



# OUR NORTHWEST HERITAGE

*A History of the Pacific Northwest  
from a Christian Perspective*

RICHARD M. HANNULA



*Hi-Youts-To-Han (top left) and Ta-Wis-Sis-Sim-Nim (bottom left), members of the Nez Perce delegation in 1833, came in search of Christianity as an alternative to the spirit worship of the shamans like this one (middle right) entranced during a ritual.*



## CHAPTER 4

# GOSPEL TO THE NORTHWEST

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”*  
*Matthew 28:19-20*

### NEZ PERCE DELEGATION

In the fall of 1831, four Nez Perce Indians appeared in St. Louis, Missouri, a bustling, frontier town and gateway to the West. The townspeople gawked at the strangers because their hair and clothing was unlike that of the Indians of the surrounding tribes. They wore short deerskin shirts and buckskin leggings. Their black hair glistened with fish oil. They had traveled more than 2,000 miles in search of an old friend of the tribe, William Clark. The Nez Perce befriended and helped Clark on his expedition with Lewis 26 years earlier. Clark now served as the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for all the area of the Louisiana Purchase.

The Nez Perce warriors sought knowledge of Christianity. They wanted the “white man’s book from the Great Spirit that teaches men the will of God.” They asked for “black robes” - priests or ministers - to teach them about the white man’s God. The Nez Perce had heard about the Christian faith through fur traders, eastern Indians who came west and through a few young Indian men, like Spokane Garry, whom the Hudson’s Bay Company had sent to Christian school. Clark welcomed the Nez Perce visitors and promised to help. Sadly, two of the warriors took ill and died in St. Louis, and another died on the trip home. Only one made it back to his people, and he was killed shortly thereafter in a battle with the Blackfeet Indians.

In 1833, a visitor to St. Louis wrote the following exaggerated account of the Nez Perce delegation, which appeared in the *Christian Advocate*, a Protestant magazine:

“How deeply touching is the circumstance of the four natives traveling on foot 3,000 miles through thick forests and extensive prairies, sincere searchers after truth! ... With what intense concern will men of God whose souls are fired with holy zeal for the salvation of their fellow beings, read their history! There are immense mountains, plains and forests in those regions

whence they came, the abodes of numerous savage tribes. But no apostle of Christ has yet had the courage to penetrate into their moral darkness... May we not indulge the hope that the day is not far distant when missionaries will penetrate into these wilds where the Sabbath bell has never yet tolled since the world began! ... Let the Church awake from her slumbers and go forth in her strength to the salvation of these wandering sons of our native forests."

The editors of the *Christian Advocate* added this challenge. "Hear! Hear! Who will respond to the call from beyond the Rocky Mountains? ... We are for having a mission established there at once... Who will go? Who?"

## MISSIONARIES ARRIVE

The account mistakenly identified the Indians as Flatheads and included a drawing of one Indian with a deformed, sloping forehead. In truth, all of the Indians who visited St. Louis had normally shaped heads, since the Nez Perce did not practice head flattening.

The article ignited a fire storm of missionary zeal. The Nez Perce request came to be called the "Macedonian Cry," from Paul's vision of the man from Macedonia in Acts 16. Churches hurried to raise money and find volunteers to bring the good news of Christ to the Northwest Indians. Soon missionaries from many different churches came west to tell the Indians about forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ.

### Jason Lee

The Methodists responded first. They called the Reverend Jason Lee to head a mission to the Flatheads. Lee stood 6'3" tall and had arms of iron from years of hard farm labor. In 1826, at age 23, Jason Lee turned to Christ through the preaching of a circuit-riding, Methodist minister. Lee wrote, "I cast away my unbelieving fears - believed in, and gave myself to Christ." Five years later he was ordained and preaching the gospel himself.

In 1834, Jason Lee and his nephew, Daniel Lee, Cyrus Shepard and two other missionaries arrived in the Northwest. After his first meeting with a band of Northwest Indians, Jason Lee wrote, "My ardent soul longs to be sounding salvation in the ears of these red men. I trust that I shall yet see many of them rejoicing in hope of the glory of God."

They decided not to go to the Flatheads. John McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver advised him to start a mission south of the Columbia River on the Willamette River. Lee believed that a mission base on the Willamette



*Jason Lee (left) started the first mission in the Northwest near present-day Salem. His wife Anna Marie (above) died while giving birth to their first child.*

would serve as a strategic headquarters from which to plant missions throughout the Northwest.

The missionaries selected a site on the Willamette several miles north of present-day Salem, Oregon. They built homes, a meetinghouse, a school and planted gardens. They ministered to the Indians and a small number of former Hudson's Bay Company workers who took Indian wives and scratched out a living in the Willamette Valley. Lee preached to the Indians. Some of them brought their children to the mission school run by Cyrus Shepard. Most of the children attending Shepard's school lived at the mission. He taught them to read and write in English and explained the truths of the Bible. He also fed and clothed them and nursed them through illness.

