Nimíipuu Notes:

An Introduction to a Memorandum of Understanding and to *Nimíipuu'neewit* "traditional lifeways of the People"

The *Nimíipuu* Flag – The Eagle Staff

By Rodney Frey in collaboration with the *Nimíipuu*

27 December 2025

Designed to be used as an e-curriculum

A **Memorandum of Understanding** (MOU) is a formal agreement between two or more legally defined parties outlining shared values and/or a shared vision, and defining roles, responsibilities and mutual expectations for a partnership. While its intent is for its parties to voluntarily enter into collaborative relationships, the MOU is legally non-binding and non-enforceable. To better understand the MOU between the *Nimiipuu* of the Nez Perce Tribe and the congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse, the following "*Nimiipuu* Notes" curriculum places the MOU within its cultural and historical context. The paragraphs of the MOU, in their associated contexts, are identified in this curriculum as text boxed, in Times New Roman font, on the following pages: 1, 4, 10, 38, 41, 46-47, 54, 63, 67 and 73.

For a better understanding of ***Nimíipuu'neewit*** **"traditional lifeways of the People"** see page 7 and throughout this curriculum.

Acknowledgements

I humbly offer my sincere thank you to the many *Nimíipuu* who, over the years and with such generosity, shared their wisdom and insights with me. They have left an indelible imprint on me, and I owe may greatest gratitude to them. They include Horace Axtell, Rachel Edwards, James Holt, Dan and Julie Kane, Mylie Lawyer, Ann McCormack, Aaron Miles, Aaron Penney, D'Lisa Penney, Sam Penney, Kevin Peters, Allen Pinkham, Josiah Pinkham, Diane Mallickan, Julian Matthews, Bob and Angel Sobotta, Leroy Seth, Vera Sonneck, Mari Watters, Silas Whitman, and Nakia Williamson. These are among the many voices that have resonated in my class lectures at the University of Idaho (1998-2017) and in the "*Nimíipuu* Lifelong Learning Online" (L3) web module (2002).

And a great thank you to the current members of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee, who reviewed and approved the Memorandum of Understanding with the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse (2025): Chairman Shannon Wheeler, Vice-Chairman Ashton Picard, Secretary Rachel Edwards, Treasurer Ryan Oatman, Chaplain Ferris Paisano, Members Sam Penney, Aaron Gould, and Shirley Allman. My gratitude for their support also goes to Harold Crook, Rick Eichstaedt and Jonathan Moon.

May their wisdom and insights, and their vibrant stories continue in the lives of all those who engage the following curriculum.

A thank you to Evan Williamson, who reformatted the *Nimíipuu* Lifelong Learning Online (L3) module website, rendering the audio and video files accessible, along with placing "*Nimíipuu* Notes" in the university's Digital Collection (University of Idaho, Digital Infrastructure Librarian, 2025-26). And a special thanks to Judy Meuth for doing a complete edit of "*Nimíipuu* Notes" 3rd draft.

Much appreciation to Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Stevens, Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse. It was her continuing desire to include the Indigenous in our Church community that was the impetus for the Memorandum of Understanding. Also, thank you to the UUCP Board of Directors for their review and approval of the MOU. Members at the time of the signing were President Judy Meuth, Vice President Suzanne Seigneur, Treasurer Sue Engels, Secretary Mark Willis, and members Michael Jennings, Tom Salsbury, David Nelson, Alexandra Broughton, Donald Stanziano, and Ashley Anderson.

A heart-felt thanks to the forty-five or so participants who stuck with the first *Nimíipuu* Class offered by the UUCP (October – December 2025). By the end of the eight-week class, they literally helped transform the first draft of "*Nimíipuu* Notes," with their questions, comments, suggestions, into the curriculum you now hold in hand. To Ryan Urie, Adult Faith Formation Manager, and to the UUCP MOU Committee members Ken Faunce, Nancy Nelson and Diane Prorak, thank you for your ongoing support.

It must have been a sight to see. There at the podium, before over 5,000 attending the "Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions" in Chicago of October 1993 was Tom Yellowtail, an *Apsáalooke* (Crow) from Montana. Wearing an Eagle-feather headdress, in beaded-buckskin regalia and with an Eagle-feather fan in hand, Tom spoke in his native language, offering the opening prayer for world peace, words of hope and renewal. In fact, Tom was first to represent Indigenous people world-wide at the Council, which had begun in 1893. At the podium that day were some of the world's foremost religious leaders – Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim, including the Dalai Lama.

I first met Tom in 1974, he an *Akbaalíak* "one who doctors others" and a Chief of the Sundance Lodge. Tom was running the three-day Sundance that summer. It was hard to explain, each of us from such differing backgrounds, but we immediately connected and Tom became my most important teacher, mentor, and more. In 1977, in an evening Medicine Bundle ceremony, Tom and his wife Susie formally welcomed me into their family and the Whistling Water clan, bestowing on me the Indian Name, *Maakuuxshiichi'ish* – "Seeking to Help Others." The summer before Tom had welcomed me into his *Ashkísshe* Way, inviting me into the "Little Lodge" – the Sweat Lodge, and the "Big Lodge" – Sundance Lodge, to offer, to pray, to renew. I would blow the Eagle-bone Whistle to the Drum's beat that summer in 1976 for the health of my son, and continue to do so over the years to come. Tom was a humble man, who never spoke angrily about another, always with a smile on his face, a twinkle in his eye, a warmth in his handshake, and hope in his voice. And he was so patient with me. Over a period of nineteen years, Grandpa Tom introduced me to and taught me the traditional lifeways of his family and, indeed, of the Indigenous.

In the summer of 1993, Grandpa Tom invited me to stay with him at his rather remote cabin on the Crow Reservation, where he had his well-attended garden and well-used Sweat Lodge. He wanted me to hear and write down his most cherished stories, so his grandkids and their grandkids could continue to learn and benefit from them, so they could be true to themselves, with hope in their hearts. It was late during one of those evenings, as he completed telling the last of his stories, that of Burnt Face, his favorite, when he turned to me and spoke these prophetic words – "**If all these great stories were told, great stories will come!**" His most cherished were subsequently published in our book, *Stories That Make the World* (University of Oklahoma Press 1995).

