made for the white man and the red man... Who can say that this is mine and that is yours.

Palmer expressed genuine concern for the welfare of Indians. He became unpopular with the settlers and townspeople who thought he was overly lenient with the Indians. A segment of the white population wished to wage a war of extermination, and these voices were raised in criticism of his policies. On August 15, 1857, Joel Palmer was removed from the office of Superintendent of Indian Affairs. His last letter in that capacity included words characteristic of that for which he had worked:

I leave the office with a desire to see such measures adopted as may tend to maintain peace and advance these Indians in civilization.

Palmer spent the remaining two decades of his life in business and politics. He served as speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives in 1862 and as a state senator, 1864-1868. In 1870, Palmer was defeated as the Republican candidate for governor.

He died June 9, 1881 in Dayton, Oregon.

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The Treaty Trail: U. S. - Indian Treaty Councils in the Northwest

KAMIAKIN, HEAD CHIEF OF THE YAKAMAS C. 1800-1878



This portrait of Kamiakin was created by Gustav Sohon. Courtesy Washington State Historical Society.

Kamiakin lived in what is present-day central Washington as a child, but his family traveled to the Great

Plains, where he was distinguished as a warrior and buffalo hunter. He accrued substantial wealth, allowing him to marry five wives. He broke custom and angered his uncles by marrying women from rival families. Nonetheless, his choice created kinship ties with many tribes.

A Natural Leader

Courage, good judgment, and generosity were Kamiakin's best claim to leadership. He demonstrated good business sense early in the 1840s by traveling to Fort Vancouver, trading horses to settlers in exchange for cattle, and driving the cattle back to Yakima. Kamiakin's herd was the first in the Yakima Valley.

Kamiakin planted one of the earliest gardens known to the agricultural history of Yakima at his home in Ahtanum. His interest in gardening was uncommon for his time, and he pursued this avocation even to the extent of irrigating his land.

Kamiakin Seeks a Teacher

In 1850 an opportunity arose to secure a teacher for the Yakama people, when Kamiakin met a Catholic priest in Walla Walla. Kamiakin offered the priest a place on his property for a mission, if the priest would teach his tribe. As a result, two Catholic Fathers arrived, and built St.

Joseph's Mission on the Ahtanum Creek. In addition to teaching the Catholic faith, the priests trained the Yakamas in digging irrigation ditches and growing crops.

Chiefs in the Region

In 1853, when Washington Territory was established, Kamiakin was the most prominent Yakama chief, although not the head chief. There were several Yakama bands, each headed by its own chief.

The Treaty Process Begins

Governor Stevens began the treaty process with the objective of "civilizing" the Indians, pushing them onto reservations out of the way of the hordes of white settlers already headed west.

Word went out to the Indians that the President in Washington, D.C. desired Indian land for the white men, and that a great white chief was on his way west to buy it. If the Indians refused to sell, soldiers would come and drive them off their land. This news understandably angered the tribes, resulting in prejudice against the newly appointed Governor of Washington Territory, Isaac Stevens.



This 1853 lithograph of Fort Vancouver was created by Gustav Sohon in November of 1853. Courtesy Washington State Historical Society.

Preparing for Trouble

At this point, Kamiakin began building a

confederation of Indian tribes to oppose non-Native settlement. He quickly enlisted Peo-peo-mox-mox, Head Chief of the Walla Walla, and Looking Glass, War Chief of the Nez Perce to his cause.

These three chiefs planned a council for Indians only in the remote Grande Ronde Valley of Eastern Oregon.

At one point Kamiakin rallied tribal forces saying:

We wish to be left alone in the lands of our forefathers, whose bones lie in the sand hills and along the trails, but a pale-face stranger has come from a distant land and send word to us that we must give up our country, as he wants it for the white man. Where can we go? There is no place left. Only a single mountain now separates us from the big salt water of the setting sun. Our fathers from the hunting grounds of the other world are looking down on us today. Let us not make them ashamed! My people, the Great Spirit has his eyes upon us. He will be angry if, like cowardly dogs, we give up our lands to the whites. Better to die like brave warriors on the battlefield, than live among our vanquishers, despised. Our young men and women would speedily become debauched (destroyed) by their fire water and we should perish as a race.

