

LEWIS  
AND  
CLARK

*Through Indian Eyes*

NINE INDIAN WRITERS  
ON THE LEGACY OF THE EXPEDITION

*Edited by* ALVIN M. JOSEPHY, JR.  
*Author of America in 1492*

"A remarkable book. . . .  
Gives both the event and the era  
a fresh perspective."

*-St. Louis Post-Dispatch*



## OUR PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HERE

Roberta Conner



**ROBERTA CONNER**—Sisaawipam—is Cayuse, Umatilla, and Nez Perce in heritage and a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Known familiarly as “Bobbie,” Ms. Conner has been an ardent representative of her people and of all Indians since her high school days in Pendleton, Oregon. After obtaining a journalism degree at the University of Oregon and a master’s in management from Willamette University, Bobbie opted for the public sector, including an early five-year spell at an Indian foundation providing technical assistance to federal Indian-educational programs in the Northwest. In 1984 she was named a Presidential Management intern and moved along in federal service, ultimately to head up the Sacramento district of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

In the late 1990s Ms. Conner decided to come home, and in April 1998 took over as director of the Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The Institute opened in August 1998 with a threefold mission—to preserve the three tribes’ cultures, to present accurately the tribes’ history, and to contribute to the development of a tribal economy.

In the years since beginning her directorship, Bobbie Conner has lectured, written, and traveled extensively in support of that mission, while at the same time fulfilling an important role in a wide range of public activities of concern to Indians and non-Indians alike. Closer to the project at hand, Bobbie is vice president of the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Board of Directors and a member of its Circle of Tribal Advisors.

## OUR PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HERE

**Kwáalisim Púucha Chná Naami Natitayt (Walla Walla)**  
**Táaminwa Pawachá Chná Naami Tanánma (Umatilla)**

### INTRODUCTION

To hear tribal history requires listening to many connected stories—all interrelated, just as all things in creation are connected. Looking back at our tribes’ recent past, the arrival of Lewis and Clark and company is part of the same story as that of subsequent arrivals—other explorers, then trappers and traders, then emigrants—which led to the Treaty of 1855 and the tribes’ move to the reservation. These are not events unique unto themselves. They are connected to ancient times and modern times because they shape the stories of our people, who are still here, and the stories of our lands on which we still live. Lewis and Clark are also connected to subsequent incursions by the Founding Fathers’ visions of a continental nation and the consistency of methods used to obtain lands and to justify the taking of them from native peoples, reaching back to the 1400s.

If each person’s life is a story, then the lives of Lewis and Clark and the Indians who received them are not only the story of the time of the expedition. In one lifetime much would change. Men who were little boys at the time of the expedition’s arrival would, forty-nine years and seven months later, be asked to cede their homeland to Lewis and Clark’s “great chief,” albeit the man in the presidential chair had changed. One tribal leader would argue in 1855 that they had been good to Lewis and Clark but that they had been blind. In Clark’s next career as superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Missouri Territory, he would use the relationships he made with some

tribes during the expedition in order to move them to what is now Oklahoma. Each story unfolds to the next story. They are not isolated.

And yet, in the Lewis and Clark bicentennial years starting in 2003, the focus of non-Indians resides in the three-year journey of exploration and all that was recorded along the route of the search for the fabled Northwest Passage. Visitors to our museum on the Umatilla Reservation want to hear about two weeks two hundred years ago—the snapshot of time when the expedition was in our homeland. This tunnel vision results from seeing the expedition as a lone event, one moment in time, rather than the larger act of premeditated expansionism that was embedded in the historical context. Our typical visitor considers the popular notion of exploration as the goal for the great journey and nothing more. It is more; it is the first incursion and the beginning of the invasion in the Columbia River Plateau. It is the advent of dispossession for our tribes. It is the intentional extension of the European form of colonization into the Pacific Northwest. It is the fulfillment of the prophecy that our tribal lives would change and that we would need to endure great difficulty to survive. And survive we have. Against all odds, our people are still in their homeland, and like many other tribes, working to rebuild their nations—like the phoenix from the ashes. We want to tell the whole story right up to today, and we want our fellow Americans to hear it.

We are descendants of the people described in the journals, and we still live in much the same area as we did when the expedition traversed our homeland in 1805 and again in 1806. The Walla Walla, Umatilla, and Cayuse Tribes, as we are now known, make up the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation just east of Pendleton, Oregon. The population of our Confederacy is about 2,470 enrolled members, growing from our lowest numbers near 1,100 in the 1880s, yet still well below the estimated 8,000 at time of contact. Tribes with whom we are linguistically and culturally related include the Warm Springs, Wanapum, Palouse, Yakama, and Nez Perce. Our people have always been here. We intend to be here—in the place the Creator gave us to live—forever.

## OUR WAY OF LIFE

OCTOBER 19, 1805 . . . *The great chief Yel-lep-pit two other chiefs, and a Chief of Band below presented themselves to us verry early this morning. we Smoked with them, enformed them as we had all others above as well as we Could by Signs of our friendly intentions towards our red children Perticular those who opened their ears to our Councils . . . Seven lodges of Indians drying fish, at our approach they hid themselves in their Lodges and not one was to be seen untill we passed . . . while Setting on a rock wateing for Capt Lewis I Shot a Crain which was flying over of the common kind. I observed a great number of Lodges . . . others I Saw . . . delayed but a Short time before they returned to their Lodges as fast as they could run . . . the enteranc or Doers of the Lodges wer Shut with . . . a mat, I approached one with a pipe in my hand entered a lodge . . . found 32 persons . . . Some crying and ringing there hands, others hanging their heads . . . They said we came from the clouds . . . and were not men &c &c.*

WILLIAM CLARK

This place in the Columbia River Plateau is our home. Our people have always been here in what are now northeastern Oregon and southeastern Washington. How long is always? As far back as our oral histories recall. Back to when the landforms were created, back to the end of the cold times, back to the floods, back to the times when the mountains hurled rocks and fire at each other, back to when the animals held council and taught us how to live here. Our covenants on how to exist in this homeland are ancient. From the animals, plants, waterways, and the cycles provided by the seasons, we learned what to eat, where to live at different times of the year, how to heal ourselves and take care of one another. Our traditional laws, still in place, never replaced or superceded, tell us how to take care of the gifts from the Creator. In our cultures, children are sacred as are all the beings made by the Creator. That is the age-old context into which Lewis and Clark arrived in 1805. By virtue of their saying

so, these newcomers proclaimed we were children to their Great Father. Not so. We were and are children of this landscape that sustains us and upon which we have depended for eons. They did not speak our languages. They shot a crane flying by for no reason apparent to onlookers. They entered a closed door without seeking permission. Then, Clark writes that we said, undoubtedly by way of signs, they came from the clouds and are other than men—godlike? Perhaps Clark's own sense of superiority and dominance has run away with his imagination.

