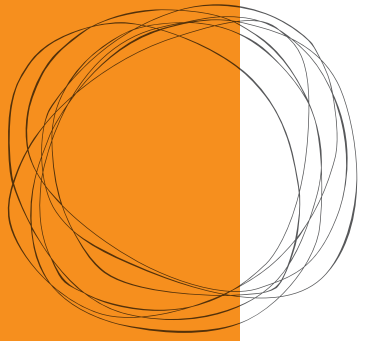




# *Voices of the River*

confluence



# c o n f l u e n c e

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Table of contents photos by Elliot Fogarty and John Benjes.

*Voices of the River is an annual publication by Confluence, a community-supported nonprofit with the mission to connect people to the history, living cultures, and ecology of the Columbia River system through Indigenous voices.*

Confluence was founded in 2002 in response to the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial as a way to connect people to the Indigenous side of the American story. It began with art landscapes along the river in collaboration with northwest Tribes and the celebrated artist Maya Lin. Today, the five completed Confluence project sites span 438 miles of river in Oregon and Washington. The artworks use the Lewis and Clark journals as a snapshot in recorded time more than two centuries ago to give us perspective to look two centuries forward to envision a better future for the Columbia River system.

Over the years, the educational initiatives that emerged from Confluence have grown to become as essential as the artwork itself. We connect teachers and students with Indigenous artists, storytellers, and Elders. Our public gatherings and museum exhibits are designed to elevate Native voices in our collective understanding of our shared landscape. The Confluence Digital Library includes interviews, documentaries, articles, and photo galleries that are educational resources for everyone.

More than two decades after our founding, this *Voices of the River* journal is our latest effort to connect people to the Indigenous side of our shared story. Learn more at [confluenceproject.org](http://confluenceproject.org).

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## *Letter from the Editor*

Lily Hart

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Confluence's *Voices of the River* journal! As Digital Content Manager at Confluence, I have had the honor of acting as the managing editor for this publication.

*Voices from the River* is an accessible journal of stories, research papers, poetry, and art designed to elevate Indigenous perspectives in our understanding of our region—the greater Columbia River system—and our nation. This project is an extension of our work in public gatherings, education programs in schools, and our Digital Library, which features interviews, documentary shorts, photo galleries, and research papers on various subjects exclusively from Indigenous perspectives.

For me, it has been such a pleasure to work with the authors of all these pieces, as well as the artist Tom Greyeyes, who created the imagery. We designed the peer review process with Indigenous methodologies in mind, by holding meetings with all the authors together, so they could give each other feedback and build community along the way. I just sat back and watched them engage with each other—thoughtfully and creatively. We are also grateful for the Confluence editorial committee for providing valuable feedback on articles and on the development of the journal process itself. And thank you to the National Endowment for the Humanities for funding our first issue.

In the pages of this first issue, you will find poetry, first-person narratives, creative nonfiction, and research articles. You will learn about how you can bring the pedagogy of the canoe into your classroom or daily life. Throughout the articles, you will see the theme of ancestors always being present, even when settler colonialism tries to push them back into memory. The river and water run through these stories. We hope the pages of the journal inspire you to deepen both your understanding of and your relationship with this region.

Warmly,  
Lily Hart



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Antone Minthorn (Cayuse/Nez Perce) is the founding board chair of Confluence and former Chair of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation.

## *My Uncle & the Economy*

Antone Minthorn

I used to fish when I was a kid; catch trout and bring them home so they could cook them. When I was little, I saw guys go to the river with a hook, and then they'd bring back fish, and then they'd cook them right off. There was always the huckleberry time to go and stay and hunt at the same time. There was always drying of meat. That was the way it was until allotments came and treaties came, and then we had to rely on the other services that were available to provide us with some food.

I had an uncle, Sam Minthorn, who went to high school in Culdesac, Idaho, where he grew up. Then he went to Haskell Boarding School in Kansas and later graduated from Kansas University. After that, he went on to work in Washington, D.C. That's where he was when World War II started. They had just built the Pentagon, and so he went to work in the Pentagon as a cartographer. That's what he would tell me. He was a mapmaker. He called me "Tony Okinawa."

In the summertime, when vacation came, he would come home by train all the way across the United States and come right down through Thorn Hollow to Pendleton. That's how he came back. Then he'd go back the same way. All the years that he was working in D.C. and before air travel came, it was always by train. In those days, Indians could not buy liquor on the reservation. Kind of like Prohibition time. It was like that. But because of his work, he had access to all that kind of stuff and could drink a beer or whatever any time he wanted. My uncle learned what golf courses were about; about those lounges and restaurants in those golf clubs. He knew all about it because of his travels. He was also a drum player and came home with records of swing jazz.

Back on the reservation, there's this road—Market Road, they call it—that connects to I-84. One time when Sam came home, he was

driving all of us kids on the back of the flatbed truck, bouncing along the gravel road. Then we came to a wheat field. He stopped and looked out to that field and said, "There should be a golf course here. There should be a golf club here." That's what he was thinking about because he could see all the activities that those kinds of facilities could have here. You know, lounge meals and drinks and whatever; people relaxing and getting together.

So that's what he always said. And I always remembered that over the years when I grew up and became part of Tribal leadership. It took a lot of years, but look at all we built: the Wildhorse Casino and Hotel and all kinds of economic development. These days, I come up to the hotel to have lunch. I look out at the casino floor where all the machines are and the people are playing. I'm sitting there, and I see workers mingling around. Some are Tribal members, but many are not; they come from the wider community. And I think, "We did this. We built that thing he was talking about way back then. It's right here. We built a golf course in the same wheat field where he said it should be." I was thinking back, and I wondered what he'd say if he could come back now and see what we did. How his dream came true. Golf course and golf club facilities and hotels and all the stuff that he saw back then are built today. We built an economy. We built this economy.

To me, all of this is what I call a win-win. The Tribe benefits and so do Tribal members. But so does the wider community also. We built this economy for all of us, and the Tribe isn't going anywhere. We're here. So how can we all benefit from this? I think we need to work harder to better understand this. You respect my rights. I'll respect your rights since you're here, too. And then you get to that win-win. And when you get to that win-win, you become one. Together.

## *Celilo Falls & the Power of Water*

Linda Meanus

*At Celilo Falls, the energy of the water was really powerful. I could just feel the mist spray your face, even if you stood far away. The falls had a roar that was so loud you could hear it from miles and miles away. Even in the next town over, The Dalles, you could hear it. It was an echo that you could feel in your heart.*

That feeling of the powerful sound feels like the truth of our way of life. I was little, but I could imagine the strength of that water. And then the smell of the falls, you could smell the salmon, the saltiness of it. It smelled so fresh. There was also the smell of salmon cooking. It was beautiful.

That's the way it was for me. I loved it, even though I had to follow rules called "protocol." I was also not allowed to be down by the river alone because I was so young. Grandpa would get everybody up at 4:30 in the morning. The women would prepare lunch, and the men, like my dad and my uncles and Grandpa, would go out on the river with their nets to fish for the day. I would see all of them down there catching fish.

The salmon were so big they had to fight to get food. I think it didn't bother them to be on the scaffolds—those are wooden platforms they built just above the water. I think for them just to get that salmon was a fight in itself. All day long, they would fish.

My grandfather would pray to the river and to the Creator for the salmon to feed the people. Salmon is a gift from the Creator. Salmon provided its body, itself, to us for

our nourishment. We need to cherish that. Everything needs water. Our bodies are full of water.