While Grandpa Tom crossed over at the age of ninety on November 24, 1993, his wisdom continues to guide me on my journey to this day, as it guides so many others. Ultimately, what you now hold in your hands and read with your heart, was only made possible because of Tom Yellowtail. I owe him my steadfast gratitude.

Ahókaashiile *Qe'ciyéw'yew'*

Preface

In my fifty-plus years of researching, writing, publishing, and teaching university courses, I must admit that I've never felt such a level of **anxiety,** and yet also a level of a sincere **hope** concerning the objectives of a text. Ultimately, "*Nimíipuu* Notes" is intended to be used to influence the behavior of my fellow Unitarian Universalist members, potentially in various ways and degrees, as to render us better "relatives" with the *Nimíipuu*, and with the *Nimíipuu*, we might change the world! Indeed, a very lofty hope! We need patience and perseverance, as we approach our aim incrementally, one step at a time.

In the past, for me, it has all been about getting the **story straight,** of telling the story of another, their culture, from their perspective. Of doing good descriptive ethnography. Of doing good participatory research in another culture, all done ethically, with cultural sensitivity, and collaboration. And then writing up the research into an ethnography, to be reviewed and approved by my host, before it goes public. And I ask, "did I get the story right, from their perspective?" Which is a question itself filled with tremendous anxiety. As it turns out, collaboratively, we have had success at doing good ethnography.

But the objectives of "*Nimíipuu* Notes" go far beyond retelling an existing story, which it still seeks to do, but also of telling the possibility of **new stories**, yet to be written. While the content of "*Nimíipuu* Notes" did not entail doing any new research as part of its makeup, the anxiety has grown and is as great as its hope. You are a member of a group that has a very unique possibility; you have an opportunity few others are offered. Can we forge and maintain meaningful **relationships** with those who in the past were complete strangers, who were often misrepresented, stereotyped and discriminated against? Forge relationships within which meaningful exchanges are made, exchanges based on an **ethic of sharing**, of giving to others, without thought of receiving something back? While applicable to the general public, "*Nimíipuu* Notes" was thus written for a specific audience, to the **non-Indian** participant of a Memorandum of Understanding.

As a participant of the **Memorandum of Understanding** between the *Nimiipuu* members of the Nez Perce Tribe and the members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse, the hope is that "we (the UUCP members) are **working with** its resilient Peoples (the *Nimiipuu*) to show **respect** and **contribute** to the healing and nurturing of this *Héetewit Wéetés* 'Precious Land' and all its Peoples" (from the *Niimíipuu* Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse Memorandum of Understanding 2025). Success of the MOU cannot be measured by its words, but only by the actions of those that are moved by its words, moved in the ties built and the exchanges made in their interwoven personal lives. You are being asked to **embrace our shared hopes, animate our common dreams, and together bring forth newly revitalized stories.**

Rodney Frey 27 December 2025

Table of Contents

with numbers of L3 pages (p) and videos (v)**:** **Pages**:

Table of Contents Continued

Introduction

> "This acknowledgment is not simply a re-writing of a "territorial acknowledgement," rendering it more appropriate and accurate. But it seeks to re-define the relationship between a Church community and the ancestral Peoples of this Land. It seeks to provide action behind its words. It seeks a new covenant with Indigenous peoples. It is a **Memorandum of Understanding** (MOU) of a collaborative relationship predicated on a framework of Indigenous conceptualizations, most importantly on, 1. inherent tribal sovereignty, 2. an inclusive, expansive kinship, and 3. an ethic of sharing. Indigenous terms will be used throughout the MOU to better convey an Indigenous perspective. At its heart, this MOU is about **Relationships**. Its intent is to improve communications and collaboration, and the healing and nurturing of this *Héetewit Wéetés,* this Precious Land and all its People." (from the *Niimíipuu* Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse Memorandum of Understanding 2025)

Besides an introduction to the history and culture of the *Nimíipuu* (the Nez Perce), the intended **objectives** of "*Nimíipuu* Notes" is to address the key elements of the *Nimíipuu* - Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse Memorandum of Understanding (MOU 2025). Those objectives include acknowledging: the inherent sovereignty of the *Nimíipuu*, the trauma resulting from Euro-American assimilation and hegemony, the *Nimíipuu* responses to that hegemony, the nature, dynamic and value of *Nimíipuu* kinship relationships, and the *Nimíipuu* importance of sharing with those in need. Ultimately, the objective of the "*Nimíipuu* Notes" is to **better inform the members of the UUCP of the responsibilities being asked of them in the MOU.** To address these objectives, "*Nimíipuu* Notes" is divided into six segments that:

First, provide a baseline, an anchoring point from which to appreciate a *Nimíipuu* perspective of the world, which is in the segment: *Nimíipuu'neewit* "traditional lifeways of the People." How can we appreciate the wounds and pain of another without first learning of the **pristine healthy other**?

Second, provide an historical overview of the underlying Euro-American factors and direct hegemonic and assimilation assault on the *Nimíipuu*, in order to better appreciate their "historic trauma," which is in the segments: Ebb and Flow of Assimilation, The Noble Savage and Romanticization of the Indian, and Indicators of Trauma. If we are to engage others with traumatic scars, do we not need to appreciate the **depth of their wounds**?

Third, provide a better understanding of how the "tradition," in *Nimíipuu'neewit,* has been the dynamic force helping provide the *Nimiipuu* with positive responses to hegemonic pressures and historic trauma, which are in the segment: Self Determination

and Participatory Empathetic Adaptability. What can be learned from **how the *Nimíipuu* have faced challenges** that can gain a better understanding of the *Nimíipuu* and also assist in how we might successfully engage challenges?