16TH OCT. 1805 . . . they have plenty of beads Copper & brass trinkets, about them which they Sign to us that they got them from Some tradors on a River to the North of this place—

17TH OCT. 1805 . . . a number of the Savages have red and blew cloth, but no buffalow Robes among them.

20TH OCT. 1805 . . . we halted at a village to dine where we bought a few roots &C. and Saw among them a number of articles which came from white people. Such as copper kittles Scarlet &C.

26TH OF APRIL 1806 . . . a number of the natives followed us who are mooveing up the river & Some of them are going over the rocky mountn. to kill buffaloe.

JOHN ORDWAY

Our Walla Walla, Cayuse, and Umatilla ancestors conducted trade for millennia with neighboring tribes traveling by canoe up and down the Columbia and on foot, and for centuries across the Rockies and elsewhere well beyond our homeland by horseback. The extensive trade network supplied ample opportunities to incorporate goods and concepts from other cultures and landscapes. When Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Northwestern Discovery arrived in our homeland in October of 1805, our people had lived in this place for thousands of years, had intertribal trade alliances, reciprocity

agreements for safe passage, and we had conducted multi-tribal expeditions to distant lands. We had white men's goods in the mid-Columbia Plateau, evidence of our network, which Lewis and Clark documented.

APRIL 28TH 1806 . . . being anxious to depart we requested the Cheif to furnish us with canoes to pass the river, but he insisted on our remaining with him this day at least, that he would be much pleased if we could conse[n]t to remain two or three, but he would not let us have canoes to leave him today . . . we urged the necessity of our going on immediately in order that we might the sooner return to them with the articles which they wished but this had no effect, he said that the time he asked could not make any considerable difference. I at length urged that there was no wind blowing and that the river was consequently in good order to pass our horses and if he would furnish us with canoes for that purpose we would remain all night at our present encampment, to this proposition he assented and soon produced us a couple of canoes by means of which we passed our horses over the river safely and hubbled them as usual.

MERIWETHER LEWIS

29TH OF APRIL 1806 . . . they have lately been at war with the Snake nation and many of them were kild.

JOHN ORDWAY

Our ancestors controlled what happened in our homeland. By 1805, more than thirty ships had reached the coast of what is now the Pacific Northwest. But when the Lewis and Clark expedition traveled through the mid-Columbia Plateau, this land was ours. None but our people lived here. This was not part of the young United States. While Russia, Spain, France, Britain, and the United States imagined the potential of economic control over abundant resources and trade with western tribes that would follow exploration, they had no influence here. Protected by the Rocky Mountains to the east, the Blue Mountains to the south, and the Cascades to the west as well as the Columbia River narrows and falls, only native peoples lived here. We

traded for white men's goods, we knew of them through our travels, and our prophecies foretold their arrival. But our local way of life was not threatened by their passage through our homeland. Thirty-three travelers were a curiosity, a trade opportunity.

14TH OCT. 1805 . . . *the canoe I had charge of ran fast on a rock in the middle of the river and turned across the rock. we attempted to git hir off but the waves dashed over hir So that She filled with water. we held hir untill one of the other canoes was unloaded and came to our assistance considerable of the baggage washed overboard, but the most of it was taken up below when the canoe got lightned She went of[f] of a sudden & left myself and three more Standing on the rock half leg deep in the rapid water untill a canoe came to our assistance. we got the most of the baggage to Shore two mens bedding lost one tommahawk, and some other Small articles a Small copper kittle &C.*

JOHN ORDWAY

The expedition was in our country when they came here; they were beyond the boundary of the United States, beyond the Louisiana Purchase. Our customs, our languages, our diet, our housing, our clothing, and our laws all emanated from the landscape that cared for us. The expedition traveled through, much as any travelers would, taking in as much as possible, learning what they could aided by the Nez Perce men who accompanied them here, and making assumptions. They were foreigners in our land, but in the journals, they write of things foreign or new to them. It is no wonder that some errors of misunderstanding or of omission occurred. One oral history of our people recounts how the explorers, and there were many after Lewis and Clark, were generally poor housekeepers and existed precariously among us, making it evident they did not belong here. Our ancestors hoped they would get home where they belonged.

Lewis and Clark were renaming rather than naming rivers "Lewis's," "Drewyer's," or "LePage's" rivers while passing through. They also renamed peoples in making their records. The peoples Lewis and Clark called Wallahwollah call themselves Waluulapam.



*A tule mat Umatilla lodge. Image courtesy of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon libraries.*

"Walla Walla" describes the many small flows of water that braid their way to the main stem of the Columbia River in that area. More than likely, their two Nez Perce escorts informed the expedition of the name of the waterway and then the expedition applied that name to the people. And the name stuck. Subsequent travelers referred to the people the same way. Walla Walla is how the tribe was referred to in the treaty of 1855 and is to this day. To native peoples then and now, each landmark and waterway has an ancient story that, when abbreviated, was represented by a name or title for that place. These names are still here, that is, as long as we retain and perpetuate that knowledge carried in indigenous languages. Today, the Cayuse language is extinct, save for about four hundred documented words, and most Cayuse descendants who speak a native language speak lower or upper Nez Perce. The few persons who speak Walla Walla as a first language are all elders. Those who speak Umatilla as a first language are a handful of adults and a few elders.

Lewis and Clark heard at least three languages on October 16, 1805, at the confluence of the Snake and Columbia rivers. That they did not know precisely which ones, or did not have the time to find out, is not important. What is important is the knowledge that is embedded in our tribal languages that accurately and efficiently tells the history of the ecosystems of the Columbia River drainage system.



In his second inaugural address on March 4, 1805, President Jefferson observed:

These persons inculcate a sanctimonious reverence for the customs of their ancestors; that whatsoever they did, must be done through all time; that reason is a false guide, and to advance under its counsel, in their physical, moral, or political condition, is perilous innovation; that their duty is to remain as their Creator made them, ignorance being safety, and knowledge full of danger . . .

Today, our people persist in resembling the observation regarding our sanctimonious reverence for the customs of our ancestors. It would be unwise to do otherwise. After thousands of years on this landscape, their empirical knowledge should be revered. This reverence for the ancient covenant between our people and salmon, for example, resulted in the ethic that one should never take all of anything in harvest. Always leave some fish to pass upriver, roots and berries for the other species who eat them. This same ancient covenant led the modern Confederated Tribes of Umatilla to undertake extraordinary efforts to successfully restore water flows and salmon to the Umatilla and Walla Walla rivers.