At the Grande Ronde council, the tribal leaders prepared for Governor Stevens' upcoming Treaty councils by developing strategies to try to keep their lands. However, Lawyer, a Nez Perce chief, notified A. J. Bolon, the Indian agent, of the Grande Ronde council. Governor Stevens learned of the meeting and knew what to expect going into the 1855 Walla Walla Treaty Council.

The Chiefs Speak at Walla Walla

Kamiakin reached the council ground, accompanied by Peo-peo-mox-mox, on May 28th, 1855. When they saw the huge number of Nez Perce present, they began to realize that Lawyer had betrayed their trust. Not wishing to accept gifts from false friends, Kamiakin refused Stevens' offer of tobacco for his pipe and provisions for his party.

The speeches of the council went on day after day, with all the chiefs—except for Kamiakin—setting forth their wishes for their tribes. Then Joel Palmer, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Oregon Territory, said: *I want to say a few words to these people, but before I do, if Ka-mi-akin wants to speak, I would be glad to hear him.* Kamiakin replied, *I have nothing to say.*

Kamiakin's contempt for the U.S. continued.

Later, an Indian agent attempted to ease Kamiakin's poverty by giving him some blankets due under the provisions of the 1855 treaty. He rejected them and pointed to his ragged clothes, saying: *See, I am a poor man, but too rich to receive anything from the United States.*

Kamiakin died in 1877, and was buried near the village he founded.

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The map above shows the locations of both Walla Walla (1) and the Grande Ronde Valley (2). Courtesy Washington State Historical Society.

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PEOPEOMOXMOX (YELLOW BIRD OR YELLOW SERPENT) C. 1800—1855



PeoPeoMoxMox was the head chief of the Walla Wallas. This drawing of him by Gustav Sohon was painted on June 7, 1855. Courtesy Washington State Historical Society.

PeoPeoMoxMox was an important chief of the Walla Wallas at a critical period in Northwest history.

The defining moment of PeoPeoMoxMox's life and leadership was undoubtedly the murder of his son. His son had received the Christian name Elijah Hedding while studying English at the Willamette Valley mission.

A Sad Journey

In 1844, in the summer of Elijah's eighteenth year, a group of about fifty men of the Walla Wallas, Nez Perces, Cayuses, and Spokans decided to make a business trip to the California settlements to buy cattle. A misunderstanding with California settlers over whether cattle offered for sale by the Indians were stolen led to the death of PeoPeoMoxMox's son, Elijah. The violence alarmed the settlers, who branded the Northwest Indians troublemakers, forcing them to leave hastily and without the cattle they had legally purchased.

Calls for a War of Revenge

Arriving back at Fort Walla Walla in the fall, The chiefs sent word to all the villages about the death of Elijah Hedding. The tragedy fueled Indian resentment toward settlers.

The chiefs from many tribes called for a war of vengeance, and a council was held among the Walla Walla, Cayuse,

Spokane, Nez Perce, Pend d'Oreille, and Shoshoni tribes. PeoPeoMoxMox wanted to wipe out the settlers in the Willamette Valley in addition to those in Sacramento. He felt they were responsible for the attitudes that made Elijah's murder possible.

It was the wrong season for such a long journey, though. The mountain passes would be filled with snow. So as they waited for the weather to clear, the Indians decided to work the problem out through legal or diplomatic channels.

Although U.S. Government Indian legal representatives called for justice on behalf of Elijah: no one was punished for the crime. The government promised compensation for losses sustained by the Indians as a result of the incident, but none was received.

Thus, long before Isaac Stevens was appointed Governor of Washington Territory, long before the treaty councils, the Cayuse War, or the Yakima War, PeoPeoMoxMox, Spokane Garry, and the people of the neighboring tribes had learned a hard, bitter lesson—no justice could be expected from the white man.

The Walla Walla Treaty Council of 1855

Late in 1854, PeoPeoMoxMox met Governor Stevens, who was out on a surveying expedition. Stevens described the Walla Walla chief as being "of dignified manner, and well qualified to manage men". In the months that preceded the Walla Walla Treaty Council, PeoPeoMoxMox, received several visits from a representative of the Stevens government, Secretary James Doty. By the end of March 1855, the chief appeared to be convinced that it would be better to receive a fair price for his lands than to be constantly fighting with

soldiers and settlers and risk being left with nothing.