I used to get a cup and dip it into the Columbia River and drink it. That's how clean the water used to be. He taught us that if we take care of the river, it takes care of us.

We have a relationship with the river, a connection. It's a connection between us and water and Mother Earth. Water has its own intelligence. It flows wherever it wants. It does what it wants. It's like they say, water is life.

I hope you are able to take a trip along the Columbia River. Enjoy our river, enjoy nature and the view. Look at the rocks and the water. There's history there.

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*Linda Meanus is an Elder, educator, member of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, and author of the upcoming book My Name is La-Moosh to be published spring 2023 from Oregon State University Press. This piece is an excerpt from it. Find more on the book here: <https://osupress.oregonstate.edu/book/my-name-is-la-moosh>.*



Top: Photo of Celilo Falls. Courtesy of the Hood River History Museum.  
Bottom: Linda with her grandparents, Flora and Tommy Thompson. Courtesy of Linda Meanus.

# LUANA, I KNOW YOUR NAME

Sean Smith

The first creation story I ever heard was the one of Adam and Eve. Just a little Catholic boy, I was too young to know it was a myth. When I was older, aware that I was a distant descendant of the Clatsop, an Indigenous people on Oregon's northern coast, I learned that everyone has a creation story. The Clatsop have one that centers on an old man, who was a giant, and an old woman. According to the story, the old giant caught a fish and prepared to cut it sideways. The woman, aghast, instructed him to cut the fish down its back. In an all-too-familiar turn, the man ignored her appeals and cut the fish crossways. The fish transformed into a giant bird and flew off toward nearby Saddle Mountain. Later, as they searched for the bird, the woman discovered a nest full of thunderbird eggs. She broke the eggs, and out spilled the first humans.<sup>1</sup>

What I've always found intriguing about that story is that it's told from the point of view of the extinct giant and ogress. The creation itself wasn't a glorious, intentional act, but an accident—the result of a poor decision—and it serves as a cautionary parable on the cost of hubris and disregarding ancient, earthly, maternal know-how.

My family has its own creation story, at least as it relates to our Native heritage. We've always been able to trace our line back to a full-blooded Clatsop woman known only as "Louisa." She married a Maine settler named Calvin Tibbets sometime in the early 1840s. In 1845, the couple had a daughter, Grace. Four years later, Calvin died at sea, and shortly after that, Louisa died as well. Orphaned Grace was taken in by friends,

grew up, married, and had a daughter named Rosa Bel. Rosa Bel begat Alice, my grandmother, who begat my uncle, aunt, and mom, who all begat my cousins, siblings, nieces, nephews, and me.

A lot of information was passed down to us about Calvin Tibbets, and even more was publicly available: He was a bona fide Oregon pioneer who signed the state's original charter at Champoeg Park. But Louisa? That's all we knew—just a first name. And it wasn't even likely the one her Clatsop parents gave her, but an Anglicized version meant to ease assimilation. We had no record of her life. No photos or references in someone's journal entry.

History did not record her wedding, how she celebrated the birth of her daughter, or what emotions gripped her when she was told her husband went to live in the sea. There's been no acknowledgment of her own death, not even a date.

We know that Louisa's people, the Clatsop, lived for thousands of years near the mouth of the Columbia River, where it flows and gallops and roars into the Pacific. They were one of several Chinookan peoples who shared the region; all adept at canoeing, fishing, and trading, and who all depended on the Big River, as they called it, to sustain them. We know that her people greeted the Lewis and Clark Expedition when it arrived at the Pacific in 1805, and helped keep the crew alive as it overwintered on Clatsop land.



Artwork by Tom Greyeyes.

We can guess that Louisa was born twenty or so years later, when the ranks of the area's Indigenous population had dwindled to a few hundred, having been ravaged by disease brought by the invaders. We can surmise that she was like other young Clatsop women, pounding cedar bark into shreds to make clothes; weaving cedar-fiber strands into hats; making jewelry out of clamshells, beaver teeth, and bear claws; and helping smoke salmon.

But that was all conjecture. For all we knew, she could have been invented, made up by some descendent to fill an empty branch of the family tree, and then subsequently, over time, placed in our ancestral Garden of Eden, atop Saddle Mountain, as our mythical founder. I have occasionally wondered if Louisa created us or if we created her.

Until one night last summer, when an unexpected conversation with a Tribal member sparked an internet genealogy treasure hunt by my wife and mother-in-law, two skilled researchers. Before long, I was called to a computer screen to *look at this*. And that's when I saw it. An official record from the State of Oregon.

Gender: Female.  
Ethnicity: Clatsop Indian.  
Spouse: Calvin Tibbets.  
Name: Luana Katata.

As I stared at the screen, stunned, a flood of emotions poured into me. She had a name, and it was *Luana*. At that moment, she was no longer a myth, or lore, or legend. She was real. Somehow, 170 years of anonymity lifted, and I was able to see her, clearly, for the first time—a woman, a mother, bold,

brave, beautiful, determined. *I see you, Grandmother. I see you.* We've since found references to other Clatsop Katatas, including records from the Chinook Indian Nation. (The Clatsop are now part of this confederation.) With each passing day, her presence grows. Recognition is an acorn.

## Recognition is an acorn.

Digging through the documents was a fresh reminder of why Native people vanished from the historical record. The 1898 obituary in *The Oregonian* for Luana's son-in-law noted that he left behind a nameless "half breed Indian widow." Census records listed her grandkids as Indian, but one generation later—my grandmother's—everyone was white.

Luana's re-emergence is proof, though, that Native people cannot be erased or hidden away forever. Indeed, she has come back to life at a time when conventional wisdom about the Native experience is being challenged. It has long been held, for example, that Indigenous women who married white settlers, as Luana did, were likely victims—sold, traded, or taken into the union. While that was certainly the reality for some, newer research on the Clatsop and Chinookan people suggests something different.

The Chinookan tribes were very hierarchical, and few routes existed for those who wanted to rise above their station. To do it, you had to be clever and have guile. The Chinook prized this kind of pluck. Coyote, the divine, ambitious trickster, was central to their own mythmaking. Obtaining power by outwitting those who had more than you was a cultural value, the way of Coyote. For many women, marriage was such an occasion. At least one contemporary of Luana's, a Clatsop woman named Celiast, made a break from the Tribal hierarchy altogether when she

married a prominent settler named Solomon Smith.<sup>2</sup> The marriage gave her status and social influence. In Calvin Tibbets, who came to Oregon with Smith and still ran in the same circles as him, perhaps Luana saw a similar opportunity. Before their story could play out, the lives of both Calvin and Luana were cut short.

But the couple's daughter—the aptly named Grace—lived nearly sixty years and produced a lineage that has multiplied in size and reach for almost two centuries—and tonight that flows, gallops, and roars into the 7-and-5-year-old boys who are asleep down the hall from me.

All because Luana bent the trajectory of the Big River—the one that had sustained her people for all of time, but that she could see was threatened—and in doing so, ensured that its waters would continue to give life. Today, rather than a creation tale, my sons will grow up knowing her as the very real, clever, courageous, pioneering woman who refused to let the giant decide.

### References

1. Told and printed with permission from the Chinook Nation Council. Permission obtained by email by the author.
2. Cameron La Follette and Douglas Deur, "Silas Bryant Smith (1839–1902)," *Oregon Encyclopedia*, April 21, 2022, <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/smith-silas-b>.