OCTOBER 18, 1805 . . . late at night the Chief came down accompanied by 20 men, and formed a Camp a Short distance above, the chief brought with him a large basket of mashed berries which he left at our Lodge as a present.

WILLIAM CLARK

APRIL 27TH 1806 . . . This Village consists of 15 large mat lodges . . . Yellept haranged his village in our favour intreated them to furnish us with fuel and provision and set the example himself by bringing us an armfull of wood and a platter of 3 roasted mullets. the others soon followed his example with respect to fuel and we soon found ourselves in possession of an ample stock . . . they also informed us, that there were a plenty of deer and Antelopes on the road, with good water and grass.

MERIWETHER LEWIS

Abundance is the standard in our culture, rather than scarcity. Our tribal characteristics emanated from our extended families, our close-knit village lives, our language groups, and our environment. Lewis and Clark described the Walla Walla as "the most hospitable, honest, sincere people that we have met with in our voyage." These complimentary journal entries describe virtues and values that directly reflected our culture, wherein people were well provided for by the landscape and their own industry. Our leaders were accus-

*An Umatilla lodge and women drying eels on racks.  
Image courtesy of Special Collections and University Archives,  
University of Oregon libraries.*



tomed to housing and feeding large gatherings. Efficient and effective food preparation, preservation, and storage methods sustained us year round, and our architecture was reliant on easily renewable resources. The journals comprehensively document our fishing practices, our numerous tule mat-lodge villages, the variety of roots we harvested, and our vast horse herds. We did not live in scarcity. We had learned through the ages to be prepared to care for others, including visitors from distant places.

OCTOBER 19TH 1805 . . . *those Lodges can turn out <250>350 men . . . opposite 24 Lodges of Indians . . . about 100 Inds. come . . .*

WILLIAM CLARK

Our homeland was neither an unoccupied frontier nor a wilderness. In fact, the concept of wilderness does not directly translate into our languages because it is a foreign construct. The Corps' journey from what is now North Dakota to what is now Oregon included contact with many tribal peoples. When the expedition arrived in the Columbia River Plateau, they entered one of the most populous areas they had been in since leaving the Mandan villages. And the Mandan villages, despite decimation by disease, were more densely populated than St. Louis, then a western outpost. The Corps of Discovery's "western estimate of Indians" included 114 tribes that are now represented by at least 58 modern tribal nations. Their estimate, while incomplete, included about 117 lodges and 4,700 estimated "soles" that were ancestors to the tribes now in our confederation of Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla.

OCTOBER 19TH SATURDAY 1805 *The great chief Yel-lep-pit two other chiefs, and a Chief of Band below presented themselves to us verry early this morning . . . Yelleppit is a bold handsom Indian, with a dignified countenance about 35 years of age, about 5 feet 8 inches high and well perpotiond. he requested us to delay untill the Middle of the day, that his people might Come down and See us, we excused our Selves and promised to Stay with him one*

*or 2 days on our return which appeared to Satisfy him; great numbers of Indians Came down in Canoes to view us before we Set out . . .*

WILLIAM CLARK

Lewis and Clark were an attraction when they arrived in our homeland in 1805. One of our leaders twice entreats them to stay longer so that more of his people may come and see them. One of our elders tells this history: "When the first people came to Umatilla, they had a colored man with them. And the kids got scared. They thought he was like a monster or something. The kids really behaved themselves. . . ." Another elder was told that her ancestors had found the men of the expedition peculiar because they appeared to be eating themselves—the men would reach into their breeches and pull something out to eat. They had pockets in their leggings or pants, which our people did not have in theirs. That people came by the hundreds to view the expedition members is evidence of the effectiveness of the moccasin telegraph and suggests just how peculiar and novel these travelers were.

20TH OF APRIL 1806 . . . *all the Indians we have Seen play a game & risque all the property they have at different games. the game that these Savages play is by setting in a circle & have a Small Smooth bone in their hands & Sing crossing their hands to fix it in a hidden manner from the other Side who gass the hand that has it in then counts one a Stick Stuck in the ground for the tal-lies & So on untill one Side or the other wins the property Stacked up. this game is played with activity, and they appear merry & peaceable. Capt. Lewis took the property from the man that gambled away our horse. . . . the Indians would not give us any thing worth mentioning for our canoes So we Split & burnt one of them this evening.*

JOHN ORDWAY

Various games and forms of gambling have been used for centuries, if not longer, to redistribute wealth along the Columbia River.



Lewis and Clark apparently wanted to engage in trade straightaway but did not wish to use their canoe to gamble for what they might obtain in a more time-consuming and chancy manner. But one of the men of the expedition did take a turn and lost a horse and then lost the gains from gambling to the captain. That gambling is inappropriate in any way is not our cultural conclusion. That judgment arrives with missionaries. In today's world, roughly 40 percent of federally recognized tribes use gaming as a means to an end. Without the benefit of a significant tax base to fund essential government services, tribes use the net profits from gaming to provide fire, police, sanitation, and emergency medical services as well as education and youth and elder care, among other necessities. Gaming also provides jobs and incomes on reservations where unemployment previously stagnated for decades between 40 and 80 percent.

APRIL 28TH 1806 . . . *we found a Shoshone woman, prisoner among these people by means of whome and Sahcaharweah we found the means of conversing with the Wollah-wollahs . . .*

MERIWETHER LEWIS

*Modern-day Umatillas playing the traditional hand game.  
Photograph courtesy of the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute.*



APRIL 28TH 1806 *This morning early the Great Chief Yel lip pet brought a very elegant white horse to our Camp and presented him to me Signifying his wish to get a kittle but being informed that we had already disposed of every kittle we could possibly Spare he Said he was Content with what ever I thought proper to give him. I gave him my Sward, 100 balls & powder and Some Small articles of which he appeared perfectly Satisfied . . .*

WILLIAM CLARK

APRIL 29TH 1806 *We gave Small Medals to two inferior Chiefs of this nation, and they each furnished us with a fine horse, in return we gave them Sundery articles among which was one of Capt Lewis's Pistols & Several hundred rounds of Amunition.*

WILLIAM CLARK

Tribal practices included taking captives during raids on neighboring rivals. The captive or slave station in the family and community was not necessarily permanent. A captive could ascend to higher stature by excelling, demonstrating worth to the community, and proving commitment to the people. York, for example, given his skills and record of service to Clark, would likely have fared better amongst Indians. For us, raids were a means of obtaining goods, livestock, and productive labor from those with whom we did not routinely trade. Raids and warfare were not conducted for the purpose of annihilation of another people. It would be counterproductive to completely eliminate another people. Clark, alternatively, indicates in his October 19, 1805, field notes about his encounter with the Umatillas that "Indians [were] much fritened . . . I am confident I could have tomahawked every Indian here." While the statement is innocuous enough, it provides an important glimpse into the psyche of Clark, who is leading an advance party, with the rest of the Corps following at some distance. For a moment Clark feels no vulnerability, and he is aware of that. Perhaps even more telling are the trades that Lewis and Clark conduct upon their return in April 1806.