Fourth, provide a better appreciation of how the nature and dynamic of *Nimíipuu* relationships, which are in the segments: *Yéeye* "family" and *Téek'e* "to share with others." What does it mean to be a "relative?" If we are to engage others, should we not be **guided by how they engage each other**?

Fifth, provide an opportunity to explore what might be missing and not addressed in "*Nimíipuu* Notes," which is considered in the segment: A Deeper Look. It is here that you are asked to reflect on what you have learned thus far and contribute to what is yet missing and needs to be considered. Having explored what is unique in the history and culture of the *Nimiipuu,* you are being asked what is it that we all **share in common**?

Sixth, provide an opportunity for you to explore ways of engaging with the *Nimíipuu* that are collaborative, mutually beneficial, ethically and culturally sensitive and appropriate, which is considered in the segment: Your Role: What is to be Shared in Relationship? As a "relative," how are you to relate and share with others? You are being asked, **what can I do to make a difference**?

The six segments of "*Nimíipuu* Notes" are a series of small steps taken to help create and improve our "**relationships of mutually beneficial sharing**" between and among the MOU participants.

Point of clarification, **individual participation in the MOU is voluntary**. The level of engagement can vary, from fully to minimally or even not at all. As a member of a community of diverse, independent thinkers, this MOU is to be engaged following **one's own principles,** true to one's own values and beliefs. Simply because the UUCP entered into the MOU, does not require all its members to adhere to its objectives.

***"Nimíipuu* Notes"** is constructed based upon a number of sources. Sources include lecture notes from Frey's "Plateau Indians," a course taught at the University of Idaho from 1998 to 2017. The course's content included materials previously Tribally-reviewed and approved for public dissemination, as well as materials from the *Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 12, Plateau,* 1998, and from other published sources as noted in *"Nimíipuu* Notes." In addition, *"Nimíipuu* Notes" includes "Ritual and the Land" by Josiah Blackeagle Pinkham and Rodney Frey (2005; see pp. 54-59), a section from "If All These Great Stories Were Told, Great Stories Will Come," by Rodney Frey with Tom Yellowtail and Cliff SiJohn (2008; see pp. 55-56), and virtually all the sections of the *Niimíipuu*-Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse Memorandum of Understanding (MOU; Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee approved 2025).

"Nimíipuu Notes" was designed to be used in conjunction with the ***Nimíipuu* Lifelong Learning Online** (**L3**) web module: https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/ (the main module entry point, "We are Nimíipuu - Nez Perce Indians"). The L3 web module (2002) is unique in that the thirty-four elders and consultants interviewed for and presented in the module were selected for their knowledge and expertise primarily by members of the Nez Perce Cultural Resource Program and interviewed by those members. They knew who to ask, knew the questions to ask, and had rapport with the interviewees. The L3 module also developed a formal Cultural Rights Agreement, protecting the cultural knowledge of the *Nimíipuu*, at a time when such agreements with Indigenous communities were few. L3 followed Nez Perce Tribal research protocols, including review and approval by the Circle of Elders and the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC), to help assure that the cultural knowledge shared publicly was authentic, trustworthy and appropriate. Some cultural knowledge should be kept within the family and not shared publicly. The L3 web module thus reflects the ***Nimíipuu* perspective** on their history and culture.

L3 Acknowledgements:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/acknowledgements.html
L3 Elders and Consultants Involved:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/people/consultants.html
L3 Cultural Property Rights Agreement:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/cultural-property-rights.html

"*Nimiipuu* Notes" is thus designed to be **used as an e-curriculum** (a digital, electronic text). Access to the L3 interviews with elders and its text materials is a click away, with the URL links embedded in the text of "*Nimiipuu* Notes." If you are using a hard-copy version of "*Nimiipuu* Notes," you can manually type the L3 URL address into your web browser and thus access the L3 materials. The main entry URL address is listed above, or you can access the L3 URL addresses as listed in each section of "*Nimiipuu* Notes."

Some words to reflect on as you begin. In seeking to learn about another culture and becoming their partner, the greatest challenge is learning about yourself, and letting go of preconceived assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices. Don't let yourself get in the way of learning about someone else. **Listen deeply.** The next greatest challenge is truly learning about others. With your mind and your heart, open yourself up to what awaits coming from others. Don't be an observer, don't be a spectator, but engage actively, be curious, ask questions, be a participant. **Listen deeply** and **engage actively.** And finally, the last challenge, if need be, are you willing and able to change aspects of your own life-long learned behavior, so that you might be better able to assist and help another person? Can you **listen deeply**, **engage actively**, and potentially **modify who you are**?

Nimíipuu'neewit "traditional lifeways of the People"

***Niimíipuu* - UUCP Land Acknowledgment**
(from the Memorandum of Understanding 2025,
read aloud at start of each Sunday UUCP service).

"The Land on which our Church is built is part of the ancestral homeland of the *Niimíipuu* "the People," and mistakenly called the "Nez Perce" or "pierced noses" by French-speaking trappers and traders.

We acknowledge the Land is held in sacred kinship, since time immemorial. The Land and its Peoples suffered immeasurable trauma brought by Euro-American society, and we are working with its resilient Peoples to show respect and contribute to the healing and nurturing of this *Héetewit Wéetés* 'Precious Land' and all its Peoples."[1]

The place to begin is with the telling of one of the foundational *Nimíipuu* creation stories, "Coyote and the Swallowing Monster." The story told here is by two of the Tribe's revered elders, Mari Watters (in 1991, an audio recording) and Horace Axtell (in 2002, a video recording). Note the similarities and differences in each telling.