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*Sean Smith is an executive vice president at the Recording Academy/GRAMMYS. He previously served as an assistant secretary of Homeland Security in the Obama Administration and as a practice leader at Porter Novelli, the global communications agency. A member of the Chinook Indian Nation, Sean grew up near Salem, Oregon and has degrees from the University of Oregon and Harvard University. His essays on music, fatherhood, and American politics have appeared in the Washington Post, San Francisco Chronicle, Politico, Nashville Tennessean, Fatherly and Grammy.com.*

# CANOE AS PEDAGOGY

## Kanim, a Teaching Tool to Enrich All

Rachel Cushman and Dr. Chance White Eyes

Indigenous knowledge production happens in various locations and through many methods. Indigenous scholars around the world are prioritizing the teachings of our ancestors and decentering Western frameworks. We are Rachel Cushman, an enrolled citizen of the Chinook Indian Nation, and Dr. Chance White Eyes, an enrolled citizen of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. We both work within the academy, actively disrupting Western frameworks and colonial structures.

Even though academic titles and degrees have importance, they are not the only means of building expertise on Indigenous issues. Cushman does not yet have a formal degree; however, her cultural knowledge is integral to this publication. She is both an elected and hereditary leader in her community. She is the elected secretary-treasurer of the Chinook Indian Nation Tribal Council, a Chinook Canoe Family skipper, a lead puller, a lead dancer, and a 2022 NDN Collective Changemaker Fellow. She was selected and entrusted with these roles because of her decades of work protecting Indigenous lands, rights, and sovereignty. Cushman and Dr. White Eyes are partners with two sons, Kanim (canoe) and Isik (paddle). Canoe culture plays a vital role in our family's lives. Our relationality and positionality are important because our lived experiences and relationships shape how we perceive and interact with the world around us.<sup>1</sup>

In this paper, we present canoe as pedagogy—a tool for anyone that teaches in formal settings. It is applicable in primary, secondary, and post-secondary educational settings, as well as in our everyday lives.

Higher education, especially, has a lot to gain from utilizing Indigenous pedagogies. This pedagogical approach will help teachers, staff, and administrators incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing within institutional settings that are often hostile to Indigenous communities. We approach this work through a Chinookan decolonial and Indigenizing praxis, meaning Chinookan ways of knowing are actively engaged, and Western ways are decentered and dismantled.

There are many instances throughout our academic careers in which Western pedagogical approaches have caused us harm and traumatized us. We are not alone in this experience. The K–12 and post-secondary educational systems were not created with our cultures or values in mind. Instead of working toward collective knowledge, they are highly individualistic and competitive. We are expected to sink or swim. We argue that there is another way—an Indigenous way—to approach knowledge production.

Within academic settings, participants come from multiple locations that are complex and dynamic, and they gather in conversation about ideas and issues. Institutions are complex, and often there is a disconnect between what is happening in the classroom versus what is happening in administrative offices. To give participants an idea of our pedagogical approach, we will share stories and provide background context.

We belong to a canoe family. Canoe families vary amongst Indigenous communities in the Pacific Northwest. Some canoe families are large, while others are small. Some canoe families are formalized within tribal cultural programs, whereas others are made up of individual families. One constant is that canoes are respected members of every family. We belong to the Chinook Canoe Family, a canoe family that is made up of families and communities and is sponsored by the Chinook Indian Nation.

There are many roles within a canoe family. Each canoe family determines how these roles are filled, but individuals often fill more than one role depending on the day. Those paddling in the canoe are called *pullers*. Lead pullers set the pace and everyone else replicates their movements. Each consecutive bench is just as important as the lead. Collectively, the pullers move the canoe forward. Skippers guide the canoe family and steer the canoe. They determine the routes, whether to hug the shore or move out into open waters. They are responsible for the wellness of the pullers and the community. The skipper's role does not end when the canoe reaches land or when the trip ends. A skipper's role is constant.

The support boat ensures the safety of the canoe. It carries extra pullers, and it supplies and helps the canoe if there are hazards. Not every canoe family has their own support boat. Some support boats are shared amongst families. The ground crew is another integral role. They set up and break down camp, shop for and prepare food, track canoe progress from land, transport those unable to participate on the water, and act as ambassadors for the family at host sites. Every role is as important as the next. Rachel has filled nearly every role in the canoe family. Even though she is a skipper, she still needs help from other skippers.

When schools reopened after the COVID-19 shutdown, our children had a hard time readjusting to the classroom. One of them struggled more than the other. He acted out, refused to do work, and expressed his frustrations in unsafe ways. We worked with the teachers, the principal, the school counselor, and other support staff, but that didn't prevent our child from getting sent home. We struggled with him, so we called on one of our canoe family skippers for help. Uncle Tony talked to our son. He talked to him about the rules of the canoe and our ancestors' teachings. Our son talked to him about his fears and frustrations. Uncle Tony gave him advice and tools for managing his frustrations. When he returned to school, we spoke with the staff about his conversation with Uncle Tony. For the remainder of the year, he had no more incidents. It takes a tribe to raise our children.

For thousands of years, our people have traveled the Columbia River Basin, adjacent seacoast, and the Salish Sea in traditional Chinookan-style canoes. For decades we have traveled this way on Tribal Journeys, which play an important role in the resurgence of Indigenous culture upon the landscape after decades of erasure and criminalization of Indigenous peoples and lifeways. As canoes and canoe families travel to predetermined locations, they stop at host villages. At host locations, food, songs, and dances are shared. A central aspect of Tribal Journeys is the cultural protocols associated with the Indigenous peoples of the region. Protocols are the rules and ways of behaving that come from the past that guide life in the present, and if followed, lead to cultural strength, resilience, and well-being.<sup>2</sup> The organizers of "Paddle to Seattle" created the Ten Rules of the Canoe to outline expectations for participation and to uplift Indigenous protocols.

### **The Ten Rules are as follows:**

**Rule One:** Every stroke we take is one less we have to make. Keep going! Even against the most relentless wind, somehow a canoe moves forward. This mystery can only be explained by the fact that each pull forward is real movement and not a delusion.

**Rule Two:** There is to be no abuse of self or others. Respect and trust cannot exist in anger. It has to be thrown overboard so that the sea can cleanse it. It has to be washed off the hands and cast into the air so that the stars can take care of it. We always look back at the rip tides we pulled through, amazed at how powerful we thought those dangers were.

**Rule Three:** Be flexible. The adaptable animal survives. If you get tired, ship your paddle and rest. If you get hungry, put it on a beach and eat a few oysters. If you can't figure out one way to make it, do something new. When the wind confronts you, sometimes you are supposed to go the other way.

**Rule Four:** The gift of each enriches all. Every story is important. The bow, the stern, the skipper cannot move without the power puller in the middle—everyone is part of the journey. The elder who sits in her cedar at the front, singing her paddle song, prays for us all, the weary paddler resting is still ballast. And there is always that time when the crew needs some joke, some remark, some silence to keep going. The least likely person provides.

**Rule Five:** We all pull and support each other. Nothing occurs in isolation. In a family of the canoe, we are ready for whatever comes. The family can argue, mock, ignore each other, at its worst, but that family will never let itself sink. The canoe that lets itself sink is certainly wiser never to leave the beach. When we know that we are not alone in our actions, we also know we are lifted up by everyone else.