However, small pox and measles brought by white traders decimated the people. Half of the Indian children who attended the school in 1835 died. The Indians' fear of disease and distrust of the whites made it difficult for the missionaries to lead them to Christ. One chief told Lee he opposed missionaries because they would prevent his tribe from getting alcohol and make them free their slaves. "And then," the chief asked Lee, "who would get wood and water and catch salmon?"

The missionaries' efforts seemed to bear little fruit. After two years, Lee wrote, "The truth is we have no evidence that we have been instrumental in

grief he wrote to Daniel Lee, "May heaven long save you from the pangs I feel...Is it possible that another sod in Oregon covers the remains of another companion who was dearer to me than life itself? ... But in the midst of all I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice that my companions are where they can never suffer what I suffer, and that I too shall join them in that glorious realm."

Life was particularly difficult for missionary wives. The hard work, isolation and loneliness often led to depression. Methodist missionary Alvan Waller wrote, "The labor of my wife wears upon her and at times she is much depressed in spirit and not a little discouraged." Many of the women suffered from serious health problems. The limited schooling available for their children was also a trial. As a missionary to the Nez Perce, Mrs. Asa Smith's experience was like many of the women's. Ailments kept her bedridden much of the time. She struggled through long bouts of depression. The Nez Perce Indians called her "The Weeping One."

### Hopes Rise; Then Fall

In 1840, spirits were lifted when a spiritual stirring came upon the Indians at The Dalles. Daniel and Jason Lee preached to large crowds of Indians eager to hear the gospel. Hundreds professed faith in Jesus Christ. However, their zeal did not last. Before long, most stopped attending services. Some said they expected to be paid for coming to church. A missionary who visited The Dalles in 1843 wrote in his journal: "A few years ago a great religious excitement prevailed among these Indians, and nearly the whole tribe, consisting of upwards of a thousand, professed to be converted, were baptized, and received into the Christian church. But they have nearly all relapsed into their former state."

After ten years of service, Daniel Lee concluded that the effort to convert the Indians of the Northwest was a failure. In 1843, he and his family left the Oregon Country and sailed east. A few months later, Jason Lee boarded a ship bound for New York to defend the mission from critics and to seek more support. He left his daughter, Lucy, in the care of Christian missionaries in Oregon. He charged them - should he die on the journey - "to train his dear little one for heaven." While visiting his hometown, he took ill and died - worn out from his labors at the age of 41. Lucy became an accomplished graduate and teacher of Willamette University, the school her father founded as the "Oregon Institute."

### Spokan Garry

In 1825, Hudson's Bay director George Simpson was under pressure from England to do something for the spiritual welfare of the Northwest Indians. He decided to send two Indian boys to a Church of England school at Red River near present-day Winnipeg in central Canada. One of the two was the son of a Spokane chief. Simpson gave him the name Spokan Garry. For five years he studied English, farming and the Christian faith.

At age 18, he returned home to teach school and preach. "He told us of a God above," one Spokane man said. "He showed us a book, the Bible, from which he read to us. He said to us if we were good, that when we died, we would go up above and see God."

It is unclear whether Garry clearly preached that Christ died for sinners. He taught the Ten Commandments, but did not challenge them to change their habits of taking more than one wife, gambling or drinking to excess.

Later, missionaries from the American Board, the Walkers and the Eells, started to work among the Spokane. They preached forgiveness in Jesus Christ and called the people to turn from their sinful ways; but the Spokane did not follow their teaching.

Over time, fewer and fewer people listened to Garry. Spokan Garry finally gave up preaching and teaching and returned to many of the old ways of the tribe. He took a second wife and concentrated on raising horses. He skillfully led his tribe as a chief for many years, keeping them out of war and cooperating with the United States government. In 1873, he brought Henry Spalding to preach to the tribe, and many Spokane put their trust in Christ. Near the end of his life, a white settler stole Garry's land and home. Spokan Garry died in 1892. He always spelled Spokane without an e - hence the unusual spelling of his name.

### AMERICAN BOARD SENDS MISSIONARIES

The American Board of Foreign Missions, an agency sponsored by Congregational, Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed churches, responded to the call of the Nez Perce by sending Dr. Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, the Reverend Henry Spalding and his wife Eliza and William Gray. They traveled overland with fur traders to the annual rendezvous in the Rocky Mountains. Here they met rugged mountain men and Indians of the Columbia



*Spokane Garry, educated in the Christian faith as a young man, led his tribe for decades.* Plateau. The Nez Perce at the rendezvous rushed to greet them. “We were met by a large party of Nez Perce, men, women and children,” Eliza Spalding wrote in her diary. “The women were not satisfied, short of saluting Mrs. Whitman and myself with a kiss. All appear happy to see us.”