See texts and videos from the *Nimíipuu* Lifelong Learning Online web module (**L3**):
Coyote and the Swallowing Monster:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/coyote.html Mari Watters 16:38 (audio)
Oral Traditions Along the Clearwater and Snake Rivers:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/oral-traditions.html Horace Axtell 4:25 and 4:16; Cecil Carter 3:00 and 1:53

The "Coyote and Swallowing Monster" story is central to all the other cherished creation narratives. As a collection, the narratives tell of ***Hanyaw'áat***, the Creator and the ***Titwa-tityá-ya***, "Animal Peoples," such as ***'Iceyéeye*** "Coyote," or Wolf, Grizzly Bear and Salmon, whose actions bring forth the land, destroying many of its "monsters" and preparing it for "the coming of the human Peoples." They etch and contour the land with rivers, valleys, hills and mountains, embedding within them the "gifts" the human Peoples will need to live and prosper. The **"gifts"** include the "water" of the rivers and the "foods" of the earth, such as camas, deer, huckleberries and salmon, that would nourish bodies. In the

[1] Capitalizing "Precious," "Land" and "People" is to acknowledge the sacred, spiritual nature of their interdependent kinship. The text is written in a present verb tense to reflect on-going relations.

contours of the land are also embedded the "teachings" that would be needed to properly guide behavior. And embedded in the land is the gift of transformative power, ***wéeyekin,*** to ensure vitality and life itself, when properly used. And finally, it is Coyote, who from the body parts and blood of "Swallowing Monster," creates the **human Peoples**. While most were slain, not all the "monsters" are overcome, leaving monsters, such as "illness" and "suffering," "ignorance" and "greed," "anger" and "jealously" and "laziness," to challenge the human Peoples. To counter these "monsters," human People must rely on the "teachings" and *wéeyekin*. From the Creator and Animal Peoples thus were established the ***Nimíipuu'neewit*** "traditional lifeways of the People," the ontological principles and societal values, the very structures and processes upon which the ***Héetewit Wéetés***, the "Precious Land" is ultimately made and renewed, and from which behavior of the Peoples should be guided.

Among the most important "teachings" are ***Tuk'uki***, "honesty" in all things said and done, and ***Cikáw***, "bravery" and courage in the defense of others and in the face of an adversity of any type. As well as the teachings included in our *Niimíipuu*-UUCP MOU, that include two essential teachings. Frist, all the Peoples, be they human, animal, bird, fish or plant, are to exist in ***Yéeye***, "family," a structural relationship of inclusivity, equity, and respect. And second, all the Peoples are to engage in ***Téek'e***, "to give and share with others [as in food]," a dynamic of freely sharing with others in need, without thought of return. As the Animal Peoples first gave gifts and prepared the world for the coming of human Peoples, so too today, among the human and the animal/fish/plant Peoples, each honors and respects the others. They, too, freely share with others who are in need, an exchange of gifts given amongst fellow family members. Gifts of any kind are not to be "taken," e.g., a hunter doesn't take his kill. Rather, gifts are only given by consent of the giver, given voluntarily, when respected as part of the family. A deer would come out from the thicket of trees and stand there patiently, as it willingly offers itself to the hunter, when respected by the hunter as a member of one's *Yéeye*.

The accounts of the creation, and the deeds and misdeeds of the Animal Peoples continue to be conveyed in the **oral traditions**. In the act of re-telling the sacred stories, the "teachings" conveyed within them are disseminated and taught and the world itself and all its entities and beings are revitalized and perpetuated. In turn, the oral traditions are linked with the features and forms of the land, e.g., a rock outcropping, a river's bend, a hill, etc., the land becoming a "**textbook**" of the **oral traditions**. As you travel the *Héetewit Wéetés,* the "Precious Land," you engage in the oral traditions. For more on the structure and dynamics of Indigenous oral traditions, see Frey 1995 and 2024.

In addition to the Coyote and the Swallowing Monster oral tradition, an exemplary narrative of key teachings is **the "covenant" between the Salmon and Human Peoples**. Once the human Peoples came forth from the parts of the Monster, the Creator called in all the plant, animal and fish Peoples, and asked them who would provide sustenance for the human Peoples. First to step up was Salmon saying he would offer his flesh and body as food for the human Peoples. But he'd only do so as long as the human Peoples showed respect and cared for the salmon Peoples. And so, a "covenant" was made between the Salmon and *Nimíipuu*: each would assist the other as kinsmen would.

We gathered around the evening campfire, sitting on the beach of Lake Coeur d'Alene. We numbered eight or so, mostly teachers and faculty from around the state, here for a teachers' workshop. Our keynote speaker and workshop leader was Mari Watters, from Lapwai. It was a time for sharing stories. Chris, a workshop attendee, just completed a long narrative, with unique plot twists, a "Sioux story," none had ever heard it before. And in an instant, Mari said, "Let's see if I got it." And she proceeded to re-tell the story, every unique character and plot twist intact, but in her own words, retelling it as if she had been telling it for years. Like so many other great storytellers, Mari had that tremendous capacity to be fully attentive and listen deeply, and retain what had been spoken aloud, without the need of writing it down. Mari spoke from experience. She had been a participant in and traveled a new land. So, it is with those of the oral tradition. (From an observation in1991by Rodney Frey.)

Mari Watters. Photographed at the University of Idaho in 1988. Courtesy *Handbook of North American Indians: Plateau*. Smithsonian 1998.

See texts and videos from **L3**:

We are *Niimíipuu* - Nez Perce Indians:

https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/ Sam Penney 1:14

Since Time Immemorial:

https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/index.html Carla High Eagle 2:09; Julia Davis 1:13

Our focus is on ***Nimíipuu'neewit* "traditional lifeways of the People."** It is a central, overarching term from which the *Nimíipuu* base their identity. The term is inclusive of such categories of human behavior that can be called "culture," "worldview," "values," and "ethics," along with foundational principles of "epistemology" and "ontology." As a "**lifeway,**" it is a complex, intricate web, providing a mazeway of strategies and ideals for how to behave with other "Peoples" – animal, bird, fish, plant, human Peoples. Each enters into a sacred kinship of relationships and expectations. As "**traditional**," it is adaptive and pliable to its surrounding dynamics, while also able to maintain its core values through time and tribulation. "Traditional" does not imply that it is rigid, inflexible or stagnant. While the interviews of *Nimíipuu* elders and consultants in the L3 web module were done in 2001-2, they remain a reflection of the adaptive dynamics yet perennial continuity of *Nimíipuu'neewit*. As **orality-based**, *Nimíipuu'neewit* encapsulates the oral traditions, handed down from generation to generation within the family, taught orally with the spoken word, and contingent on deep listening, as opposed to the written word.