**Rule Six:** A hungry person has no charity. Always nourish yourself. The bitter person, thinking that sacrifice means self-destruction, shares mostly anger. A paddler who doesn't eat at the feast doesn't have enough strength to paddle in the morning. Take that sandwich they throw at you at 2:00 AM! The gift of who you are only enters the world when you are strong enough to own it.

**Rule Seven:** Our experiences are not enhanced through criticism. Who we are, how we are, what we do, why we continue, all flower in understanding. The canoe follows who are grim go one way. Some men and women may sometimes go slow, but when they arrive they can still sing. And they have gone all over the sea, in the air with the seagulls, under the curve of the wave with the dolphin and down to the whispering shells, under the continental shelf. Withdrawing the blame acknowledges how wonderful a part of it all everyone in reality is.

**Rule Eight:** The journey is what we enjoy. Although the state is exciting and the conclusion gratefully achieved, it is that long, steady process we remember. Being part of the journey requires great preparation. Being done with a journey requires great awareness. Being on the journey, we are much more than ourselves. We are part of the movement of life, we have a destination, and for once, our will is pure, our goal is to go on.

**Rule Nine:** A good teacher always allows the student to learn. We can berate each other, try to force each other to understand, or we can allow each paddler to gain awareness through the ongoing journey. Nothing sustains us like that sense of potential; that we can deal with things. Each paddler learns to deal with the person in front, the person behind, the water, the air, the energy, the blessing of the eagle.

**Rule Ten:** When given a choice at all, be a worker bee—*Make Honey!*<sup>3</sup>

On Tribal Journeys, canoe families are expected to adhere to the rules of the canoe. There are also other protocols that communities are expected to follow. These rules and journey protocols ensure that Tribal Journeys is a respectful and safe environment. If individuals or families cannot respect the rules and protocols, they are asked to leave. No one is exempt from the rules.

*This is how we frame every class: using the rules of the canoe from Tribal Journeys and protocols from our community.*

Several years ago, we witnessed hereditary and elected leaders from across nations exile a skipper because several women stepped forward saying that he had caused them harm. We have witnessed individuals sent home because of continuous fighting and other harmful behaviors.

In our Chinook Canoe family, we follow the Ten Rules, Tribal Journey protocols, plus Chinookan protocols that have been passed down from generation to generation. One important rule from our community is *ntsayka wawa k<sup>h</sup>apa ntsayka*—we communicate with one another. We gather regularly to communicate our needs, struggles, successes, frustrations, joy, and more. On Tribal Journeys we do not go to sleep with anger in our hearts. We must travel in the canoe with *lush tæmtæm*—a good heart.

*"Does anyone have anything that they would like to share or anything they need to get off their chest?" we ask at the beginning of each family meeting.*

*"That was the best pull ever! It was hard, but I've never laughed so much. Did you see those whales come up next to the canoes? I can't wait for tomorrow." A share can be celebratory.*

*"I am feeling frustrated that only two people helped break down and set up camp today." Usually, frustrations are easily fixed.*

*"I am disappointed in our community. When I entered the camp, folks were sitting around and there was trash all over the place. We are stewards of the land and ambassadors of our people." Sometimes we just need reminders.*

*"I need help. I am feeling this way." We help and support each other when asked.*

*"I felt unsafe when..." Other concerns are more serious. We address all issues right away.*

We suggest *kānim tilixam chaku-kæmtæks* or a Canoe Family Education Model for the classroom. *tilixam* isn't the nuclear family; it is the community that we are raised in. *tilixam* is the extended family and the community we call home. Learning happens when we are in sync with one another. When we openly communicate about our strengths, weaknesses, frustrations, struggles, and successes.

This is how we frame every class: using the rules of the canoe from Tribal Journeys and protocols from our community. To be critical about social issues, we must draw from our own experiences and value the experiences of those around us, especially when those experiences are different. This means that we will not always agree, and that is okay. We believe in constructive controversy, so long as we can be respectful to one another.

The students and classroom guests will be pullers in our classes and are expected to contribute through critical discussion. In doing this, we will be able to engage with these issues with a diverse array of tools. We, the teachers, instructors, and professors, are the skippers. We guide students in and out of the classroom, but our role is no more important than the students. We learn from them as well. We remind students of the rules and ensure that classrooms are safe environments for learning. Administrators and support staff are the ground crew and support boat, making our work possible. They work with the teachers and students to make sure their needs are met. When everyone is in communication, working collectively, we can be successful. In the canoe, no one person or role is better or more important than another. The skipper, the pullers, the elder sitting at the bow, and the ground crew are all integral. Everyone contributes, and every person's story is important. The same goes for educational settings.

This model is different from more traditional formal educational settings, wherein the instructor/professor is typically viewed as the primary holder of knowledge.

Especially in post-secondary institutions, it is often presumed that the professor will lecture at the students, using the "Banking Model" to quote Paulo Freire.<sup>4</sup> In this model, students become receptors of information fed to them by the professor and do not necessarily connect the information to their lives, hindering intellectual growth. Students are often encouraged to work independently and are not necessarily encouraged to work as a group or as a family. This goes against the idea of the classroom as a canoe, where everyone's experiences and opinions are valued. Everyone's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health is valued, as is everyone's intellectual growth.

The physical space is also treated differently using canoe pedagogy. A canoe is not just a static object. It is a member of the canoe family. If you want the canoe to take care of you, you should treat it with the same respect as anyone in the canoe. Our classroom settings are treated in the same capacity. If in a formal classroom setting, we make sure the space is clean and functional before the class begins, and we make sure to clean the space afterward. The same goes for non-Western classroom spaces. The land and waterways can be classrooms.

Dr. White Eyes has used canoe pedagogy for the past three years at Southern Oregon University, where he teaches nine to ten classes per year. On the first day of every class, he goes over his background, areas of expertise, and class expectations, which includes going over the rules of the canoe. This approach to teaching has been embraced and celebrated by a vast majority of students who take these courses and understand the protocols. Dr. White Eyes' course evaluations are consistently in the "exceptional" category, and student testimonials allude to enjoying the inclusive nature of the class and participating in discussions with people from a variety of backgrounds.

Educational institutions can greatly benefit from canoe pedagogy and *kānim tilixam chaku-kæmtæks*. Incorporating canoe culture into classrooms and institutions actively prioritizes Indigenous knowledge production in spaces that can otherwise be hostile. Including the pedagogical approach is only the first step, but must also decenter and dismantle harmful Western structures that don't serve the collective.





Rachel Cushman skippers the canoe as members of the Chinook Canoe Family travel across the Salish Sea (Puget Sound) during Tribal Canoe Journey, July 18, 2019. The annual Pacific Northwest Tribal Journey involves several weeks of traveling from host nation to host nation on a schedule and direction that changes yearly—some days it's calm, some days rough, always long. Photo by Amiran White.

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# SEEKING SAFETY

Carlee Wilson

Ilchee paddled hard, her dark hair whipping back in the wind, the perspiration on her forehead following it. Every stroke was a reminder of the distance she needed to place between her and her husband, Casino, so she bore down with all her strength to pick up speed.

“I will kill you, Ilchee!”, Casino had earlier proclaimed, blaming her for the death of a son shared with a different wife. She immediately fled her husband’s village after he came tearing through the longhouse, her bare feet barely touching the ground as she ran to the river, the pang of rejection deep in her heart.