PeoPeoMoxMox arrived at the Walla Walla Treaty Council insisting that he, Young Chief, Lawyer, and Kamiakin do all the talking for the tribal participants. He also demanded more than one interpreter, so that "they might know they translated truly." Stevens readily agreed to this demand.

The Council began with speeches by Washington Territory Governor Stevens and Joel Palmer, Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs, after which the Indians requested a day to talk amongst themselves. During the next day's council session, PeoPeoMoxMox delivered an angry speech:

I do not know what is straight. I do not see the offer you have made the Indians. I never saw these things which are offered by the Great Father. My heart cried when you first spoke to me. I felt like I was blown away like a feather... Stop the whites from coming here until we can have another talk: let them not bring their oxen with them. The whites may travel in all directions through our country: we will have nothing to say to them, provided they do not build houses on our lands. Now I wish to speak about Lawyer. I think he has given his lands, that is what I think by his words. I request another meeting; it is not in one meeting only that we can come to a decision. If you come again with a friendly message from our Great Father, I shall see you again at this place. Tomorrow I shall see you again and tomorrow evening I shall go home. That is all I have to say.



This map shows three places important in the life of PeoPeoMoxMox- Walla Walla (1), the Willamette Valley (2) and Sacramento (3). Courtesy Washington State Historical Society.

The council continued on for several more days in this vein, with Kamiakin, Young Chief, and PeoPeoMoxMox standing firm in their opposition to the treaty. Something must have changed their minds, however, as all three signed a treaty with Stevens before leaving the council grounds. Stevens called it "a most satisfactory council".

The Yakima War

The *Oregon Weekly Times*, just twelve days after the Walla Walla treaties were signed, ran an inexcusable article that read, in part:

By an express provision of the treaty, the country embraced in these cessions and not included in the reservation is open to settlement, excepting that the Indians are secured in the possession of their buildings and implements till removal to the reservation.

White settlers and miners began pouring into eastern Washington lands guaranteed by treaty to be reserved for Indians. Violence escalated between Indians and whites. Although PeoPeoMoxMox approached the militia forces under the white flag of surrender and peace during this conflict, he was taken hostage and killed.

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BIOGRAPHY OF SPOKAN GARRY (1811-1892)



Sketch of Spokan Garry of the Spokane Indian tribe by artist Gustav Sohon done on May 27, 1855. The signature on the illustration is by Garry himself.

Courtesy of the Washington State Historical Society.

Spokan Garry was born in 1811. Although his boyhood name is not known, we know that early traders mistook his father's name, Illim-Spokanee, for the name of the tribe. In this way, the Sma-hoo-men-a-ish people became known as the Middle Spokanes. Garry grew up around the white traders who built their post near his tribe, so he was very familiar with the "King George" men (the British) and the "Bostons" (the Americans).

Garry Goes to School and Returns

At the age of fourteen, Garry was selected as one of two boys from the surrounding tribes to be sent to the Red River School at Fort Garry, sponsored by the Hudson's Bay Company and run by the Church Missionary Society of the Church of England. There Garry learned history, geography, religious studies, and he learned to read and speak English and French.

In 1828, at the age of eighteen, Garry traveled the 1800-mile trip back to the Spokane River. The encroachment of the white population on the tribes of the Northwest put stress on their traditional religious beliefs. The tribe accepted the Christian teachings brought back by Garry upon his return and combined them with their traditional beliefs.

When George Gibbs traveled through the area, he described how Spokan Garry appeared to him:

Garry himself accompanied us to the forks of the Spokane, where his band usually reside. A few lodges, chiefly old men and women, were there at the time. His own, in neatness and comfort, was far beyond any we had seen. His family were dressed in the costume of the whites, which in fact now prevails over their own. Many of the Spokanes, besides their intercourse with the fort, visit the American settlements, where they earn money by occasional work, most of which is spent in clothing, blankets, &c. The chief offered us the hospitality of his house with much cordiality - a cup of tea or coffee and bread.