Nimíipuu'neewit implicitly presupposes the ability to make free choices and have unrestricted decision-making, of maintaining one's sovereignty. **Sovereignty can be defined** as the inherent and supreme power from which a people derive their social, political and economic governance. It is the basis upon which a band (a network of related extended families), a tribe (collection of bands) or a nation is formed, and which a people govern themselves. Sovereignty is established and asserted by the **will of the people**, and not ultimately contingent upon some other tribe or nation granting it to that people.

Indian tribes and the *Nimíipuu* were sovereign nations long before Columbus set foot on the shores of "his new world," and long before Lewis and Clark handed out "peace medals" among the tribes of the disputed Oregon Country (as England also claimed sovereignty over this area). Indian sovereignty is ultimately defined, affirmed and asserted by Indians themselves. Nevertheless, how the U.S. government defines Tribal sovereignty and subsequently its relationship with Tribes directly affects Tribal sovereignty today.

The inherent sovereignty of the *Nimíipuu* and their *Nimíipuu'neewit* is most effectively expressed embedded in their oral traditions, as in the creation narratives told by Mari Watters and Horace Axtell. Equally, the sovereignty is expressed through the song and dance and the beadwork on the regalia worn at a powwow. It is a sovereignty freely expressed in the structures and dynamics of human kinship relationships, as reflected in *Yéeye* "family" and *Téek'e* "sharing," and in human-animal-plant-fish kinship relationships, as expressed in *Héetewit Wéetés* "Precious Land." The reach of *Nimíipuu*

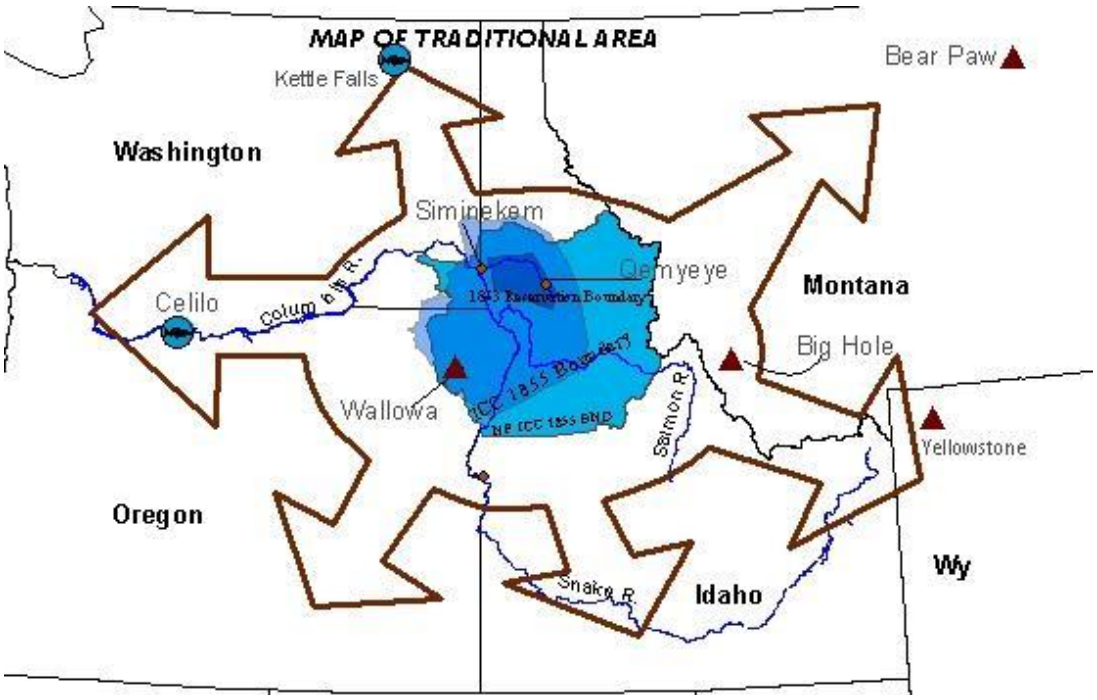
sovereignty is also visualized embedded in the land they once freely traveled, fished, hunted and gathered and called their "Precious Lands," their "homeland." See map page 9 for an image of *Nimíipuu* traditional homeland and the reach of *Nimíipuu* travels, along with *Nimíipuu* land designated by the treaties of 1855 and 1863. **The inherent sovereignty of the *Nimíipuu* is ultimately expressed in their ability to tell their story their way.** It is an inherent sovereignty most challenged in the hegemonic winds wrought by Euro-American assimilation pressures and desires.

See texts and videos from **L3:**
Self-Determination and Sovereignty:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/self-determination.html Rick Eichstaedt 1:51, 3:36, 1:44; Leroy Seth 1:29
Sovereignty: Underlying Legal Principles:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/sovereignty.html
***Niimíipuu* and Nez Pece Maps:**
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/maps/

For Further Readings on Indigenous storytelling, orality and oral narratives, see Frey *Carry Forth the Stories* 2024:27-82 and Frey *Stories That Make the World* 1995. For presentations of *Nimiipuu* oral narratives, Aoki *Nez Perce Texts* 1979, Aoki and Walker *Nez Perce Oral Narratives* 1989, Phinney Nez Perce Texts 1934, Walker and Matthews Nez Perce Coyote Tales 1998. For an overview of *Nimiipuu* culture and history, see Walker. 1998. "Nez Perce," in *Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 12, Plateau*.