Breathing heavily, she knew she needed to find safety in a new location. “I must get to Skitchuxwa,” she thought, hopeful that the fur traders would welcome her behind the timber walls of Fort Vancouver. The words of her husband, Casino, continued to ring in her ears like the wind. “My son is dead, and it was your magic, your prayers that did the harm, medicine woman.” She was innocent, but his fury could not be tamed.

Her husband’s village was nearly 100 miles from her home near the mouth of *iyaqayt̓ ima̓t̓*, the Columbia River. It didn’t matter where she was, as she knew these waters well. Before her arranged marriage to Casino, her father, Comcomly, the one-eyed chief, took her on many journeys up and down the big river until it became as much a part of her as the blue veins in her strong forearms.<sup>1</sup>

After paddling upriver, she veered for the north shore. She was close.

Ilchee jumped lightly from her canoe to drag it to land, careful not to make a big splash. She quickly crouched down on the beach behind the canoe, scooping up a sip of the rushing water. She took a deep breath as she soaked in the river’s energy and then looked around before moving on to some nearby cattails, tall enough to hide behind, but giving her the ability to inspect her surroundings easily. She needed to ensure she wasn’t being followed, and her senses told her she was okay for now. It would have taken half a dozen men from Casino’s village to keep up with her in a canoe, this extension of her body, but she knew they wouldn’t be far behind.

Ilchee’s heart buzzed with yearning. She tucked her dark hair behind her ears as she stood up again, silently wishing she could have gone downriver to her home village, to her territory, but she needed immediate shelter from the imminent danger of her husband and was unsure if her running home would lead to danger for her people. The closest safe place for her to retreat to was Fort Vancouver, where she could gather strength before making another plan.

The coast was clear, so Ilchee began the walk from the shore inland to the fort. Once she arrived, she could feel distant eyes on her as she walked toward her final destination. Night was just beginning to blanket the landscape, and she was steps away from the doors of the fort, its pathways lined by lamps and fiery torches. Ilchee came to a stop. The fort’s gate was closed for the night. She took in a deep breath and stood up straight, forcing some composure in the midst of her enveloping

fear. She tapped on a small hatch, which opened to reveal the face of a guard. “John McLoughlin,” she blurted, a little shocked at her own quickness of tongue. The guardsman seemed to understand her simplistic request, nodded his head, and turned to a second guard to fetch the fort’s chief factor.

Dr. John McLoughlin was a tall and scruffy-looking man. As the chief factor of Fort Vancouver under the Hudson’s Bay Company, it was his duty to determine who could come and go. He came to the gate with the young guard that had fetched him and knew immediately that something was wrong when he saw Ilchee alone. He knew of Ilchee and wondered why a woman of such royalty was travelling without company. “Please, gentlemen, let her in immediately.”

Ilchee walked inside, unsure of how McLoughlin would react to her request. McLoughlin waited a moment for her to speak but could sense her nerves. “*ḥax̌aw’yam.*” *Welcome*, he said in Chinuk Wawa. He was a fluent speaker. Ilchee let out a deep breath and fell to her knees, suddenly exhausted and overwhelmed. She explained to McLoughlin that she was on the run, carefully detailing what led her to Fort Vancouver. “*Ipšət̓ nayka.*” *I need to hide.*

“Chaku, Ilchee,” he welcomed her into the fort, extending his hands to her to help her stand up again. “Yawa-iwa,” he said, directing her toward the guesthouse where a comfortable room was waiting for her, and then requested the guard that she be guided to the room and brought food for the night.

Ilchee felt some of the tension in her shoulders ease. She felt safe in McLoughlin’s company. He had a reputation for demanding respect among his employees and the white settlers of the region—not only for himself, but for his Indigenous wife, Marguerite. He was known for his intuition and sense of justice.

“You’re protected here,” he said in a gentle tone as Ilchee walked away to her room.

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Ilchee awoke to the sounds of conversations outside her small room and the smell of fresh bread from the Bake House. The light crept around the drapes on the window, leaving threads of bright white on the floor, and she realized she had slept in many hours’ past sunrise. Ilchee sat up in the bed, the room spinning slightly and her body sore from yesterday. She slowly stood up, bracing herself against the small dresser beside the bed.

She was unsure of how to operate within the fort; although she felt the communal energy, this place was nothing like the villages she was used to, the longhouses she called home. Does she seek out breakfast? Does she wait for a bucket of water to wash her hair? She was once the bride of a powerful Scotsman in Astoria named Duncan McDougal, who had ordered such things for her, but that was a different time and place. Her father sought out a new husband for her upon McDougal’s departure to his homeland; a politically minded marriage to Chief Casino was quickly assembled and meant to ease tensions between the two Chinookan chieftains.

Ilchee rubbed her temples. It wouldn’t be long before Casino would come looking for her and she worried about when that might be. It could be hours, or it could be days. She paced the small room, wondering how long until she overstayed her welcome at the fort. She knew that timing was everything. Her life depended on the hospitality of Dr. McLoughlin and his fellow white settlers. Would they keep her safe?

A soft knock startled Ilchee. She gently opened the door to the face of a young servant woman. Hawaiian. Likely married to a laborer in the fort’s outer village.



Art by Tom Greyeyes.

The young woman smiled, entered the room, and set a tray of food on the bed. She stood for a moment in solidarity with Ilchee, bowed her head politely, and left just as quickly as she came. Ilchee devoured the food until another knock came. She opened the door to a guardsman motioning for her to follow.

In a small but elegant room, Dr. McLoughlin sat waiting for Ilchee's arrival. The room smelled of tobacco and tea. McLoughlin had round spectacles on the bridge of his nose as he was reading a long document, which he put down upon Ilchee's arrival. "Ilchee," he began in a somber tone, "please sit." Ilchee sat in a wooden chair across from McLoughlin as the guard disappeared down the hallway of the chief factor's house. McLoughlin began to explain that while Ilchee slept that morning, several of Casino's men had arrived to announce

their chief would be in attendance for tomorrow's trading event. "I suspect they were here to begin their investigation of your whereabouts. We trade with Casino's men weekly, but Casino does not often make an appearance himself." McLoughlin paused for a moment, taking the glasses off his face. "It's customary for us to give the chief a tour of the fort's grounds each visit."

Ilchee could feel the fear at the base of her spine, its intensity growing the more she thought about what Casino would do to her should he or his men find her. She knew this was it; her time behind the fort's walls was being cut short. She also understood what was not being said by the doctor—that a strong relationship with Casino was vital for the fort, as trading was an integral part of everyone's livelihood here.

"I'll go tonight."

"I had some men bring your canoe into the fort early this morning. I'm unsure if your people have already seen it, but I believe it was a good measure to hide it just in case."

Ilchee nodded her head. "Hayu masi." *Thank you.*

McLoughlin smiled. "In the meantime, please make yourself at home here at the fort. We will meet again this evening before your departure."

Ilchee wandered the fort, unaware of the light rain falling or where she was walking. Her sense of urgency to find safety had now created a pit in her stomach. She could no longer depend on the safety of the fort with Casino's pending arrival and the potential of his men lingering in its outskirts. She didn't dare leave in the daylight and knew that the best plan would be under the cover of darkness.