Whether it is out of confidence from being amicably greeted and well hosted by the Walla Walla or out of the paucity and recklessness that were more common on their return journey is unclear, but one of our ancestors received Clark's sword, one hundred balls, and powder. Another received one of Lewis's pistols and several hundred rounds of ammunition. Evidently, the leaders of the expedition did not fear for their lives among our people, or were too long too far from home to be careful.

OCTOBER 17TH 1805 . . . *This river is remarkably Clear and Crowded with Salmon in many places, I observe in ascending great numbers of Salmon dead on the Shores, floating on the water and in the Bottoms which can be seen at the depth of 20 feet. the Cause of the emence numbers of dead Salmon I can't account for So it is I must have seen 3 or 400 dead and maney living . . .*

WILLIAM CLARK

OCTOBER 18, 1805 . . . *great numbers of Indians appeared to be on this Island, and emence quantities of fish Scaffold . . . on the Stard. Side is 2 Lodges of Indians Drying fish, . . . passed an Island Close under the Stard. Side on which was 2 Lodges of Indians drying fish on Scaffolds as above . . . on this Island is two Lodges of Indians, drying fish, on the fourth Island Close under the Stard. Side is nine large Lodges of Indians Drying fish on Scaffolds as above . . .*

WILLIAM CLARK

APRIL 29TH . . . *thought it best to remain on the Wallah Wallah river about a mile from the Columbia untill the morning, accordingly encamped on that river near a fish Wear . . . they have also a Small Seine managed by one person, it bags in the manner of the Scooping nets . . . there are 12 other Lodges of the Wallahwallah Nation on this river a Short distance below our Camp. those as well as those beyond the Columbia appear to depend on their fishing weres for their Subsistance . . .*

WILLIAM CLARK

We were resident; Lewis and Clark and all members of the expedition were transient. They saw much that they did not comprehend, even when they tried in earnest to understand. In fact, as they traveled in service to President Jefferson's expansionist fantasy of seeking a direct water route through the continent, they were exploring the place the Creator gave us in which to live. The Creator gave everyone a place to live. Why were they in our country, living precariously in a place they did not belong? Moreover, why would our ancestors be so hospitable to these strangers? Why not? They were thirty-three travelers merely passing through, who did not represent a threat to our way of life at the time of their passing and for years to come. Could anyone foresee that, 109 years later, dams on the Umatilla River would prevent fish passage and that our tribes would have to work for years to return water to the riverbed and reintroduce salmon to the Umatilla River after an absence of 70 years? Did anyone envision that, 152 years later, the richest salmon fishery in the West, the magnificent Celilo Falls, would be submerged under the backwaters of the Dalles Dam? That Lewis and Clark were unfamiliar with the anadromous fish teeming in the rivers—fresh with just as many spawned out lying dead—is not important. What is important is our modern challenge to protect water flows and salmon habitat and restore salmon runs not to 1950s pre-dam levels, but to the levels that Lewis and Clark indubitably witnessed.

APRIL 28TH 1806 . . . *a little before Sun Set the Chim nah poms arrived . . . they joined the Wallah wallahs . . . and formed a half circle around our camp . . . the whole assemblage of Indians about 350 men women and Children Sung and danced at the Same time. most of them danced in the Same place they Stood and mearly jumped up to the time of their musick. Some of the men who were esteemed most brave entered the Space around which the main body were formed in Solid Column and danced in a Circular manner Side wise. at 10 P M. the dance ended and the nativ retired; they were much gratified in Seeing Some of our Party join them in their dance. one of their party who made himself the most Conspicuous Charecter in the dance and Songs, we were told was a Medesene man & Could foretell things. that he had*

*told of our Comeing into their Country and was now about to consult his God the moon if what we Said was the truth &c. &c.*

WILLIAM CLARK

We had philosophy, laws, order, and religion; we were not uncivilized or wild. We lived according to our laws in the order established in our homes and homeland. Our law emanated from our ecosystem and our philosophy and is celebrated in our music. On the night of April 28, 1806, the members of the expedition did not distinguish the kinds of songs and dances they witnessed. As native people read what some of the Corps wrote about the occasion, they recognize that the writers are describing a worship service in which each song is a prayer and they are participating in a ceremony in which the fulfillment of the prophecy of the new people coming is proclaimed. It is a Washat service. Our people still sing the prayer songs that were likely sung that night. In our longhouses, people still mark time to the prayer songs and dance jumping in time to the music in a circular, sideways manner as described two hundred years ago. Elders here have spoken of the announcement of the fulfillment of the prophecy. That Clark thought the medicine man was consulting the moon is not far from the erroneous notion assumed by the traders who later occupied Fort Nez Perce at Wallula—that we were sun worshipers. In actuality, the practice of greeting the day in prayer at sunrise, facing east, led to the traders' conclusion but we worship the Creator, the supreme light of the world, maker of all, in all our prayers.

APRIL 26TH 1806 . . . *we were over taken to day by Several families of the natives who were traveling up the river with a Numr. of horses; they Continued with us much to our ennoyance as the day was worm the roads dusty and we Could not prevent their horses Crouding in and breaking our order of March without useing Some acts of Severty which we did not wish to Commit.*

WILLIAM CLARK

APRIL 30TH 1806 . . . *this stream is a branch of the Wallahwollah river into which it discharges itself about six miles above the junction of that river with the Columbia . . . it appears to be navigable for canoes; it is deep and has a bold current . . .*

MERIWETHER LEWIS

Although our once-great horse culture is now a remnant of what it was, it is not gone. After our homeland became a "fur desert," as otter and beaver were obliterated for a hat craze in "civilized" nations, horses were our stock-in-trade. Our selective-breeding practices yielded fast, hearty horses renowned for their stamina and soundness. A few of our famously sturdy, fast equines went to Bora Bora during World War II. By the 1950s, the businesses of farming, ranching, and railroads find horses a nuisance, and the advent of post-Depression economics and the auto result in thousands of horses being "canned" for dog food and glue. Nonetheless, within our modern tribes are people who rodeo, race horses, rope, trail-ride, teach horsemanship; cut, rein, and round up cattle; and hunt on horseback. Canoe making has ceased but threatens resurgence because other neighboring tribes have maintained this skill. Many of the tribal technologies that sustained our people for millennia continue because they are valuable not as quaint traditions, but as knowledge of our universe. Hunting, fish harvest, root digging, and associated processing technologies represent ways of perpetuating the sacred species given to us on our land. Formal rites of passage for first kill, first fish, first digging, and first picking are still observed in families and in the longhouse. The ways of knowing are as valued as the land and animals that taught our ancestors. Being instructed formally and finding answers from nature are both accepted methods of obtaining knowledge.