Discussion Questions.

1. In the context of the previous two chapters, reflect on the implications of the **MOU statements** on pp. 1 and 4.
2. If "values" can be defined as fundamental cognitive patterns helping guide behavior, and "ontology" are the underlying philosophical principles that categorizes the nature of reality, reflect on what may be the values and ontological principles evident in the *Nimíipuu'neewit*. How might those *Nimíipuu* values and ontological principles compare with your own?
3. What are your take-aways on the importance of *Nimíipuu* oral traditions?
4. Does the definition of sovereignty offered here align with your own definition? Can you provide examples of sovereignty from your own experiences?
5. Closely view and reflect on the next two images on the following page. What meanings and significances jump out to you when you reflect on each and when you compare them?



Nimíipuu Precious Lands: aboriginally, at 1855 Treaty, and at 1863 Treaty.
By Edith "Wook" Powaukee

American Progress by John Gast 1872

Ebb and Flow of Assimilation: The Hegemonic Attack

Trauma.

(from the Memorandum of Understanding 2025)

"Acknowledge the Lands and Peoples of the *Niimíipuu* have suffered immeasurable and irrevocable trauma from Euro-American society and contact history. Such trauma resulted from aboriginal land displacement, disease and demographic loss, military subjection, missionary and boarding school disruption and assimilation, etc. That trauma extends to the relatives of humans, to the animal, bird, fish and plant Peoples. For example, the Salmon Peoples suffered considerable trauma resulting from dams placed along the Columbia River, as did Camas Peoples resulting from lands placed under agricultural cultivation. In the face of such historic trauma, the *Niimíipuu* have consistently shown tremendous perseverance and resilience. While traumatically injured, core *Niimíipuu* culture has triumphed over the forces of cultural genocide. "Trauma" helps identify ***the why*** of the MOU, the impetus for action."

The history of Euro-American contact has directly influenced the free expression of *Nimíipuu'neewit*, occasionally benefitting it, but most typically seeking to hinder if not negate *Nimíipuu'neewit*. It is a chronological contact history as if an oscillating pendulum, swinging between self-determination and tribal sovereignty, and dependency and assimilation. While the United States federal government may seek to use their language and assert their power over the *Nimíipuu,* applying such words as "plenary power" or "domestic, dependent nation" onto the *Nimíipuu*, it is ultimately argued, that it is up to the *Nimíipuu*, to decide to what degree they wish to bow to the power of these words or assert their own definition of sovereignty. Resistance can find many opportunities.

The first assault on Indian sovereignty came with an encounter with a miniscule alien invader, invisible to the eye, but its consequences disastrous. This invasion occurred long before Native Peoples encountered the first Euro-American explorers, trappers or traders. When Lewis and Clark traveled the Columbia River on their way to the Pacific Coast, they saw adults with pockmarked faces, who as children must have contracted smallpox. The disease traveled inland from tribe to tribe after contact with Europeans who were exploring the Pacific Coast in the late 1700s.

Diseases. Before contact, the Indigenous populations of North America (north of the Rio Grande River) were estimated to be at between 4 - 10 million. After contact with Euro-Americans, over 60 serious epidemics swept across the land, reducing the population to 300,000 by 1910. Among the contagious diseases for which the Indigenous populations

had no natural immunity were smallpox, measles, chickenpox, whooping cough, and typhoid.

When Lewis and Clark visited the *Nimíipuu* bands in 1805, they numbered around 6,000 members. Within 100 years, by 1900, the *Nimíipuu* numbered some 1,600. The tragedy was compounded given that the most vulnerable were the young, such as babies and children, and the old, the elders. With their elders passing, so too passed hope for the future and the collective wisdom needed for that future. *Nimíipuu* institutional infrastructure and knowledge were greatly threatened, e.g., band political coordination and leadership, ceremonial roles and duties, seasonal round fishing and root gathering practices and expertise. The overall *Nimíipuu'neewit* of each band was thus more susceptible to the influences of outside forces, to American assimilation.

See texts and videos from **L3:**
Smallpox and Disease:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/disease.html Clifford Allen 3:33, 3:33, 2:30, 1:57

"**Americanism**" and the "**Extinction of the Indian."** The following outlines the cultural context for the clash of sovereignties, which is predicated on at least six distinct Euro-American cultural strands which challenge Indigenous cultural themes. Assimilation can be defined as the infringement on one's sovereignty by the actions of an economically, politically and/or militarily superior hegemonic force. To appreciate the hegemonic winds blowing over the *Nimíipuu*, one needs to appreciate the **sources of those winds**.

1. Spread of "Civilization" over "Wildness." One strong hegemonic wind came from the Judeo-Christian notion of "spreading civilization," in order to "conquer" the moral and physical wastelands of the world, transforming the "wildness" into "cultivation," and to conquer all that which resides within wildness, especially its "wild savages." This conceptualization is expressed in much of Christian theology. This thesis is articulated in such works as Nash's *Wilderness and the American Mind* 1982.

> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image and likeness to rule the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all wild animals on earth, and all reptiles that crawl upon the land." So, God created man in his own image; in the image of God, he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "**Be fruitful and increase, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven, and every living thing that moves upon the earth**."

God also said, "I give you all plants that bear seed everywhere on earth, and every tree bearing fruit which yields seed: they shall be yours for food." (Genesis 1:26-29)

"Doctrine of Discovery" is a concept of public international law first expounded by Pope Alexander VI in a 1493 Papal Bull. Among other things it asserts the right of the conquering and "civilized Christian peoples" to occupy and possess the lands and resources of the "heathen" inhabitants, without their consent. It is tantamount to assimilation and genocide. It is reiterated in a series of United States Supreme Court decisions, most notably *Johnson v. McIntosh* in 1823. Chief Justice John Marshall's decision justified the way in which colonial powers laid claim to lands belonging to sovereign, non-Christian Indigenous nations during the Age of Discovery. Under it, title to lands lay with the European Christian government whose own subjects explored and occupied a territory of non-Christian inhabitants. The doctrine has been primarily used to support decisions invalidating or ignoring aboriginal/indigenous possession of land in favor of colonial or post-colonial Christian governments.