A detail of the signature of Spokan Garry.
Courtesy of the Washington State Historical Society.

The Coming of the American Missionaries

When missionaries arrived in the area, rather than building on Garry's teachings, they began attacking the way he understood Christianity. This conflict led Garry to give up his school and public preaching. He also stopped wearing white man's clothing, gradually returning to traditional dress and activities, many of which did not meet the approval of the Missionaries.

Washington Becomes a Territory

On October 17, 1853, Garry was summoned to a meeting with newly-appointed Governor of Washington Territory, Isaac Stevens, who was making his way east from Olympia, the new territorial capital. Garry surprised Stevens by carrying on a lengthy and fluent conversation that evening, in both English and French. Garry was uncertain of Stevens' intent with regard to the Indians, so he remained as noncommittal as possible on the issues.

Stevens and the Treaties

In Spring of 1855, Spokan Garry attended the Walla Walla Treaty Council as an observer. The Yakama tribe was one of several tribes signing treaties at this time. A few days after the treaty an announcement published in a newspaper encouraged a stream of pioneers to east of the Cascades and settle on Yakama land. The Yakamas decided to fight to keep whites out of their territory and recruited other tribes to help them. Many of the younger Spokanes joined. Garry

pleaded for no action against the whites until they could talk to Governor Stevens.

The Treaty council with Spokan Garry and the Spokane Tribe was the last treaty council of 1855. Stevens, hearing about the outbreak of war while traveling back from Blackfeet country, arrived suddenly in the Spokane village on the evening of November 27, and surprised the Spokanes by demanding an instant decision for war or peace.

When the chiefs of the Spokane, Coeur d'Alenes, Colvilles were assembled, along with some French Canadians, Stevens opened the council and promised friendship.

Stevens then urged that the tribes relinquish lands and move to reservations.

Garry had been appointed spokesman for the tribes. He delivered a long and passionate speech revealing the Indians' point of view.

This speech left Stevens, for the first time in the treaty process, on the defensive. Of all the

councils held by Stevens with the Indians, the Spokane Council was the only one that failed to produce a signed treaty.

The Later Years

As the white settlers poured into the region in the years following the Civil War, Garry tried to protect himself and his followers by continually seeking to secure a treaty with the Government and preserve a portion of

"When you first commenced to speak, you said the Wallawallas, Cayuses, and Umatillas were to move onto the Nez Perce Reservation, and that the Spokanes were to move there also. Then I thought you spoke bad. Then I thought when you said that, you would strike the Indian to the heart."

- Spokan Garry at the Spokane Council

his country for his tribe. This, he felt, had been promised by Governor Stevens. In 1881 the Spokane reservation was created as a subdivision of the Colville Agency.

The following year, while Garry and his family were at a temporary fishing camp, trespassers took possession of his own farm, which he had fenced and cultivated for many years. Garry tried to recover his land through the legal system. Shortly before his death, a final judgment was made against his claim of ownership; his home, valued at \$2,500, passed into the hands of another man with no compensation made to Garry or his family.

On January 14, 1892, Spokane Garry died in poverty. Today many members of the Spokane Tribe reside on the Spokane Indian Reservation.

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TIMOTHY (TAMOOT SIN) CHIEF OF THE NEZ PERCE 1808-1891



This portrait of Timothy was created by Gustav Sohon.
Notice the cuffed shirt he wears.
Courtesy Washington State Historical Society.

Timothy, or Tamootsin as he was known to his people, was a mild-mannered, sensitive man who holds the distinction of being the first Christian convert among the Nez Perce.

Arrival of the Missionaries

When Henry Spalding, missionary to the Nez Perce, arrived in Lapwai Valley in 1836, he quickly learned that in order to bring the natives to Christianity, he would have to encourage them to leave their semi-nomadic lifestyles behind. To accomplish this, he distributed seeds and hoes, and encouraged them to develop more agrarian lifestyles. Timothy was very receptive to this approach, and moving from his traditional home on Alpowa Creek to Lapwai, readily took up farming. He was taught to read and write in his native language by the missionaries.