APRIL 30TH 1806 . . . *this plain as usual is covered with aromatic shrubs hurbatious plants and a short grass. many of those plants produce those esculent roots which form a principal part of the subsistence of the natives. among*

*others there is one which produces a root somewhat like the sweet pitaitoe . . . Drewyer killed a beaver and an otter; a part of the former we reserved for ourselves and gave the indians the ballance. these people will not eat the dog but feast heartily on the otter which is vastly inferior in my estimation, they sometimes also eat their horses, this indeed is common to all the indians who possess this animal in the plains of Columbia; but it is only done when necessity compells them.—*

MERIWETHER LEWIS

Our indigenous diet was lean, rich, and diverse, and our people were physically active and athletic (characteristics that become especially significant when compared to today's diabetes-inducing nutrition and lifestyles). Despite their awareness of native plant foods, members of the expedition ate, according to scholarly estimates, nine pounds of meat per man per day. If they found Indian customs peculiar and our diet distasteful, imagine what we thought of theirs. While we did not consume dogs, and would only consume horse meat in a rare circumstance, the Corps members preferred these meats to salmon. They bought at least fifty dogs from our camps on the outbound journey. There was no alcohol in our diet. Unlike the expedition group, we did not make spirits out of rotting camas roots. And, for regular cleansing, both physical and spiritual, we had our sweat houses and bathed frequently in streams and rivers, while the members of the expedition were smelly, according to tribal oral history.

1ST DAY OF MAY 1806 . . . *some time after we had encamped three young men arived from the Wallahwollah village bringing with them a steel trap belonging to one of our party which had been negligently left behind; this is an act of integrity rarely witnessed among indians. during our stay with them they several times found knives of the men which had been carelessly lossed by them and returned them. I think we can justly affirm to the honor of these people that they are the most hospitable, honest, and sincere people that we have met with in our voyage.—*

MERIWETHER LEWIS

Native peoples were not heathens, thieves, squaw drudges, savages, or even chiefs. While Indians were described as such in the journals of the six men in the expedition who could write, these were all terms given to us by others outside our cultures that represented common vernacular of the day, albeit largely derogatory. If saying it doesn't make it so, writing it down did not improve the veracity of such labels. When our Nimíipu (Nez Perce) relatives escorted them into the mid-Columbia Plateau, the explorers encountered orderly division of labor between genders, picketed graves and burial islands, veneration of elders that was obvious even to outsiders, people unafraid of new commerce opportunities, people who were multilingual, and displays of tremendous hospitality. Our people continue to be welcoming, straightforward, and heartfelt in our endeavors, and, sadly, racial epithets and derogatory labels persist.

### INNOCENT JOURNEY OR RECONNAISSANCE FOR AN EMPIRE?

Our tribes were sovereign nations when President Jefferson dispatched the expedition. We were nations at the Walla Walla Treaty Council in 1855. We are nations today. Lewis and Clark carried the message of U.S. sovereignty to each of the tribal nations they met; diplomacy was part of their directive. During the face-to-face diplomatic overtures of the expedition, no one deliberated our ownership, our occupancy, or our authority. Lewis and Clark had no doubt that they were visitors. But in the "seventeen great nations" on the other coast, and across the Atlantic waters in Europe, unmistakable precedents had already shaped what would become our destiny—Manifest Destiny born of the rights of discovery.



President Jefferson expected the expedition to be thorough in their reconnaissance, documentation, and ritual enactment, and wrote very explicit instructions in his June 20, 1803, missive to Captain Lewis:

*The commerce which may be carried on with the people inhabiting the line you will pursue, renders a knolege of these people important. You will therefore endeavor to make yourself acquainted, as far as diligent pursuit of your journey shall admit, with the names of the nations & their numbers; the extent & limits of their possessions; their relations with other tribes or nations; their language, traditions, monuments; their ordinary occupations in agriculture, fishing, hunting, war arts, & the implements for these; their food, clothing, & domestic accommodations; the diseases prevalent among them, & the remedies they use; moral and physical circumstance which distinguish them from the tribes they know; peculiarities in their laws, customs & dispositions; and articles of commerce they may need or furnish & to what extent . . . it will be useful to acquire what knolege you can of the state of morality, religion & information among them, as it may better enable those who endeavor to civilize & instruct them, to adapt their measures to the existing notions & practises of those on whom they are to operate. . . . In all your intercourse with the natives treat them in the most friendly & conciliatory manner which their own conduct will admit; allay all jealousies as to the object of your journey, satisfy them of it's innocence, make them acquainted with the position, extent, character, peaceable & commercial dispositions of the U.S., of our wish to be neighborly, friendly & useful to them, & of our dispositions to a commercial intercourse with them. . . . [emphasis mine] Carry with you some matter of the kine-pox, inform those of them with whom you may be of it's efficacy as a preservative from the small pox; and instruct them & encourage them in the use of it. This may be especially done wherever you may winter.*

Lewis and Clark were not making an innocent journey of discovery into our lands. The word *discover*, according to Webster's dictionary, "presupposes exploration, investigation or chance encounter and always implies the previous existence of what becomes known."

So to discover tribes takes nothing away from our history, or so it seems, but for indigenous peoples the act of discovery is loaded, charged, and offensive. Why? Because there is a larger, more consequential, insidious application when lands and indigenous peoples are "discovered." The idea that an official government-ordered expedition of discovery conducted by a military unit is or was altruistic, innocent, virtuous, and heroic must come from the discoverer's vantage point. Such a notion is naïve, or disingenuous and reckless. The moniker of "discovery" tied to the expedition is commonly seen in terms of the group's naturalist findings and their identification of numerous waterways and peoples. The bigger picture reveals that "discovery" and the exercise of "discoverer's rights" were practices made common by European nations in their colonizing forays throughout the world; they were employed in the United States, as reflected in Jefferson's directives to Lewis and Clark; and finally, they inform the actions of Lewis and Clark.