That evening, Ilchee was summoned back to McLoughlin's small office in the chief factor's house. She arrived again with a guard and sat in the same wooden chair as before. She could tell that McLoughlin had been thinking hard, his near-white hair more disheveled than earlier, the lines between his eyebrows seeming deeper. She waited for him to speak.

McLoughlin got up from his chair and looked out the window before turning to Ilchee. "The guards have informed me that Casino's men are lingering in the nearby woods. Although I think it's best you leave before Casino's arrival tomorrow, we must tread carefully. I suggest waiting until nightfall to leave. I'll send several of my men with you to carry the canoe down to the river if you'd like."

Ilchee nodded in agreement, her body feeling numb. Casino's men were waiting

for her; the danger becoming more real. After dinner, she sat on the bed in her small guestroom, knees pulled to her chest, preparing herself mentally for what was next. Would she be able to flee in the night? Would she find safety?

A knock on the door jolted her from her thoughts. It was McLoughlin himself coming to fetch her. He didn't need to explain anything. She knew it was time.

McLoughlin walked Ilchee to the main gate. "We're unsure how close they are, but they won't see you in the village. We've asked that everyone blow out their torches and lights. Your canoe is already at the shore. We can't be seen aiding you from here, unfortunately. Our existence here depends—"

Ilchee took McLoughlin's hand in understanding, stopping him from further explanation. She knew he couldn't do more without jeopardizing himself and others at the fort. They stood there for a moment, letting the silence do the talking.

Ilchee let McLoughlin's hand go and turned to face the gate. She pulled her shoulders back and took in a deep breath, tucking her hair behind her ears. "I'm ready."

The guards took hold of each door and opened them, the soft creaking sound of the wood filling the silence around them, and Ilchee stepped into the dark.

Ilchee stands as a seven-foot statue overlooking the Columbia River. My mother showed her to me one sunny afternoon after her recent move from Marysville, Washington. I had driven from north of Seattle to visit her. Each time I came to Vancouver to see her again, I made a point also to see Ilchee; her humble face pointed west to where my ancestors—*like her*—called home.

I was fascinated with her. Her slanted forehead, a symbol of royalty, her large earrings, her nose piercing, her slender hands. I tried learning as much as I could about this regal relative in bronze, but my Google searches and library books returned minimal information, and I was unaware of anyone within my tribe with further knowledge. Upon reading what was available, I was left with more questions than answers, so I took this opportunity to write for the Confluence journal and fill the gaps of Ilchee's story with my imagination.

*For us, that vengeful husband is the continued consequences of colonization. We are forever married to a state of unrest due to a series of events that took our rights away.*

I chose not to give Ilchee's story an ending. I realized while writing this that Ilchee's sense of urgency is still relevant to the Chinook experience today. Ilchee is indeed a real figure of this region from the 1800s, and just as she urgently sought safety from her husband, our tribe—the Chinook—is also urgently seeking safety.

The lower Columbia River has been Chinook territory since time immemorial. We've been stewards of the land and waters here until the introduction of settlers, but the past two hundred years have not been good to us. We've experienced government-abandoned treaties, forced attendance of boarding schools, and displacement from our ancestral land, among other atrocities.

In 1851, our ancestors signed the Treaty of Tansy Point, a promise by the U.S. government to provide us with housing, healthcare, food, and other resources in

exchange for taking our land. The treaty was never ratified by Congress, and we've been fighting for our rights ever since with some wins and some losses along the way.

What we are seeking is called *federal recognition*.

More than 500 tribes in the United States have federal recognition, many of them through treaties. Federal recognition means that the U.S. recognizes the tribe as a sovereign entity, enters into a government-to-government relationship with them, and provides them with the resources I listed above. There are so many reasons we as a tribe need federal recognition that I don't even know where to begin describing them.

My hope is that Ilchee's story inspires you to learn more about her people and how we are still here. I hope you will cheer for us just as you may cheer for her as she escapes to safety.

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Ilchee statue. Photo by Confluence staff.

# The Pathway of Reaffirming Treaty Rights

Emily Washines

Yakama Elders share that since time immemorial, the Yakama people and fish are intertwined. Tribal members traveled then like they do today, covering vast tracts of lands to gather, hunt, and fish at all usual and accustomed areas.

In the 1850s, more settlers were coming to the Northwest, and Washington was a territory and not yet a state. There was a sense of urgency to write out the terms for the areas of lands for Natives. Yakama Chief George Meninock shares here what he witnessed during the treaty negotiations of 1855:

If we give you possession of the lands, we will lose our rights to fishing the streams, but Stevens said "No, The Whites wanted only to farm and would never interfere with the Indian fishing at their old fishing places." But my father [Meninock, a Treaty Signer] said, "When we are dead then who will be witness to what you promise." Then Governor Stevens said, "I will write it down in the Treaty that you and your people have the right to take fish at these old fishing places."<sup>1</sup>

The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation gathered in Walla Walla to sign the Treaty of 1855. <sup>2</sup> Article 3 of the treaty reserves the right to take fish at all usual and accustomed places. <sup>3</sup> Governor Stevens stated to Kamiakin that "The Indian will be allowed to take fish...at the usual fishing places, and this promise will be kept by the Americans as long as the sun shines, as long as the mountains stand, and as long as the rivers run."<sup>4</sup>

This article explores how the Yakama Nation created a treaty rights strategy that included both legislative and judicial branches of government and advocated for the rights outlined in the treaty.

Of the early settlers, law professor Will Rodgers stated that they "...just went out and lived from nature...he [the settler] thought it was nature he was living off of, but it was really future generations he [the settler] was living off of..."<sup>5</sup> Fishing was utilized differently between tribal fishers and non-tribal fishers. Salmon began to deplete in 1865 and, over the course of several decades, because of the increased demand for salmon to canneries.<sup>6</sup> For example, as a University of Washington module explains: "By 1883, over 50 such canneries operated in the Columbia River basin."<sup>7</sup> Before 1920, non-tribal fishers expanded from the Columbia River to the ocean, and, by the 1970s, they continued to expand past 200 miles of the U.S. coastline. Operations that overharvest salmon or threaten their habitat also threaten the livelihood of tribal members.<sup>8</sup> Due to development along the river, there were also access issues for tribal members.

Since the late 1800s, the Yakama Nation has been to court numerous times for treaty rights concerning fishing. Their first landmark U.S. Supreme Court Case was *U.S. v Winans*, in which U.S. Supreme Court Justice Joseph McKenna reaffirmed for the Yakama people that fishing for salmon is "not much less necessary to the Indians than the atmosphere they breathed."<sup>9</sup>

Citations of Yakama tribal fishers at Top-tut (Prosser Falls, Washington) began in 1915 and started two lengthy court battles: *State v. Towessnute* (1916) and *State v. Meninock* (1921).<sup>10</sup> From 1915–1921, the tribe lost two fishing cases related to Top-tut (Prosser Falls Fisheries).<sup>11</sup> The court revisited these cases in 2015 and 2020. Why did these cases span 105 years?