Timothy was married to Tamer, a sister of Joseph the Elder, another Nez Perce Chief, who was baptized on the same day as Timothy. Joseph would later turn away from the white's religion, but Timothy remained a devout Christian for the rest of his life. He and a number of other warriors were responsible for the capture of the perpetrators of the Whitman Massacre of 1847.

The Walla Walla Treaty Council of 1855

In 1855, at the Walla Walla Treaty Council, Timothy and several other Nez Perce, meticulously recorded the words spoken. At one point in the proceedings Timothy states:

While we were assembled here yesterday, we heard that lands were staked off and white men were taking our homes. We tell you that this must stop. The country is still ours and our children's. What Lawyer has said is the heart of all the people.

The notes taken by the Indians never made it to the public record, however, and it is believed that Timothy's notes may have been ceremonially burned following his death.



This detail of Gustav Sohon's "May 1855, Walla Walla Council" painting shows one of the Nez Perce writing during the proceedings. It is believed that this image may be of Timothy acting as recorder for his tribe.
Courtesy Washington State

The Lapwai Council

At the Lapwai Council of 1863, when the Nez Perce chiefs came together once again to negotiate with the American government, Timothy was the only chief to sign the treaty whose lands lay outside the boundary set for the new reservation. Other chiefs whose lands were not in the new reservation, such as Joseph, refused to sign the agreement.

By Steamer to Washington, D.C.

Years went by, and still the Nez Perce did not receive any of what was owed them by the treaty terms. In 1868, government officials again wished change the terms of the treaty to provide some of the reservation lands to military forces. This time, rather than sending a delegation west to the Nez Perce, four chiefs - Lawyer, Timothy, Jason and Utsinmaliquan- were taken by steamer to New York City. Utsinmaliquan reportedly became ill, and died the day after they arrived in Washington, D. C. The remaining three chiefs signed a supplementary agreement giving reservation land to the military, in exchange for a promise from Congress to restore school funds that had purportedly been wasted by a series of Indian Agents.

Timothy, Lawyer and Jason returned to Idaho on the overland route, boarding a train on August 26, 1868. The train in which they rode crossed the Continental Divide on September 6th, and left its Nez Perce passengers at Bitter Creek, about sixty miles from the Green River. The remainder of the journey was made by stagecoach, and the chiefs arrived in Walla Walla on September 19th.

In the latter part of his life, Timothy appeared to live the life of a white man on his homestead outside the reservation. He died in 1891, an old man of more than eighty years.

Postmortem Honors

As a Nez Perce man who adopted Christianity and helped the U.S. Army, Timothy is more visible in mainstream history than many other Indian people.

In 1914, Chief Timothy of the Alpowa Band of Nez Perce was honored for his service to Steptoe and his men by the construction of a tall granite monument above the town of Rosalia, in Whitman County. The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission also set aside 145 acres for a park named to honor the Nez Perce chief-Chief Timothy State Park-with a nearby Interpretive Center featuring an exhibit about Timothy's role in the Treaties of 1855 and 1863.

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The image above shows an "Indian ticket" from the Northern Pacific Railroad issued in 1886. Such tickets were issued to Native Americans traveling by train. Courtesy Washington State Historical Society.

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WILLIAM CRAIG, INTERPRETER 1807-1869



This portrait of Bill Craig was created by Gustav Sohon on June 4, 1855.
Courtesy Washington State Historical Society.

William Craig was born in Virginia in 1807. At the age of seventeen he killed a neighbor following an argument and fled west. He seldom spoke of his early life, possibly fearing arrest for his crime.

Craig the Mountain Man

Craig was a trapper-explorer in the American West as early as 1829. In partnership with several other men, he established a rough log post named Fort Davy Crockett, at the Green River in Brown's Hole, a favored wintering site for the Indians in the northwest corner of Colorado.

In 1833, he temporarily traveled to California with a group sent by Captain Bonneville under the command of Joe Walker. Craig achieved some notoriety when he played a prank on his commander, tricking Walker to dive headfirst into the Humboldt River where only a few inches of water covered soft mud. Scrambling out of the mud, and scooping mud out of his eyes, Walker went for his rifle, but Craig was able to

stay out of gunshot range until his anger subsided.