**Was there a grand design in the act of exploration carried out by Lewis and Clark? Further, if members of the expedition knowingly conducted reconnaissance with foresight and intent to dispossess Indians of their lands, should Americans still applaud their journey? Finally, should enlightenment about past injustices and pursuit of justice be goals for future generations of non-Indian as well as Indian citizens, leaders, and officials?**

"[T]he dispatch of the Lewis and Clark expedition was an act of imperial policy," wrote Bernard DeVoto in *The Course of Empire*. "The United States had embarked on the path of building a transcontinental empire" and the expedition "dramatically enhanced the United States' 'discovery rights' to what became known as the Oregon Country," Stephen Dow Beckham explains in *Lewis & Clark: From the Rockies to the Pacific*. In *Founding Brothers: The Revolution-*

ary Generation, Joseph J. Ellis identifies a fully continental vision of an American empire in General Washington's 1783 annual message to the states. James P. Ronda, in *Finding the West: Explorations with Lewis and Clark*, observes that Jefferson's vision "made empire not only possible, but somehow almost predetermined . . . Jefferson was determined to make the United States an imperial contender." That this straightforward and comprehensible expansionist theme recurs in scholarly work suggests that its assertions are not implausible, not imperceptible, and not without merit.

Recent scholarship on the Doctrine of Discovery by Robert Miller, Eastern Shawnee, Lewis and Clark Law School professor, and member of the Bicentennial Circle of Tribal Advisors, illustrates the principles that underlie the impetus for the expedition. He dispels the popular belief that the Louisiana Purchase was a remarkable land deal because the United States did not buy the land in that transaction. If the United States had bought the land, the next century would not have been spent executing treaties with and buying land from tribes to acquire that territory. Instead, what the United States purchased were Napoleon's so-called discoverer's rights. Miller describes the chronological development and application of the Doctrine of Discovery, the philosophy and international law that crossed the Atlantic and took root in the fertile soil of the fledgling United States. "Discovery was applied by European/Americans to legally infringe on the real property and sovereign rights of the American Indian nations and their people, without their knowledge or consent, and it continues to adversely affect Indian tribes and people today. . . . The three fundamental tenets of American Indian law, the plenary power, the trust responsibility, and the tribal diminished sovereignty doctrines, which grant the United States nearly unchecked power in Indian affairs, all arose from the Doctrine of Discovery."

Miller demonstrates how the doctrine arises from Spain and Portugal when "the conversion of the 'nearly wild' infidel natives was justified because they allegedly did not have a common religion, were not governed by laws, lacked normal social intercourse, money, metal, writing, European style clothing, and lived like animals. . . ."

By 1493, the Church exercised the Doctrine of Discovery, explorers helped expand the Church's domain, Spain and Portugal had exclusive rights over other Christian countries to explore and colonize, and Spain and Portugal were sufficiently dominant to claim possession of lands simply through symbolic rituals.

Such routine institutionalized dehumanization of native peoples is not unique to Europe. The writings of Presidents George Washington and Thomas Jefferson provide ample evidence that they regarded the Indian inhabitants of North America as animals. In 1783, while a general, Washington recommended an approach for dealing with tribes summed up as "the Savage as Wolf," wherein rapidly encroaching civilization would eventually result in evacuation and attrition. Jefferson similarly suggested that for Indians who failed to assimilate "we shall be obliged to drive them with the beasts of the forests into the Stony mountains." If not dehumanization to help allay any threat Indians might represent, there was always the option of paternalism to diminish the power of the natives.

AUGUST 3RD, 1804 . . . *The great chief of the Seventeen great nations of America, impelled by his parental regard for his newly adopted children on the troubled waters, has sent us to clear the road, remove every obstruction, and make it the road of peace between himself and his red children residing there.*

MERIWETHER LEWIS

The procedure for applying discoverer's rights through treaties was established and in use well before the expedition was dispatched. Between 1785 and 1789, when the United States entered into treaties with the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Wyandot, the United States exerted "the sole and exclusive right of regulating the trade with the Indians and managing all their affairs in such manner as [the United States] think proper." In addition, in the four aforementioned treaties and the 1784 Treaty with the Six Nations (Iroquois) and the 1786 treaty with the Shawnee, the United States promised to protect the tribes and said they were "under the protec-

tion of the United States and of no other sovereign whatsoever." Professor Miller explains that the doctrine meant that "when European, Christian nations first discovered new lands the discovering country automatically gained sovereign and property rights in the lands of the non-Christian, non-European nation even though, obviously, the natives already owned, occupied, and used these lands."

The importance of Indians to President Jefferson is evidenced in many of his writings and speeches, including his second inaugural address and first, third, and sixth annual messages to the Senate and House of Representatives; in his work as a lawyer; as well as in his 1803 directives to Captain Lewis. Jefferson, a student of science, culture, and linguistics, author of the Declaration of Independence, was also a founding father of American archaeology, based on his excavation of Indian burial mounds. It can hardly be argued that he did not know what would become of the native peoples once the embrace of the United States reached them. In his second inaugural address on March 4, 1805, President Jefferson said:

The aboriginal inhabitants of these countries I have regarded with the commiseration their history inspires. Endowed with the faculties and the rights of men, breathing ardent love of liberty and independence, and occupying a country which left them no desire but to be undisturbed, the stream of overflowing population from other regions directed itself on these shores; without power to divert, or habits to contend against, they have been overwhelmed by the current, or driven before it . . .

Miller demonstrates that "Jefferson clearly understood the ramifications of the Doctrine and utilized Discovery principles against the native people and tribal nations in the Louisiana and Pacific Northwest territories through the expedition." He also notes that the expedition was cited for more than three decades in political negotiations as justification for the United States' Discovery claim to the Pacific Northwest. The Doctrine of Discovery had been in

use internationally for three centuries by 1803. By then, European and colonial governments, American state governments, and federal executive and legislative branches had adopted the doctrine.

So, was there a grand design in the acts of exploration carried out by Lewis and Clark? Unequivocally, yes. The expedition was in and of itself evidence of exercising the Doctrine of Discovery, affirmation of its efficacy, and manifestation of the expansionist dream. Miller summarizes: "Lewis and Clark carried out the tasks Jefferson assigned them in the Louisiana Territory to start to bring the tribes within the American political and commercial orbit and they performed well-recognized rituals in making the United States' Discovery claim to the Pacific Northwest . . . Lewis and Clark's actions seem to have been an amalgamation of all the Discovery rituals practiced by England, France, Spain, Holland, and Portugal, which included taking physical possession of land, building structures, official parades and formalistic procedures, native consent to European control, map-making, and astronomical observations."