### Friction Between Henry Spalding and the Whitmans

The Indians escorted them through the mountains to their homeland. On the trail, Spalding and Whitman decided to establish separate missions instead of working side by side. Henry Spalding frequently quarreled with Dr. Whitman and Narcissa. Before the American Board put the Whitmans and the Spaldings together, Spalding had told people, “I will not go on a mission with Narcissa. I don’t trust her judgment.”

Years earlier, Henry Spalding and Narcissa attended the same school and church in Prattsburg, New York. He proposed marriage to Narcissa but she refused him. Spalding harbored a grudge against her that came out at times in unkind words toward Narcissa and her husband. Although he apologized to them often and sought the Lord’s forgiveness with tears, he never fully overcame his bitter feelings.

In 1836, the Spaldings established a mission on the Clearwater River at Lapwai, “Butterfly Valley,” among the Nez Perce near present-day Lewiston, Idaho. The Whitmans chose to work with the Cayuse at Waiilatpu, “the place of the rye grass,” near present-day Walla Walla, Washington. The Nez Perce

urged the Whitmans to live with them and warned that the Cayuse were a violent and untrustworthy people. John McLoughlin also informed them that the Cayuse did not get along well with whites. However, Dr. Whitman was pleased with the Cayuses’ warm welcome and liked Waiilatpu, a beautiful and fertile spot on the Walla Walla River. Although Waiilatpu and Lapwai were 110 miles apart, the Whitmans and Spaldings helped one another often in their work.

### The Spaldings’ Work Bears Fruit

When Henry Spalding came into Nez Perce country, he was deeply moved by the desire of the people to learn to pray and worship. “Oh, that I may soon be settled among them,” he wrote in his journal, “and master their language, so as to point them to the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” The Spaldings gathered the Nez Perce for morning and evening prayer and for Sunday worship. At first, Henry Spalding spoke through a Nez Perce interpreter who had learned a little English from fur traders. But before long he was preaching in Nez Perce.

The Spaldings used creative ways to teach the message of Christ. Before each sermon, Mrs. Spalding painted Bible scenes from the passage upon which Mr. Spalding preached. He pointed to the pictures as he spoke. After each sermon, they asked the people what they had learned. After correcting misunderstandings, they urged them to share the message with their friends. The Spaldings taught the Indians to sing hymns that they translated into Nez Perce.

Mrs. Spalding began a school. She taught children and a few adults to read and write in Nez Perce. When Jason Lee visited in 1838, he was impressed with the Spaldings’ progress. “Both are instructing the Indians in the Nez Perce language,” Lee wrote. “Mrs. Spalding has made a small book in the language, printed it with a pen, and the children have made several copies which they sing very well. The Indians have acquired a good deal of Scripture knowledge.”

Later, a missionary brought a printing press from the American Board’s mission in Hawaii and taught Spalding how to use it. The first book printed in the Pacific Northwest was the Gospel of Matthew in Nez Perce. “Oh,” Spalding prayed, “may we see souls flocking to Jesus as doves to their windows.”

The first two converts to Christianity were influential men of the tribe



*John McLoughlin welcomes Eliza Spalding and Narcissa Whitman to Fort Vancouver.*

whom Spalding named Joseph and Timothy. "Joseph speaks most affectionately," Spalding said, "urging all present to give their hearts to Jesus without delay." By 1839, he wrote to the mission board that a large number of Nez Perce had confessed their sins and "many give evidence of a change of heart."

### Eliza Spalding

Arguably, the most effective of all the pioneer Protestant missionaries to the Northwest was Eliza Spalding. She was born on August 11, 1807. After putting her faith in Christ during her teenage years, she dedicated her life to the Lord. The day that she and her husband left home for the mission field, she wrote, "I trust it is the love of Christ which has made me, not only willing, but anxious to promote my Master's cause among the benighted Indians. O blessed privilege to labor in the vineyard of my Savior; and point the lost and perishing to Him, for He is the way, the truth and the life."

Eliza worked tirelessly and lovingly among the Nez Perce. In the midst of caring for her own four children, she translated Scripture verses and hymns into Nez Perce, wrote a primer, taught school and graciously served the people. Many of the Nez Perce traced their coming to Christ to Eliza's

teaching. Eliza's health was frail, but she pressed on, even when her husband wondered if they should continue. "I like the command just as it stands," she told him. "Go ye into all the world' - and no exceptions for poor health."

When the Whitman Massacre led to the Spaldings' withdrawal from Lapwai, the Christian Nez Perce mourned Eliza's leaving most of all. One said to Mrs. Spalding as she departed, "Now my beloved teacher...I shall look upon your face for the last time in this world. But this book (the Bible) in which your hands have written and caused me to write the words of God I shall carry in my bosom until I lie down in the grave."

Eliza Spalding died at the age of 43 on January 7, 1851. Among the words Henry Spalding had written on her tombstone were these: "She died in peace trusting in her Savior, 'Rest sweet dust, till Jesus bid thee rise.'"