## Fish Wars

In 1915, Yakama tribal member Alec Towessnute was taken to county court, and then in 1916 to the State Supreme court, for fishing and lost his case. As a contemporary reporter put it, "Justice Frederick Bausman, using racist language, also disparaged the Yakama Nation, its stewardship of natural resources, and the idea of sovereignty in his ruling."<sup>12</sup> For decades, the Yakama refuted this decision and said that "This court characterized the Native people of this nation as 'a dangerous child,' who 'squander[ed]' vast areas of fertile land before our eyes."<sup>13</sup>

In 1921, the Yakama Nation again lost in the Washington State Supreme Court. The four defendants were Chief Meninock, Chief Jim Wallahee, and Al and A.J. Barnhardt. On January 27, 1921, Chief George Meninock said to the Court, "...It makes me sad that I have been able to accomplish nothing for my Indian people, and the thought that I may die without having secured for them their rights, will break my heart, but then God knows I did my best."<sup>14</sup>

The descendants of Towessnute and Meninock worked with Attorney Jack Fiander for years to clear their names for the record and to prove the Yakama fishers had secured rights for their people.<sup>15</sup> In 2015, his great-grandson, Johnson Meninick said, "It's long overdue...It took 100 years to clear his name, but my sons and grandsons still fish there at Prosser."<sup>16</sup>

Some fishing cases have been overturned since by contemporary courts. In 2014, the State of Washington created a process through HB2080 to overturn fish war convictions. "A crime was never committed, they [the convictions] should be expunged," said Senator John McCoy, referring to the imposition of state law over Treaty Indian fishing.<sup>17</sup> And through a 2020 Washington State Supreme Court order, justices decided to "repudiate this [1921] case, its language, its conclusions, and its mischaracterization of the Yakama people."<sup>18</sup> In a powerful reading of the court's order, Justice Raquel Montoya-Lewis, who is a member of the Pueblo of Isleta and the second Native American to sit on a state supreme court said, "We cannot forget our own history, and we cannot change it. We can, however, forge a new path forward, committing to justice as we do so."<sup>19</sup>

If they lost the fishing cases, but their convictions were not overturned for over 90 years, how did Yakamas continue to fish at Top-tut without being taken to court?

In 1921, the Washington State Legislature passed a law that reaffirmed Yakamas' right to fish at Prosser Falls.<sup>20</sup> Chief Meninock may have lost the Supreme Court case, but the Yakama Nation worked with Senator David Morthland from Yakima, who sponsored a bill that removed state restrictions from the Yakama Nation taking fish at any time.<sup>21</sup> "It overwhelmingly passed the Senate and the House, even over-riding the Governor's Veto," said Yakama Historian Jo Miles.<sup>22</sup> Miles went on to explain that:

The final law was passed March 10, 1921, with text that stated the law allowed for "any Indian belonging to any tribe of the Yakima Nation, who has maintained his tribal relations and who resides within this state, may take salmon or other food fish, by any reasonable means, at any time, at said Prosser Falls, for the use of himself and family, but this right is not to extend to others than such Indians."<sup>23</sup>

Photo on the Capitol Steps, 1921. Courtesy of Yakima Valley Museum.



The strategy to obtain this is described in a 1920 writing by Lucullus "He-mene Ka-wan" McWhorter:

The catch of salmon at Top-tut, now known as Prosser, on the Yakima river this year was unusually heavy. Under the Treaty of 1855, it would appear that the right to take fish at this, their ancient fishing grounds, is assured the Indians, but a State law interferes...It is hoped that the next legislature will restore to the Yakima's their right to fish at Top-tut, built especially for them in the beginning by Speelyi.<sup>24</sup>

How did the Yakama delegation meet with the Legislature? There is a historic 1921 photo with over 20 people on the state capitol steps in Olympia, Washington. There are eighteen Yakama tribal member; some of them are in suits, but most of the tribal members in regalia with beadwork and feathers. There are two non-Natives with this delegation: a woman stands in a fur coat and hat and a gentleman stands in a long overcoat. Sixty-six years after the Treaty of 1855 and two children of treaty signers are standing side-by-side: Kate Stevens Bates was the daughter of Governor Stevens, and Chief George

Meninock was the son of Chief Meninock. I sought more information about the photo from Elders:

"In the photo, there are Native people dressed in suits and Native in regalia. Why are they dressed differently?" I asked.

"As I understand it, the ones in suits are interpreters," said Elmer Schuster, the grandson of Louis Mann, one of the men in the photo.

"Yes, I did know they had interpreters, but why five?"

"They wouldn't just have one interpreter; they would have several. One meeting in one room, another in another room," said Elmer Schuster.<sup>25</sup>

In the early 1900s, most Yakamas needed to speak through an interpreter, as the court and legislative systems were not designed to understand them. Even with language barriers, they persisted. In order to learn the English language during the violent assimilation era, Native people went to boarding schools. These Native interpreters exemplify the endurance of tribal culture through difficult times. The historic photos

of Yakama tribal members in regalia at the Washington State Capitol demonstrate how the people are taught to work together.

### History of the Area

The Columbia River flows to the Yakima River, which connects to Top-tut, an ancient fishing village site. Yakama Chief Jim Wallahee talks about Top-tut here: "When the salmon came from the sea, they would go up to this place where the water was shallow and in ripples so that the fish could be caught with our hooks, spears, and nets, so when an Indian got hold of a big fish there, he could land it without danger of being pulled in and being drowned in the deep, swift, high water."<sup>26</sup>

Place names highlight the intersectionality between Native people's history and the connections they keep throughout time. Significant place names in the area include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Nch'i Wana: The Columbia River.
2. Taptiil: The Yakima River.
3. Chim-nah: The mouth of the Yakima River.
4. Top-tut: Ancient Fishing village in Prosser, Washington.
5. Yakitat (Yuk-ti-tut): Describes the way the river weaves through the Prosser stretch.<sup>26</sup>
6. Kiona: This describes a trail that goes over the hill.<sup>28</sup>
7. Wanawish: Horn Rapids.
8. Laliik: Rattlesnake Mountain.

Challenges to treaty rights sometimes connect to the government's attempts to limit Yakama sovereignty in different locations. The traditional foods on the ceremonial table often have an account about who gathered, hunted, or fished for the food and where. These cases provide examples of the frustration felt when those rights are not upheld. "Treaty negotiations have been debated across the country since first contact. Only modern history has begun to understand the depth of the tribal quest for sovereignty," said fishing rights activist Hank Adams.<sup>29</sup> Since time

immemorial, tribes have depended on fish. Chief Wallahee said, "That is why these accustomed fishing places which were created for the Indians were set aside in the treaty for the use of the Indians."<sup>30</sup> In 1921, at seventy-seven years old, Chief Meninock said in Washington court:

"...your officers punished us for taking fish at the places reserved...you violate your Treaty and your promise...take this Treaty out of the grave where it lies buried in error, shake off the dust from it so you can see its words plainly, read it as the Spirit of Governor Stevens and of our fathers would want you to interpret it, as they understood it and agreed to it. Then hold it up high so all the people can know its truth."<sup>31</sup>

Food sovereignty includes a need to be prepared. In between these cases, we had the 1918 pandemic. This saw many people sick at alarming rates.

Chief Meninock shared about the inherent knowledge of our traditional foods, "...my Indian people, whose rights have been taken from them and who today, with tears running down their faces are sick and sad because they have been deprived of the food which gives them health and strength and life. For I say to you that our health is from the fish; our strength is from the fish, our very life is from the fish."<sup>32</sup>

### Vision of the Elders

For decades, the families of those 1921 fishers sought to set the record straight. Even though the fishers lost the cases, they were able to simultaneously secure a fix, so Yakama people continue fishing at Top-tut. Their strategy specifically included multiple paths to protect the treaty rights. In addition, they worked as a team with other Natives and had important allies. During the 1855 treaty signing Governor Stevens told Northwest tribes, "I pledge the American[s] to keep this promise so long as the mountains stand, as long as the sun shines and as long as the river runs."<sup>33</sup>



Left: Artwork by Tom Greyeyes, based on a photo of George Meninock.