Jefferson's recognition of tribes as sovereigns only made it more imperative that the expedition conduct ceremonial diplomacy councils, carve their names and dates on rocks and trees, brand what they could, erect improvements on the land, and name places and waterways and map them. Anyone who might attempt to preempt the U.S. interests would know that these Americans had already been there by the evidence they left. Peace medals in the form of U.S. currency and banners of the American interest in the form of the U.S. flag were doled out all along the routes traveled. The notice they posted at Fort Clatsop was a clear demarcation of the U.S. claim. This was an army expedition following the military orders of their commander in chief. Discovery was not just exploration. It was and is a legal construct complicating the standard historical narrative of the innocence of the expedition's journey.

So, if members of the expedition knowingly conducted reconnaissance with foresight and intent to dispossess Indians of their lands, should Americans still applaud their journey? Reluctantly, and

conditionally, yes. When the United States and its citizens accept responsibility for the consequences that came after Lewis and Clark's mapping and recording, then they can praise a job done well. The members of the expedition were courageous, observant, astute, conscientious, and diligent about their duties. They were courageous because they were very far from home, vastly outnumbered by the Indians, and largely uneducated about the lands, conditions, and peoples in the West. Even when they were dangerously foolhardy in their methods or haphazard in conduct, they were still performing their duty. The various journals reflect these characteristics and permit a look into the changes that occurred during their contact with Indians as they transpired. These records of tribes in their homelands have been used in Indian land-claim cases because they represent documentation of our longitudinal occupancy and ownership. That the record they created might not win any journalistic laurels or spelling contests does not make their fieldwork and documentation any less worthwhile. That they were sometimes off the mark in cultural understanding or in measuring locations astronomically does not diminish the incredible record they created. That they were ignorant of the inherent knowledge and values in the ancient cultures they encountered does not separate them from many people today. That they were just following orders in preparing the homework for the dispossession of lands from American Indians does not distinguish them from more modern U.S. emissaries. They were a small military unit, representing a distant ambitious president leading an immature nation, doing the best they could with what they had at the time and within the mores with which they were born and raised. They were not "from the clouds" back then any more than they are idols to Indian peoples today.

## AFTERMATH

... *We require time to think, quietly, slowly.*

*PeoPeoMoxMox, Walla Walla  
Treaty Council of 1855*

The Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark expedition shaped the future boundaries of the young United States and changed our people's lives forever. Less than fifty years after Lewis and Clark trooped through the middle of the homelands of the Walla Walla, Umatilla, and Cayuse, our leaders ceded under duress—in peace-treaty proceedings—roughly 6 million acres of land to the United States. Washington territorial governor Isaac Stevens conducted a fourteen-month campaign to conclude ten treaties that would yield approximately 70 million acres of the Pacific Northwest to the United States by 1856. And he was not the only agent of empire at this time.

In the deliberations at the Walla Walla Treaty Council of 1855, Lewis and Clark are referenced many times. The minutes of the proceeding reflect that the treaty commissioners reminded those at the council that they "knew the Nes Perses were always friendly to the whites. Lewis and Clark had said this and all white men." Governor Stevens also asks, "What has made trouble between the white man and the red man? Did Lewis and Clark make trouble? They came from the Great Father; did I and mine make trouble? No! but the trouble had been made generally by bad white men and the Great Father knows it, hence laws." Then he extends the embrace of the United States typical in other treaties, "The Great Father therefore desires to make arrangements so you can be protected from these bad white men, and so they can be punished for their misdeeds."

Stevens again invokes Lewis and Clark to compliment and draw in the tribes: "The Great Father has learned much of you. He first learned of you from Lewis & Clarke, . . . they came through your



country finding friends and meeting no enemies. I went back to the Great Father last year to say that you had been good, you had been kind, he must do something for you." In the same treaty council, Oregon superintendent of Indian Affairs Joel Palmer describes Discovery and Manifest Destiny. "It is but fifty years since the first white man came among you, those were Lewis and Clark who came down the Big River—the Columbia. Next came Mr. Hunt and his party, then came the Hudson's Bay Co. who were traders. Next came missionaries; these were followed by emigrants with wagons across the plains; and now we have a good many settlers in the country below you. . . . Like the grasshoppers on the plains; some years there will be more come than others, you cannot stop them; they say this land was not made for you alone. . . . Who can say that this is mine and that is yours? The white man will come to enjoy these blessings with you; what shall we do to protect you and preserve peace? There are but few whites here now, there will be many, let us like wise men, act so as to prevent trouble. . . . And now while there is room to select for you a home where there are no white men living let us do so. . . ."

The treaty commissioners repeatedly conveyed the urgency of their requirement to execute a treaty. By 1855, our people had spilled the blood of the missionaries Marcus and Narcissa Whitman among others, the Oregon Trail migration was twelve years old, the railroads needed to be transcontinental, gold had been discovered, and Spain and England had relinquished their claims in the Oregon Territory. After describing what he knows of Fort Laramie and California circumstances, the Nez Perce leader Eagle from the Light spoke about previous diplomatic gambits: "At the time the first white men ever passed through this country, although the people of this country were blind, it was their heart to be friendly to them. Although they did not know what the white people said to them they answered yes as if they were blind. . . . I have been talked to by the French and by the Americans, and one says to me, go this way, and the other says go another way; and that is the reason I am lost between them."

Through travel to other regions and through the talk of white men at the churches and trading posts, tribal leaders were aware of the

colonialist enterprise at the time of the Treaty Council and well before. "Lawyer Said. This Earth is known as far as it extends. . . . We also know that towards the east there are a great many different kinds of people: there are red people and yellow people and black people, and a long time ago the people that travelled this country passed on the waters. . . . From this country they took back samples of rich earth, of flowers, and all such things; they also reported that there was a country on the other side, and it was peopled and these people reported they had found a country."\*

Our spokesmen at the Treaty Council were not naïve, nor were they oblivious to the fact that decisions were being made for them without consultation or their consent. They were beset by the savage-as-wolf consequence, which was threatened in no uncertain terms. At the council, Cayuse leader Young Chief said, ". . . The reason why we could not understand you was that you selected this country for us to live in without our having any voice in the matter. . . . You embraced all my country, where was I to go, was I to be a wanderer like a wolf. Without a home without a house I would be compelled to steal, consequently I would die. I will show you lands I will give you, we will then take good care of each other. . . . I think the land where my forefathers are buried should be mine."