### New Missionaries Arrive; Quarrels and Mistakes

In 1838, William Gray went east to recruit more help. He returned with a new wife of his own and three couples - the Eells, Smiths and Walkers. Gray had a difficult and domineering personality. By the time the new missionaries arrived in the Northwest, the other couples refused to work in the same mission with him. The Smiths started a mission at Kamiah with the Nez Perce. The Walkers and Eells established Tshimakian Mission among the Spokane tribe. These new mission stations struggled. Soon the missionaries were critical of Spalding as well as Gray. They sent letters to the mission board in Boston complaining of problems.

Henry Spalding loved the Indians and worked tirelessly to save them, but he also did damage to the cause of Christ. Spalding often had difficulty controlling his tem-



*Timothy, a Nez Perce Chief, believed in Christ through the teaching of Henry and Eliza Spalding.*



*This 19th century sketch of Whitman's murder is wrong in many details. Whitman was struck when he went to get medicine, and Mrs. Whitman was not in the room at the time her husband was killed.*

grants swept through the region. Several Cayuse died every day. Despite Whitman's best efforts, he could not save their lives. Chief Tilokaikt lost two children. Half of the tribe perished in two months. The Cayuse noticed that most of the whites treated by Whitman recovered, but the Indians did not. Their anger grew. Some thought that Whitman wanted them to die. Cayuse leaders made plans to kill Whitman and Spalding and overrun the missions.

## The Massacre

On Monday, November 29, 1847, a band of Cayuse led by Tilokaikt and Tomahas entered the crowded mission compound. Most of the occupants were sick or needy immigrants wintering at Waiilatpu. Several were orphaned children whose parents had died on the Oregon Trail. Tilokaikt asked Whitman for medicine. When the doctor turned his back to get it, Tomahas struck him in the head with a tomahawk. Throughout the mission grounds, warriors opened fire killing thirteen people, including Narcissa Whitman. The Cayuse looted and burned the mission buildings and held 47 women and children hostage for more than a month. The plan to kill the Spaldings failed when they found protection among friendly Nez Perce.

Officials of the Hudson's Bay Company ransomed the captives for tobacco, clothing and ammunition. They brought the women and children and the Spaldings down river to the safety of Fort Vancouver. In the aftermath of the massacre, the American Board closed its mission stations in the Northwest. The Spaldings, Walkers and Eells moved to the Willamette Valley where Henry Spalding taught school and preached. Eliza Spalding died there in 1851.

## Cayuse War

Oregon settlers were furious when they learned of the massacre. A volunteer militia of 500 riflemen pursued the Cayuse. Few battles were fought as the Cayuse fled into the Blue Mountains. For two years, militiamen assailed the Cayuse. Many Indians died due to exposure to the harsh elements and lack of food. Finally, the tribe surrendered five warriors involved in the killing. They were tried, convicted and sentenced to death. Tilokaikt, Tomahas and three other warriors were hanged in Oregon City in the spring of 1850.

## The Nez Perce Revival

The government forbade Spalding to return to Lapwai for many years. When he did return in October of 1871, 24 years after he was forced to leave, a great spiritual awakening among the Nez Perce began. In less than 18 months, more than 600 people were baptized and joined the church. "This is a glorious day," Spalding wrote, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

In 1873, Spokane Garry invited 70-year-old Henry Spalding to preach to the Spokane. He rode nearly 1,500 miles, preaching to the Spokane as they fished, hunted and gathered roots. In the 1840s, the Walkers and Eells had worked with the tribe for nine years without seeing one turn to Christ. During the summer of 1873, more than 300 Spokane confessed faith in Jesus Christ and were baptized. "The labor has been fearfully severe to ride so much on rough horses in my old age," Spalding wrote, "but my heart has overflowed with praises to God and joy in his wonderful work." Henry Spalding died in Lapwai in 1874, leaving behind several strong churches among the Nez Perce and Spokane. This great spiritual awakening among the Plateau tribes is known as the Nez Perce Revival. Several of the churches born out of the revival thrive to the present day.

soldiers to their camp.” On some Sundays, American and British troops gathered together for worship. When the American Civil War broke out in 1861, Captain Pickett returned home to Virginia and became a famous Confederate general. His troops led the disastrous charge up Cemetery Ridge at the Battle of Gettysburg. But British and American troops remained on San Juan Island for over ten years.

Finally, the two nations agreed to have the boundary dispute settled through arbitration. In 1872, the emperor of Germany, Kaiser Wilhelm I, after hearing arguments from both sides, ruled that Haro Strait formed the boundary. The San Juan Islands officially became United States territory.