2. Emerging American Values and the Need for their Antithesis – "The Indian." To help clarify and solidify an emerging national cultural identity, there was a need to create and project its antithesis, i.e., "the Indian." For instance, the value of "self-reliant, autonomous individualism" needed to create a counterpoint, "Indian collectivism." The unique values of the emerging American culture can be seen in such works as Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* (1733-1758) and as observed by Alexis de Tocqueville *Democracy in America* (1835-1840). This thesis was developed in such works as Berkhofer's *The White Man's Indian* 1978. And hence, as the "antithesis," the created meaning assigned to "the Indian" represents everything in opposition to being "American," and thus must be either eliminated or assimilated. Paradoxically, as the "American" identity becomes more solidified, there is no need for an antithesis, and thus no need for an "Indian."

The American:	**The Indian:**
– Individualism	– Collectivism/ Communalism
– Future Oriented	– Past Oriented
– Save-Thrift Oriented ("save for a rainy day" and "penny saved is a penny earned")	– Give It All Away
– Man Above, Owns and Has Right to Exploit the Environment	– Man Runs Around as an Animal in the Wilderness

Examples of emerging American Values:

"Early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."
"God helps them that help themselves."
"Lost time is never found again."
"Plough deep while sluggards sleep, and you shall have corn to sell and keep, says Poor Dick."
"There are no gains without pains."
"If you would be wealthy, think of saving as well as of getting."

So wrote **Benjamin Franklin** (1706-1790) in *Poor Richard's Almanac* (1733-1758).

The Emerging Construct of "Individualism":

"Individualism is a word recently coined to express a new idea."

"Individualism is a calm and considered feeling which disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of his fellows and withdraw into a circle of family and friends; with this little society formed to his taste, he gladly leaves the greater society to look after itself."

"There are more and more people who, though neither rich nor powerful enough to have much hold over others, have gained or kept enough wealth and enough understanding to look after their own needs. Such folk owe no man anything and hardly expect anything from anybody. They form the habit of thinking of themselves in isolation and imagine that their whole destiny is in their hands."

"Each man is forever thrown back on himself alone, and there is danger that he may be shut up in the solitude of his own heart," forgetting his ancestors, his descendants and isolating himself from his contemporaries.

"It is odd to watch with what feverish ardor Americans pursue prosperity, ever tormented by the shadowy suspicion that they may not have chosen the shortest route to get it. They cleave to the things of this world as if assured that they will never die, and yet rush to snatch any that come within their reach, as if they expected to stop living before they relished them. Death steps in, in the end, and stops them, before they have grown tired of this futile pursuit of that complete felicity which always escapes them."

So wrote the French social philosopher, **Alex de Tocqueville** (1805-1859), in *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville traveled throughout

America of the 1830s, observing the emerging character of its Euro-American people.

3. **Landownership Equated with Freedom.** American freedom is secured and equated with landownership, e.g., early voting rights were predicated upon owning land, as a conceptualization developed by America's "founding fathers." Hence there was a need for vast expansive land holdings, the "western wilderness" to help secure "freedom" for the white male American population.

4. **Territorial Integrity, Capitalism and Survival of the Fittest**. As with most any newly forming nation-state, there is a need for territorial, military, economic and political viability, and hence securing the land for the citizens and removing or confining non-citizens, i.e., the Indian. In the instance of the emerging American nation, it was the continuation of the European "capitalistic form of economy" and its need for expanding markets and diversified natural resources, that led to the securing of a growing and viable land base. Co-mingling with capitalism was the conceptualization of a world-view governed by "survival of the fittest," which was particularly emphasized in the emerging American identity.

> It was **Adam Smith** (1723-1790), the Scottish political philosopher and economist, who laid out the fundamental principles of laissez-faire capitalism in his *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776. Primary among these principles is his "clarification of a basic human motivation." According to Smith, man is, by nature, acquisitive. People are driven by the desire to accumulate material wealth. And it is a demand that is never satisfied. It is a drive innate within all of humanity, a drive to maximize one's own gains and to minimize one's own losses; it is the drive for self-interest. In the ebb and flow of the supply and demand market-place, this desire fuels the system and is measured in terms of profit. As such, capitalism is predicated on an ever-expanding economy; it is predicated on growth. The expansion extends to that which populates the "natural world," such as land, water, plants and animals, which are viewed as "resources" and "commodities" to be "exploited" for their monetary value. Without this elementary human condition, capitalism would cease and collapse. Capitalism had not manifested itself as a significant economic system prior to the European Renaissance. It flourished after the Renaissance (ca. 1600-present).

The English philosopher **Herbert Spencer** (1820-1903) added still another clarification of human motivation. Borrowing loosely from the model of biological evolution as developed by Charles Darwin (1809-1882), Spencer applied an evolutionary model to human social institutions. Through time, human society evolves into more advanced states. Progress is endemic to human institutions and is inevitable. The mechanism for this advancement is what Spencer called "survival of the fittest." Some individuals in society and some societies among various societies are better endowed than others to adapt to the rigors of competition. They have a natural right to initiate, direct and benefit from societal institutions. Progress depends upon their initiatives. The human condition is a competitive condition. And a competitive individual is a strong and successful individual.

5. "Children of God." In proselytizing, backed by force, Euro-Americans sought to "change the body to save the soul of the Indian," and establish Christian "Wilderness Kingdoms of God." This effort resulted in using a variety of assimilation means to mold, indoctrinate and/or force "the Indian" into becoming a "white Christian American," so that their souls could be saved for Christ. The source of this hegemonic wind, closely aligned with Doctrine of Discovery, is in evangelical Protestant and Jesuit missionary doctrines. It is a thesis articulated in such works as Nash's *Wilderness and the American Mind* 1982.