The tribal leaders were aware of what they were being asked to do and knew of the whites' perceptions of them as eager traders. Walla Walla leader PeoPeoMoxMox said, "In one day the Americans become as numerous as the grass; this I learned in California; I know that it is not right. You have spoken in a round about way; speak straight. I have ears to hear you and here is my heart. Suppose you show me goods shall I run up and take them? That is the way we are, we Indians, as you know us. Goods and the earth are not equal; goods are for using on the Earth. I do not know where they have given lands for goods."

\*U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Certified Copy of the Original Minutes of the Official Proceedings at the Council in Walla Walla Valley, Which Culminated in the Stevens Treaty of 1855* (Portland, Ore.: Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1953).

Our tribal leaders were steadfast in their lack of desire to cooperate in the land cession. On one night, the Cayuse announced a lockdown in their camp, indicating no white visitors would be permitted. That night, they proposed to their tribal allies a war that would eliminate the whites and allow them to reclaim all their lands. But after their allies refused the proposition, they returned to hear the commissioners' proposals. After a week of council meetings, Governor Stevens made his plan clear. "I will now explain this matter more freely. We wish to put the Spokanes, the Nes Perces, the Walla Walla, the Cayuses, the Umatillas on one Reservation in the Nes Perces country." He would not prevail. He eventually agreed to create a third reservation, the one where most Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla live today.

Our leaders did not succumb to the tactics that had been so successfully applied in so many other councils. But our fate would be the one common to most Indians in the late nineteenth century. While some would become successful farmers and ranchers, most of our people would adjust to subsist on the fishing, hunting, gathering, trapping, and grazing rights reserved in our Treaty of 1855, without which our suffering would have been much worse. The government policies and practices in reservation life and boarding schools would further disenfranchise and fractionalize our people, but they would not do us in. We are still working to overcome the social, psychological, physical, and economic consequences of what followed Lewis and Clark. At great cost, our people have survived. In every major tribal decision-making point since, the troubles of our ancestors are revisited. We do not do this to remind ourselves of the injustices. We do so to remind ourselves of the wisdom, fortitude, forbearance, and foresight of our ancestors who made tremendous sacrifices so that we may still be here in our homeland and so that we follow their example.

The series of Isaac Stevens's treaties negotiated in 1854-56 provided the United States with the fulfillment of the dream of a continental nation reaching both coasts. President Jefferson and the

Founding Fathers charted the course; the Lewis and Clark expedition mapped and branded the route; and treaty commissioners imposed their national rights of Discovery on Indians who had few choices and none favorable. The unsettling of the West, the mess left by Manifest Destiny, is manifested in the lives of terminated tribes, unrecognized tribes, landless tribes, and tribes trying to restore the pedagogy of ancient cultures splintered by historical events and actors. Regardless of how many cultures live here now and who claims title to each parcel, this is the legacy of the young United States; it is the mutual inheritance of Americans.

In the Walla Walla Treaty Council of 1855, our leaders reserved for our tribes 512,000 acres so that we might continue to live according to the natural laws given to us by the Creator. Oregon was granted statehood February 14, 1859, prior to the official dispossession of our lands—almost a month before the treaty was ratified on March 8. The 512,000 acres became less than half that as a result of an eastern boundary dispute when the Umatilla Reservation was surveyed in 1871. It became 158,000 acres after the Slater Act of 1885 allotted lands to individual Indians and the U.S. government declared the balance to be surplus and open for settlement.

So, should enlightenment about past injustices and pursuit of justice be goals for future generations of non-Indian as well as Indian citizens, leaders, and officials? Absolutely, and progress should be assessed when planning anniversary observances. U.S. Constitution, article 6 states, "[A]ll Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land." Ratified Treaty #289 is the treaty between the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Tribes and the United States. Our treaty rights face myriad challenges today, in the court of law and in the court of public opinion. There are citizens who believe that the treaties are not living documents, that they are out of date, obsolete, and no longer useful. Indeed, treaties were the means through which all others obtained legal title to Indian lands, and it would behoove non-Indians to protect and uphold the provisions of treaties today.

### CONCLUSION

Our tribal history is as ancient as our bond to the place the Creator gave us in which to live. One of the recent modern chapters in our long history begins with the arrival of the army expedition led by Lewis and Clark into our homeland. American history in the interior Pacific Northwest commences with their arrival. Comparatively speaking, Americans are still the new kids on the block. American Indians were largely exempt from the American ideals of democracy, justice, domestic tranquillity, common defense, and general welfare for most of the past two centuries. The "Great White Father" could not provide what his voting citizenry did not require, and usually did not deliver on promises past presidents and congresses made to Indians. However, the land and cultural teachings sustained us.

This history was, is, and always will be a story about our land. The passage of time does not separate the story from the land, and our people have refused to be separated from this land. By now, it must be clear we are not going to go away or become extinct. The immense and powerful United States needs to acknowledge tribal contributions to its development. Our lands, knowledge, customs, sacred foods, and medicines have all been subjected to unwelcome harvests by unethical parties. And yet, tribes continue to try to inform and protect this still-young nation because this is our home. The United States is a powerful nation that must do what it has promised.

We have been patient. We are not leaving. But the land and the species that the Creator placed here with us need our help. The way we all live has consequences for water and air quality and affects all the other species with which we share this home. Our tribes have undertaken natural and cultural management compacts and plans and implemented a host of projects to restore and protect many parts of the ecosystem. There are many publicly owned lands in our homeland, and we are active participants in their future wherever

possible. Also, with the revenue our tribal enterprises provide, we have begun buying back land, sometimes at seemingly rapacious rates, from the great-grandchildren of emigrant families. Our imperative is constant; our tribes must protect our home and all the gifts from the Creator.

My grandfather's great-grandfathers were little boys when the Lewis and Clark expedition came into our homeland. They would grow up and represent our people at the Walla Walla Treaty Council of 1855. In their lifetimes, the hospitality, sincerity, and honesty of their parents would not save them from the travesty and tragedy of the unsettling of the West. Their tribes went from being superior hosts to Lewis and Clark to being forced to cede almost all of their lands in their lifetimes.

"Our people's devotion to this land is stronger than any piece of paper," my grandfather told my mother, when explaining his World War I tour of duty in France with the U.S. Navy well before Indians had the right to vote. That's why he went to war when the United States had conflict with other countries. That devotion is deeper than our mistrust. It is more important than our wounds from past injustices. It is tougher than hatred. We continue to be inextricable from our homeland. However modern our tools and wars become, our bond to the place the Creator gave us is immovable since time immemorial.