## OREGON BECOMES A STATE

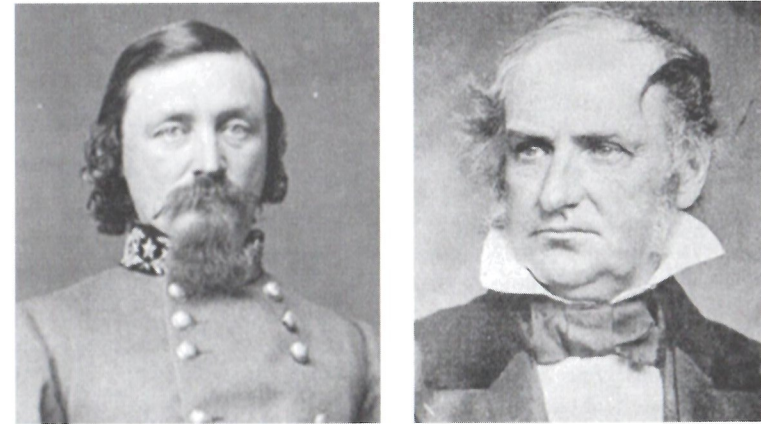
In 1859, Oregon was admitted as the 33<sup>rd</sup> state. They sent former territorial governor Joseph Lane to Washington, D.C. as one of Oregon’s first U.S. senators. In the state’s first presidential election in 1860, Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln won, even though Oregon’s Joseph Lane ran for vice-president with John Breckinridge for the pro-slavery Democratic Party.

In 1860, Oregon chose Edward Baker for the United States Senate. Baker had moved from Springfield, Illinois where he had been a close friend and law partner with Abraham Lincoln. Baker became a Union officer in the Civil War while remaining a senator. He was killed in battle in 1861, one of the first Union officers killed in the war.

## NEZ PERCE WAR

During the Indian wars of the 1850s, the Nez Perce remained friendly to the government and settlers. Since the days of Lewis and Clark, the peaceful Nez Perce had never killed a white man. The Walla Walla Treaty of 1855 established two reservations for the Nez Perce: one near Lapwai, Idaho, and the other in the Wallowa Valley in the northeast corner of Oregon where Chief Joseph’s band lived. But soon miners and settlers coveted Nez Perce land, so government agents in 1863 pressed for a new treaty that reduced the reservation’s size by 90%, in exchange for money and schools. The Wallowa Nez Perce refused to sign the treaty, for it stripped them of all of their land and required them to move to the Lapwai reservation. Lapwai chiefs signed the treaty. Government agents told the Wallowa Nez Perce to move.

They refused and appealed to President Grant. Grant agreed that the Nez Perce had a right to the land and ordered the Wallowa Valley set aside as a



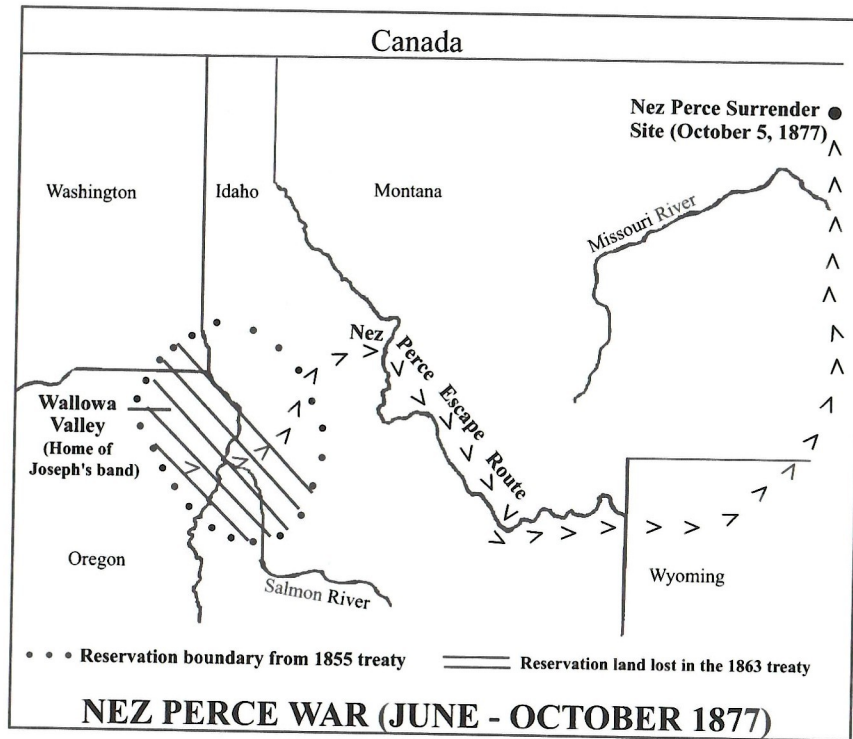
*George Pickett (left) commanded American troops on San Juan Island during the Pig War. He later fought for the South in the Civil War. Oregon’s Senator Edward Baker (right) served as a general in the Union army and was killed in an early battle.*

reservation in 1873. However, under growing pressure from settlers, the United States government decided to remove the Nez Perce and open the Wallowa Valley for settlement. In 1877, General O.O. Howard, commander of the United States Army in the Northwest, was ordered to evict the Wallowa Nez Perce and put them on the Lapwai reservation. The government gave them just 30 days to round up their horses, cross Hells Canyon and the Snake River, raging with high waters from spring runoff, and reach Lapwai.