In the summer of 1840, Craig and his trapper friends learned that supply trains would no longer be passing by Fort Davy Crockett, so the watering hole was closed, and Craig headed further west.

Arrival at Lapwai

According to the diary of missionary Henry Spalding, Craig arrived in the Lapwai Valley on November 20, 1840. Unlike most of the mountain men, he stayed in the valley, settling about eight miles up from the Spalding Mission. He was the first non-missionary settler in what is now the state of Idaho.

He married a Nez Perce woman named Pah-Tis-Sah (also known as Isabel). She was the daughter of James, also known as Big Thunder, a chief of the Nez Perce. Craig infuriated the missionary by advising his father-in-law that he should charge Spalding for the use of his land, water and timber. Craig's loyalty to his adopted people was not always an annoyance to Spaulding. Craig's knowledge of Nez Perce language enabled Spalding to write a Nez Perce dictionary. Spaulding then taught the tribe how to read and write.

What is an Indian Agent?

An **Indian Agent** was the term used to refer to an official representing the U.S. government in dealing with an Indian tribe or tribes.

First Indian Agent for the Nez Perce

Craig was a well-educated man of his time, capable of writing well-composed letters and reports. From 1848 to 1858 he served as the first Indian Agent for the

Nez Perce people. He served as the interpreter for the Nez Perce at the Walla Walla and Blackfoot Councils. The Records of the Walla Walla Council of 1855 show that Red Wolf made this request:

I have only one or two things to speak. I want Mr. Craig to stay there in the Nez Perce country, and not go away. The reason why I wish Mr. Craig to stay there is because he understands us. He speaks our language well. When there is any news that comes into the country we can go to him and hear it straight. The same for us when anybody comes to speak to us, he will sit down with us and we understand them. It is good for him to stay there to interpret on both sides so that each can understand the other.

The Nez Perce thought so highly of Craig that they asked Isaac Stevens to put a provision in their treaty allowing the former mountain man to keep his homestead in a reservation otherwise off-limits to whites. His homestead was often used for councils of the Nez Perce, occasionally drawing crowds of up to two thousand people.

Officer of the Volunteers

Craig served as a volunteer in the Yakima Indian War, eventually attaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Over time, he became frustrated with some of the consequences of the treaties. In an 1858 report, he wrote:

Subtly some evil disposed persons have begun to introduce whisky...the pernicious and bad effects of which have become most glaringly apparent within the past

few months. From what source they obtain it is impossible to tell...many of the Cayuses and Walla Wallas living in the valley have been leading a most dissolute and renegade life lately, under no control whatever.



MAIN STREET, WALLA WALLA, IN 1877.

This early image of Walla Walla shows the city less than 10 years after Craig's death.

Courtesy Washington State Historical Society.

Craig's Later Years

During the winter of 1858-59 Craig left Lapwai and briefly became the first postmaster of the new town of Walla Walla. Upon leaving that job he returned to his farm, from which he ran a hotel and stage station.

In April of 1869, William Craig died following a paralytic stroke at the age of sixty-two.

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YOUNG CHIEF (WEATENATEMANY) HEAD CHIEF OF THE CAYUSES ?-1859



This portrait of Weatenatemany (Young Chief) was created by Gustav Sohon. Courtesy Washington Historical Society.

The Cayuse people had a series of leaders named "Young Chief". The Cayuse chief who

attended the Walla Walla Treaty Council of 1855 was not the first, nor was he the last, to bear that English name. Weatenatemany, nephew of Tautau, the previous Young Chief, became the new Young Chief in October 1853, following a potlatch to mourn his uncle's recent death. (Portrait of Young Chief by Gustav Sohon)

The Walla Walla Council

Governor Isaac Stevens knew in advance who his friends and foes would be in the Walla Walla Council of 1855. In contrast to the spectacle of the over two thousand friendly Nez Perce arriving at the Council, the four hundred Cayuse and Walla Wallas arrived on May 26th in similarly grand fashion. Governor Stevens and his party felt threatened. They recorded that the Cayuse circled the treaty camp three times, whooping and shouting, glaring at the white troops, and boldly displaying their antagonism.