Those fishers made sure this promise was kept.

“Think of the vision of our Elders of that time, to continue to protect the fishing rights for those not yet born,” said Tony “Kywamat” Washines, a descendant of Chief Meninock.<sup>34</sup> Chief George Meninock was fifteen when he listened to the treaty negotiations and over seventy when he was asked to share his account.

Still today, Native Elders ask the younger generations to remember our treaty rights and how they connect to the foods and different places. There is strength in believing in our youth. This is a teaching that continues to echo for many generations.

In 1921 Chief Meninock said, “My father when he was about to die, charged us to abide in peace and live up to the treaty and we have done so all our lives.”<sup>35</sup>

This article reflects upon the vision of Yakama Elders in illuminating a policy pathway while ensuring future generations’ fishing rights at one of their usual and accustomed places.

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# Indian Mask

Ed Edmo

Indian mask  
in dusty museum  
gazing with wonderment  
& awe

at tourists  
who gaze at you  
with wonderment  
& awe

you see  
steady stream  
of humanity  
all shapes  
all sizes  
you hear all  
languages

you watch parents pulling  
crying children  
who are all too tired  
to comprehend  
awesome power  
of ages past

I look to your  
mute face  
see you crack  
smile  
as I walk by

pulling my tired  
daughter

*Ed Edmo is a Elder, poet, storyteller and educator. Ed is Shoshone Bannock, Nez Perce, Yakama and Siletz, and lived at Celilo Village in his childhood. Ed Edmo conducts writing workshops, storytelling performances, and informational lectures.*



## Notes on Storytelling

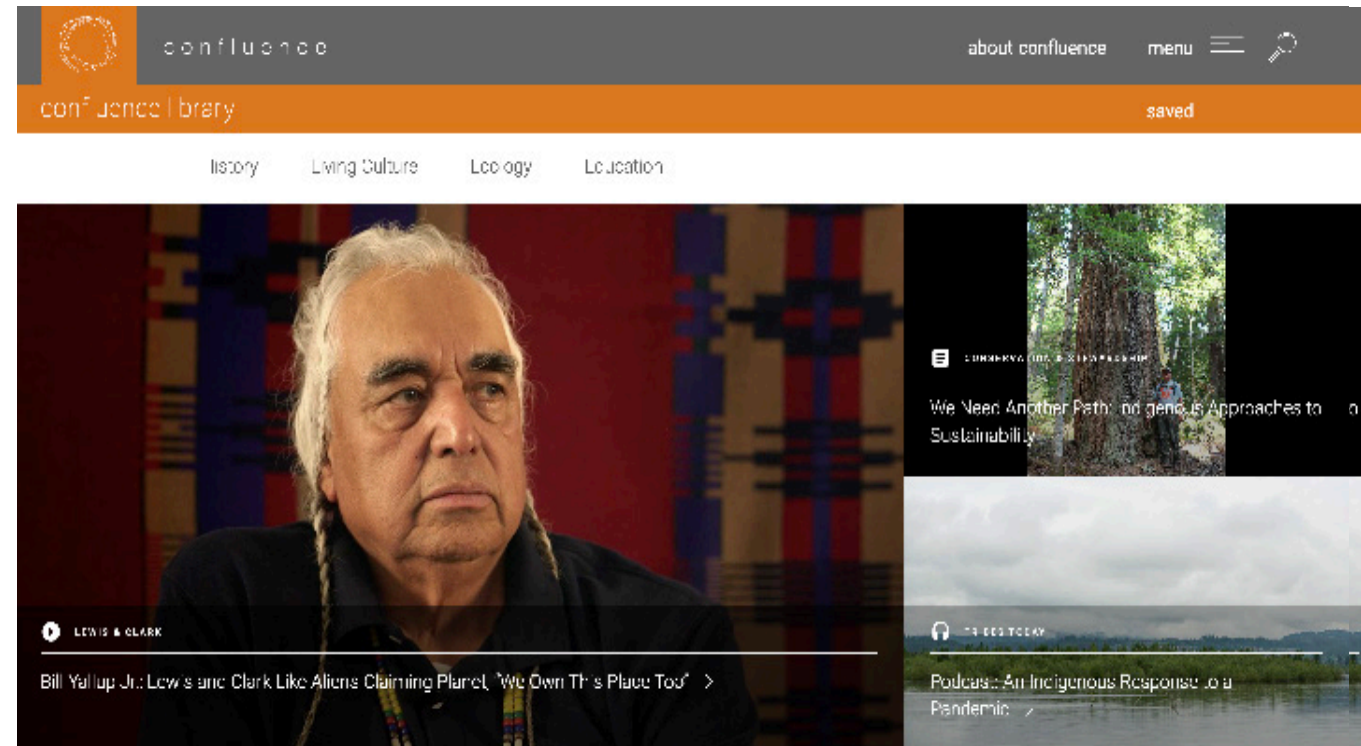
During the winter, I listened to my father telling me Native legends to put me to sleep. He told the legends over and over again. I was covered up with many quilts made by long hands by mom, aunty, and grandma. There would be the crackling of the fire in the wood stove while the winter wind blew outside. I was safe and secure.

I was raised at Celilo Falls, Oregon. During the winter, we learned life skills to help the village survive; how to make stone tools, flint arrowheads, and spear tips for hunting animals. The children would also listen to legends, which would explain to them how to act in the world. Some of the lessons in life would be don't be greedy, don't take more than you need, help those who are younger and smaller than you, and respect your elders.

Many of these legends used a "trickster" figure. In this area, our trickster is the "old-man-coyote." He is always hungry, wants more than he needs, and acts outrageously to show children how not to act. When we would go to town to go shopping and I would misbehave. My Grandma would say quietly, "Quit acting like Coyote," and I knew that I was not acting right. Grandma would not shout at me. The role of the trickster is a universal figure in most tribal legends and is important in the teachings of storytelling.

Now I work for Confluence and other organizations, telling legends in classrooms, both in person and on Zoom. I use puppets to tell my legends; I use "Aunty Coyote" to explain the background of storytelling. She has a red bandana on and red sunglasses. Storytelling is essential for the proper growth and development of well-rounded human beings.

You can read Ed's entire piece at <https://www.confluenceproject.org/library-post/notes-on-storytelling>.



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Social discourse is the way most individuals will have learned about Kennewick Man. In this article, communications scholar Cynthia-Lou Coleman (Osage) dives into the historical pseudoscience roots and presents the impact of the coverage—through newspapers, blogs, websites, and books—surrounding The Ancient One. This type of coverage has a direct effect on the Indigenous Peoples from the Columbia River.

#### ***We Need Another Path: Indigenous Approaches to Sustainability – by Keri E. Iyall Smith***

In this article, Keri E. Iyall Smith (Cowlitz) details how, by taking cues from Indigenous Peoples—who see the natural world as relatives, equal to humans, entitled to protections and thoughtful (minimal) use—it is possible to shift away from attitudes that expanded in the Colonial era, which see land as a thing to be conquered and with resources to be extracted.

To read, go to [confluenceproject.org/library](https://www.confluenceproject.org/library).



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