General Howard believed that the order was wrong. Earlier he had written to Washington, D.C., “I think it is a great mistake to take from Joseph and his band of Nez Perce Indians that valley...possibly Congress can be induced to let these really peaceable Indians have this poor valley for their own.” Howard’s appeals failed to change the government’s plans. Joseph and the other Wallowa Nez Perce chiefs protested the order. But realizing there was little they could do, they prepared to leave their valley for Lapwai.

## Hostilities Begin

Many of the younger warriors wanted to fight rather than give up their homeland. When two of them killed four white settlers who had been hostile to the Nez Perce, the whole band knew they would suffer for it. They decided to flee to Canada as the Sioux Indians had after the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876. For four months, Joseph and the other chiefs led a group of 800 men, women and children on a 1,400-mile journey. Fewer than 200 were warriors. They forded rushing rivers, scaled mountains and outmaneu-



vered their pursuers. The vastly outnumbered Nez Perce warriors defeated the United States Army in several battles and skillfully eluded the soldiers. Just before reaching the safety of the Canadian border, a cavalry division under Colonel Nelson Miles came from the east and attacked the Nez Perce camp, killing men, women and children and scattering many to the hills. The warriors regrouped, but they were surrounded without hope of escape.

### Defeated and Exiled

The following morning, an exhausted Chief Joseph, his hair hanging in two long braids on either side of his face, surrendered his rifle to Colonel Miles of the United States Army. He stood erect and said: "I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed... It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are, perhaps freezing to death. I want time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs, I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever."



Chief Joseph (left) and General O.O. Howard (right) battled for four months across 1,400 miles during the Nez Perce War in the summer of 1877.

Before Joseph surrendered, Colonel Miles promised that the Nez Perce would be placed on the reservation at Lapwai. However, after the surrender, Joseph and his people were exiled to Indian Territory in Oklahoma. "When will the white man learn to tell the truth?" Joseph asked. Many Nez Perce died in the heat and unfamiliar surroundings in Oklahoma. The following spring, the Bannock tribe went on the warpath. When General Howard and his forces defeated them, the Indian wars in the Pacific Northwest came to an end.

### Changes in Treaties and Reservations

The experience of the Wallowa Valley Nez Perce was not unusual. In the years after the establishment of the first treaties, the government insisted on changes that greatly reduced the size of Indian reservations. In 1887, The Dawes Act was passed in an effort to assimilate Indians into the general population. Reservations were divided into individual parcels for each Indian family. The Dawes Act led to a reduction of reservation land by two-thirds and it opened large tracts of land to white settlement. In the 1930s, the federal government took steps to protect reservation lands from further shrinking. During the 1960s and 70s, Northwest Indians fought for their treaty rights and won a greater measure of control over their own affairs.

### More About O. O. Howard

General Oliver Otis Howard (1830-1909) won national fame fighting for the Union in the Civil War where he lost his right arm at the Battle of Fair Oaks. He fought in many of the great battles of the war, including Bull Run, Antietam, Gettysburg, Chattanooga and Sherman's "March to the Sea." Howard did not hide his strong Christian faith. During the war he wrote, "Oh, that my guiding principle might be the honor of Christ!" He held nightly prayer meetings in his tent, led Bible studies, prayed at the bedside of wounded soldiers and encouraged his men to look to Christ for salvation. He was known throughout the Union army as the "Christian general."

After the war, he served as the Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, an agency that helped the former slaves in the South. Under his leadership, the Freedmen's Bureau provided food, clothing and education to hundreds of thousands of black men, women and children. General Howard established Howard University in Washington, D.C. to provide higher education to black Americans. He came to Fort Vancouver in 1874 as the commander of army forces in the Northwest. Although Howard tenaciously pursued Joseph in the Nez Perce War, he maintained a life-long friendship with him and later advocated a return to the Wallowa Valley for Joseph's Nez Perce band.

## IDAHO AND MONTANA TERRITORIES CREATED

The discovery of gold east of the Cascade Mountains in 1855 prompted a rush of prospectors and merchants to the eastern side of Washington Territory, which included present-day Idaho. Before long, more people lived east of the Cascades than west. There was talk of moving the capital from Olympia to Walla Walla or Lewiston. Settlers in the Puget Sound region asked Congress to create a new territory, rather than run the risk of losing their political power and capital city to the newcomers east of the mountains.

During the American Civil War, Lincoln and Congress were anxious to add more antislavery states to the Union. In 1863, President Lincoln signed a bill which created Idaho Territory. In 1864, Montana Territory was established. The new territories created the present boundaries of Washington and Idaho.