Weatenatemany, Five Crows, and the other Cayuse chiefs rode up to Stevens' and Palmer's tent, dismounted and shook hands. They were invited to smoke, but declined, saying they had not come to talk on that day.

The council officially began three days later.

Young Chief had no intention of signing a treaty and spoke frequently and passionately in the Council meetings. The records of the Council show his concern for the Cayuse people's connection to the land:

I wonder if the ground has anything to say? I wonder if the ground is listening to what is said?...The ground says, It is the Great Spirit that placed me here. The Great Spirit tells me to take care of the Indians, to feed them aright. The Great Spirit appointed the roots to feed the Indians on. The water says the same thing. The Great Spirit directs me, Feed the Indians well. The grass says the same thing, Feed the horses and cattle. The ground, water and grass say, The Great Spirit has given us our names. We have these names and hold these names. Neither the Indians nor the Whites have a right to change these names. The ground says, The Great Spirit has placed me here to produce all that grows on me, tree and fruit. The same way the ground says, It was from me man was made. The Great Spirit in placing men on earth, desired them to take good care of the ground and to do each other no harm. The Great Spirit said, You Indians who take care of certain portions of the country should not trade it off except you get a fair price.

When Looking Glass, Chief of the Nez Perce, arrived late in the council, Young Chief supported Looking Glass' claim that he, not Lawyer, was the Head Chief of the Nez Perce. Young Chief allied with Looking Glass to draw back from the agreements that appeared to be solidifying. By doing so, he likely

influenced the creation of a third reservation in the region.

Despite his misgivings, Young Chief signed the treaty in the end, but the Cayuse and Yakima were not pleased. The resentment they brought to the council would inevitably boil over into war a few months later.

War on the Columbia Plateau

The Yakima, Walla Walla and Cayuse peoples were incensed by a sudden flood of non-Native settlers. A newspaper article that prematurely announced that their land was open to settlement. It had been their understanding that they would hold their territory until the treaties were ratified. In October 1855, the tribes took up arms against the government.

Young Chief was drawn into the conflict. By spring, however, he and Five Crows, another chief, were weary of battle. Spokane Garry wrote a letter to Stevens relaying that Five Crows and Young Chief wanted peace and were "acting for the tribe". Garry went on to suggest that it might be acceptable to make peace with the Cayuse Nation, without involving the Yakima tribe. Isaac Stevens did not concur.

On August 30, 1856, members of the warring Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Tenino tribes began to arrive for a council with Stevens to discuss the conflict. The session- rife with tension- ended on September 17, with no agreement having been reached.

The Indians were called to one more council, this one with Colonel George H. Wright, who had been instructed to make peace with the region's tribes. During this second council, Wright explained that the army regulars understood the Indian point of view, and assured them that their lands would remain in their hands until the government ratified the treaties.



The map above shows three areas involved in the Walla Walla Treaties: Walla Walla (1), the Wallowa Valley (2) and the Lapwai Valley (3).
Courtesy Washington Historical Society.

Wright's actions initially restored calm to the region. However, resentment and conflict continued to build between the tribes and the non-Native settlers. The settlers believed that they had the right to settle where and when they pleased, regardless of the treaties that had been signed.

When the war with the whites was over, there were still hostilities with the Snake Indian tribe. Young Chief, Weatenatemany, was killed in a skirmish with the Snake Indians during the summer of 1859. His legacy was followed by yet another "Young Chief."

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The Treaty Trail: U. S. - Indian Treaty Councils in the Northwest

SPOKAN GARRY 1811-1892



Portrait of Spokan Garry created by Gustav Sohon. The signature on the bottom of the painting is by Garry himself. COURTESY WASHINGTON STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Spokan Garry, whose original name has been lost in time, was born in 1811. His

father, Illim-Spokanee, was the head of Sma-hoo-men-a-ish. Early traders mistook Illim-Spokanee's name for the name of the tribe, and the Sma-hoo-men-a-ish became known as the Middle Spokanes. Garry grew up around the white traders who built their post near his tribe, so he never feared nor was in awe of either the "King George" men (the British) or the "Bostons" (the Americans). (Portrait of Spokan Garry by Gustav Sohon)

Spokan Garry Goes to School

At the age of fourteen, Garry was selected as one of two boys from the surrounding tribes to be sent to the Red River School at Fort Garry, sponsored by the Hudson's Bay Company and run by the Church Missionary Society of the Church of England. He received the name of Spokan Garry there due to a school custom that renamed boys for their tribe and a well-known and respected person. The students, who numbered an average of sixteen at any one time, were taught English and farming.