### More About Chief Joseph

Chief Joseph was born in 1840 and baptized as an infant by Henry Spalding. Joseph's Nez Perce name was Hin-mah-too-yah-lat-kekht (Thunder Traveling to the High Mountains). His father, Old Joseph, was one of Spalding's first Christian converts among the Nez Perce. In his youth, Joseph received Christian training at home and at the mission. But later Old Joseph renounced Christianity by publicly tearing up his New Testament. He returned his band to their native religion. When Old Joseph died, the people made Joseph chief, for they knew him to be compassionate, gentle and wise. Joseph ably led his band, always trying to preserve the rights of his people while maintaining peace with white settlers.

In the Nez Perce War, Joseph was nicknamed "Red Napoleon" by newspaper writers who gave him credit for the amazing military victories over the army. In truth, Joseph was one of several chiefs who led the people and was not the main military commander. When Joseph's band was banished to Oklahoma, many people died. Colonel Miles repeatedly petitioned the government to let them go to Lapwai. Joseph went to Washington, D.C. to request a return to Nez Perce country.

Finally, in 1885, the government relented and the banished Nez Perce returned to the Northwest, but Joseph and his band were sent to the Colville Reservation in eastern Washington, not to Lapwai. Joseph made two trips to the East, requesting a return to Nez Perce land. In 1897 in New York, he rode in a parade as an honored guest with General Howard, Colonel Miles and Buffalo Bill Cody. Although New Yorkers cheered him as a hero and many politicians revered him as a brave and noble man, he was never permitted to live again in the Wallowa Valley. He died in 1904 on the Colville Reservation near Nespelem, Washington.

## THE STRUGGLE FOR STATEHOOD

When Washington and Idaho became territories, residents assumed that after a few years of growth Congress would admit them as states. The disadvantages of being a territory, and not a state, abounded. The people did not elect their own governors or judges. The president in Washington, D.C. appointed them. Some appointed officials worked hard for the citizens, but many did not. One territorial governor of Washington accepted the job when he discovered that the territory granted divorces easily. He came to Washington, got a divorce and left soon afterward. Idaho had one territorial



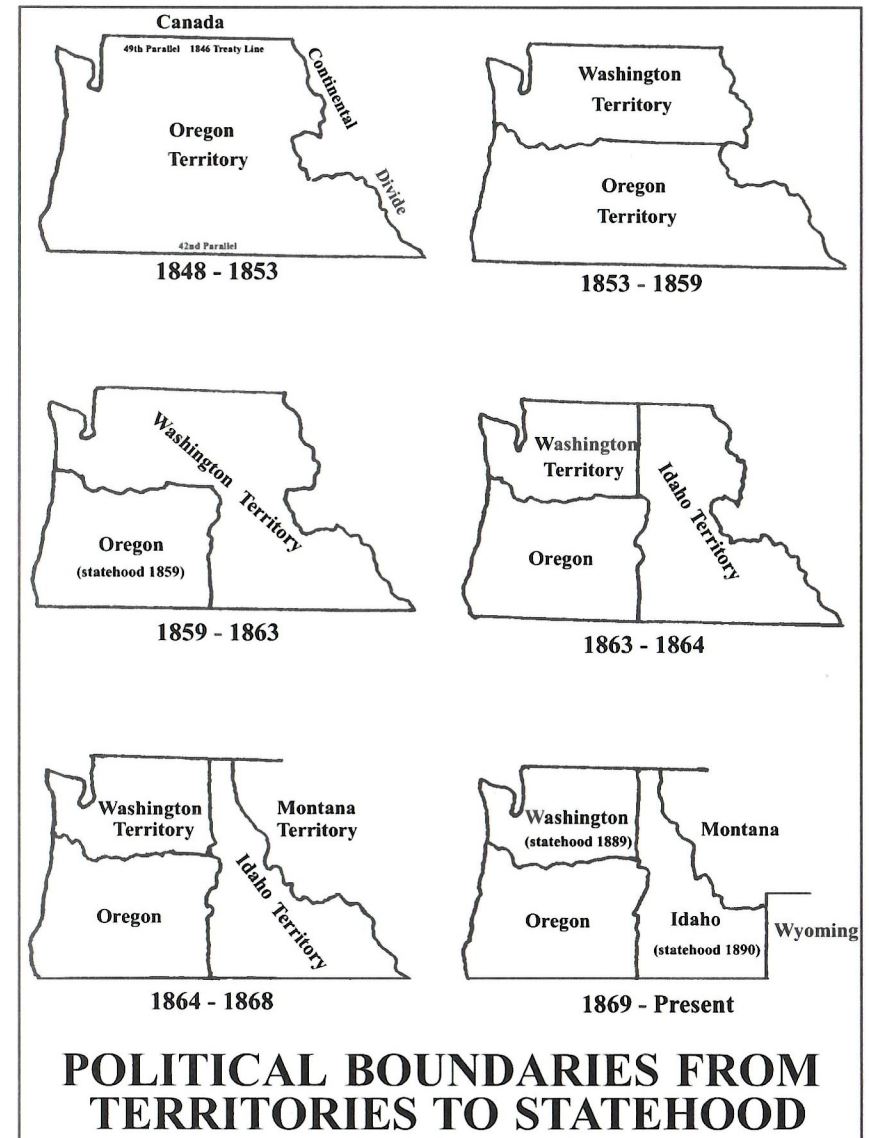
Chief Joseph, photographed late in life, wears a Nez Perce warbonnet and necklaces. He died on the Colville Reservation in eastern Washington in 1904.

governor who drank himself to death in eight months, while another stole a fortune from the state treasury and fled the country.

Territories had no voting representatives in the House of Representatives or the Senate. Although the federal government taxed the territories, territorial citizens had no voice in how tax money should be spent or what federal laws and policies should be. Many settlers felt like the American colonists had under the rule of the British king. "No taxation without representation," they cried. The sooner territories achieved statehood, the more control they could exercise over their lives.

Congress could override the laws of territorial legislatures. Several times, Congress dabbled with major adjustments to the political boundaries of the Northwest. In 1887, Congress passed a bill giving northern Idaho to Washington Territory and the rest of Idaho to Nevada. Only the veto of President Cleveland kept Idaho from disappearing as its own political entity.

In the 1870s and 1880s, the territorial legislatures of Washington and Idaho



petitioned Congress several times for statehood. But politics interfered. For most of this period, the Democrats controlled at least one house of Congress or the presidency, and they did not want to admit new states that were likely to vote Republican. At that time, the Republican Party was popular in the territories of Washington, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. Democrats feared that if the territories of the Northwest were admitted as states, the citizens would elect Republicans to Congress, and the Democratic Party

would lose its power in Washington, D.C.

## Washington Admitted as the 42nd State

The completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad in the early 1880s led to a gigantic increase in the number of settlers streaming into the Northwest. Statehood could not be delayed for long. The impasse was broken in 1888 when Republican Benjamin Harrison was elected president and Republicans won control of Congress. On February 22, 1889 (George Washington's birthday), Congress passed the Enabling Act that authorized the citizens of Washington to write a state constitution.

At the Constitutional Convention in Ellensburg, representatives drafted a constitution that granted citizens broad powers of self-government, including the direct election of judges. It made it the state's duty to provide education to all children without regard to race, color, sex or class. But it denied Chinese the right to own land. Olympia remained the capital, rejecting pleas from Ellensburg and Yakima. Despite a strong push for women's suffrage, the constitution rejected it. The women of Washington would have to wait twenty years before they won the right to vote. Citizens ratified the constitution and submitted it to Congress. On November 11, 1889, Washington entered the Union as the 42<sup>nd</sup> state.

Republican Elisha P. Ferry, a Seattle banker and former territorial governor, was elected as the first state governor. "Let greater wisdom accompany the greater power we now possess," Ferry said in his inaugural address. "Let us discharge the additional duties devolving upon us in a manner that will redound to our credit; advance the welfare and prosperity of our State, and add importance and strength to the National Union." Washington State government had begun.

## Idaho Becomes a State

In 1890, Idaho was admitted as the 43<sup>rd</sup> state with a population of just under 90,000 people. Its state constitution created a democratic representative government modeled on the U.S. Constitution. However, it also reflected the prejudices of the time. It denied Asians and Indians the right to vote or work for the state government. Citizens selected Boise as the capital and elected George Shoup as the first governor. To placate northern Idahoans who felt separate from the agrarian southern half of the state, Moscow was chosen as the site for the state university. The Supreme Court held sessions at rotating locations throughout the state.

### EZRA MEEKER

One of the most enduring characters in Northwest history was the pioneer, Ezra Meeker, founder of Puyallup, Washington. Meeker came to the Northwest by covered wagon as a young man. He farmed, logged and dug for gold. Meeker discovered that the climate and soil of the Puyallup Valley was ideal for growing hops, a grain used for making beer. Hops were, for a time, the most valuable crop for many Northwest farmers. He served on the jury during Chief Leschi's murder trial and stood up for Leschi's innocence. Later in life, Meeker wrote books about pioneer life and he led a drive to preserve the Oregon Trail as a national historical monument. As a publicity stunt, he retraced the Oregon Trail by ox cart in 1904 and made it all the way to Washington, D.C. where he met President Teddy Roosevelt. Ezra Meeker holds the distinction of being the only person to travel over the Oregon Trail by covered wagon, train, automobile and airplane. He died in 1928.



*Ezra Meeker retraces his steps over the Oregon Trail in 1904 by ox cart (top right) and by airplane in 1921 (bottom right).*

## CONCLUSION

The Oregon Treaty with the Great Britain made the Pacific Northwest American territory. The United States government quickly established treaties with the Indian tribes of the region. Failure to faithfully implement the treaties often led to confusion and conflict. Congress enticed settlers to the Northwest with promises of free land, but continued old prejudices by denying blacks and Asians the right to claim land on an equal footing with whites. Pioneers endured great hardships on the Oregon Trail, but quickly created homes and communities in the Northwest and developed stable state and local governments.