Return to the Tribe

After the death of his father in the winter of 1828, Garry made the 1800-mile trip

back to the Spokane River. With the encroachment of the white population on the tribes of the Northwest, the traditional religious beliefs of the tribes had begun to weaken. The tribe readily accepted the Christian teachings brought back by Garry's upon his return, a hybrid form of Christianity that well suited the needs of the native population. The books from the missionaries became known as the "white man's book of heaven" which urged peace between the tribes and the whites.

The Coming of the American Missionaries

When missionaries arrived in the area, the focus shifted from Spokan Garry's teachings to those offered by the religious professionals who, rather than building on the foundation of faith already instilled by Garry, began attacking his interpretation of Christianity.

Unable to compete with the missionaries, Garry gave up his school and public preaching, along with his practice of wearing white man's clothing. He gradually returned to traditional dress and activities, many of which did not meet missionary approval.

Washington Becomes a Territory

Chief Garry, turning 40 in 1851, was a wealthy man, owning a large number of horses and farming a considerable area of land.

On October 17, 1853, Garry was summoned to a meeting with newly-appointed Governor of Washington Territory, Isaac Stevens, who was making his way east to Olympia, the new territorial capital. They carried on a lengthy conversation that evening, in both English and French, and Garry

surprised Stevens with his fluency in both languages. Garry was uncertain of Stevens' intent with regard to the Indians, so remained as noncommittal as possible on the issues. Stevens was somewhat annoyed by his caginess, and wrote in his diary that Garry "is not frank, and I do not understand him."

Stevens and the Treaties

When in May of 1855, the Stevens treaty-making team arrived in the eastern Territory, Garry was invited to attend the council at Walla Walla as an observer. He watched as the chiefs of the Walla Walla, Nez Perce, Cayuse and Yakama Indians reluctantly signed treaties, the implications of which were undoubtedly misunderstood. Spoken Garry's words to the Governor at the Walla Walla Treaty council:

Governor, see the difference there is between these Indians and you. See how everybody is red and you are white. The Indians think they are not poor. What do you think? Do you think they are poor when you look at them that way?

When you look at those red men, you think you have more heart, more sense than those poor Indians. I think the difference between us and you Americans is in the clothing. The blood and body are the same.

Do you think because your mother was white and theirs black that you are higher or better? We are black, yet if we cut ourselves, the blood will be red. So with the whites it is the same.

Now you take those Indians here for Chiefs. Do you think it? If you believe what they say, it is all right. If you take those Indians for men, treat them so now. The Indians are proud, they are not poor. If you talk truth to the Indians, the Indians will do the same to you.

The Later Years

In the years and wars that followed, Garry consistently and steadfastly came out on the side of peace with the whites. His unwillingness to make war often placed him in direct opposition to younger factions within the tribe.

As the white settlers poured into the region in the years following the Civil War, Garry's principal ambition in his later years was to protect himself and his followers from the pressure of white settlement by continually seeking to secure a treaty with the Government and preserve a portion of his country for his tribe. This, he felt, had been promised by Governor Stevens, but from 1859 forward his attempts were rebuffed. In 1887, Garry finally got his treaty, but no reservation.

The following year, while Garry and his family were at a temporary fishing camp, trespassers took possession of his own farm, which he had fenced and cultivated for many years. Endeavoring to regain possession peacefully, Garry maneuvered his way through the legal system. Shortly before his death, a final judgment was made against his claim of ownership and Spoken Garry's home, valued at \$25,000, passed into the hands of another man with no compensation made to Garry or his family.

On January 14, 1892, Spokane Garry died—homeless and penniless, his burial expenses paid out of the Spokane County pauper fund.

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