6. Racism. Underpinning all the hegemonic winds are degrees of prejudice, bias and overt and/or systemic racism. While the "Thanksgiving" meal of the pilgrims in 1621 has come to be celebrated as a national holiday by most Americans, it represented but a short-lived mutual alliance between the Wampanoag Indians and the Plymouth colony. What followed was colonial expansion, resource exploitation, and King Philip's War of the late 1670's, all infused with racism that helped devastate the Wampanoags and other Indigenous peoples of New England. Racism became imbued in Manifest Destiny and settler colonialism.

Discussion Questions.

1. If you were a *Nimíipuu* born in 1805 and lived to age 85, what might you have experienced during your lifetime? How might you have reacted?
2. Do you see any of these six American cultural themes, perhaps reframed in today's terms, still prominent in American governmental, economic, political, or religious policies and actions? If so, can you provide examples of their continued influences on Indigenous communities, or on other ethnic communities, or even on your family?
3. How has your faith community responded to the Doctrine of Discovery?

Expressions of Culminating Emerging American Culture: a. Horace Greeley, the influential 19th-century newspaper editor, did not coin the term "Manifest Destiny," yet he was a powerful and vocal proponent of westward expansion through his famous phrase, "Go West, young man," b. Indian Removal Act of 1830, c. Lewis and Clark and the Fur Trade, d. missionary and government boarding schools, e. war and establishing reservations, f. the Dawes Act of 1887, g. Termination Policy of the 1950s, h. U.S. Supreme Court rulings such as *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* in 1831.

Lewis and Clark, and The Corps of Discovery. The Corps of Discovery was sent to survey and help eventually secure the newly acquired Louisiana Purchase from France in 1803. It should be noted that the *Nimíipuu* homeland resided outside that boundary, located in the Oregon Territory claimed by another colonizer, England. The Corps first met the *Nimíipuu* in September of 1805 on the Weippe Prairie, at the heart of *Niimíipuu* homeland, near the place of their Creation. The *Nimíipuu* called them "upside down heads," given the beards and bald heads of many of the Corps members. While some *Nimíipuu* wanted to kill these strange creatures that "smelled so bad," it was a *Nimíipuu* woman, *Wetxuuwíis*, who stepped forward and defended them and thus saved the entire Corps of Discovery. With *Nimíipuu* hospitality shown to these strangers, the *Nimíipuu* took them in, helped build canoes for their journey down the Columbia River, served as guides for much of the journey, and kept their horses fed and secured that winter until their return the next year. In exchange, the *Nimíipuu* received "Peace Medals" from Lewis and Clark, with the image of the President and his authority boldly displayed on them. They were given an emblem foreshadowing what eventually would become a dire threat to their own sovereignty.

See texts and videos from **L3:**

Expedition:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/expedition/ Mylie Lawyer 3:36; Silas Whitman 2:56; Beatrice Miles :56; Lewis and Clark 1954 video 16:44

Misconceptions and Misrepresentations:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/expedition/misconceptions.html Allen Pinkham 3:29; 2:56; 2:47

Wetxuuwíis:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/expedition/wetxuuwiis.html Beatrice Miles 4:31; Angel Sobotta 3:13

Twisted Hair:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/people/twisted-hair.html

"Squaw":
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/expedition/squaw.html

Fur Trade. While only marginally involved with the fur trade (not great beaver country), which began around the early 1810s, the *Nimíipuu* were exposed to and began relying upon material objects acquired from Euro-Americans, such as metal knives and pots and rifles, all obtained through barter and eventually cash exchange. As a result, the *Nimíipuu* became increasingly dependent on material goods they could not make themselves, anon an exchange system based on a capitalist economy and self-interested competitive motivations, replacing an exchange system based upon kinship values and an ethic of sharing.

See texts and videos from **L3:**
Fur Trade:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/fur-trade.html

Federal Policies. The overt imposition of American culture onto the Indian is witnessed in Manifest Destiny. It resulted in the Oregon Trail and trans-continental railroads; in gold rushes and land acquisitions, and in the Indian Removal Act of 1830, with its Seminole War and Cherokee "Trail of Tears" and tremendous land acquisition. The Department of Indian Affairs was established in 1834, then in what was titled the Department of War, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs was established in 1849, in the Department of Interior – the affairs of the Indian began in "war" and conflict and were transferred to "land interior" and control of resources. Federal governmental Indian assimilation policies entailed both transforming the **soul** and culture, as well as the **soil**, changing the "Indian" into an "American."

Missionaries. An assimilation focused expression of American culture is witnessed in governmental and missionary run boarding schools, and Christian missionary activities in general. By 1884 the government established it to be an "Indian offensive" to practice "giveaways," public feasts, Sundancing, being a "medicine man," and most other forms of dancing (limited to once a month, during daylight hours, in mid-week, and no one under 50 years old could take part). While each Christian denomination was assigned a specific reservation, each approached their missionary and educational tasks differently, though often as a "battle against Satan" for the souls of the Indian. Indians were forced to attend boarding schools, cut their hair short (a traditional sign of mourning), and prohibited from speaking their language. Their family structure and the roles of elders were attacked, and they were prohibited from traditional religious practices, all to instill Christian values and practices. They were to become "American farmers" and have "household skills." While industrial skills were imposed, cultural voids and dysfunction of the family resulted.

Among the *Nimíipuu,* the earliest missionary endeavors occurred with **Henry Spalding**, a Presbyterian, and **Asa Smith**, a Congregationalist, both in the late 1830s, with **Father Joseph Cataldo**, bringing Catholicism to *Nimíipuu* in the late 1860's. Reflective of differing missionary approaches that would contribute to an eventual schism between various *Nimíipuu* bands are the actions of Spalding, whose mission was located in Lapwai, and Smith, whose mission was located in Kamiah. Spalding was closely aligned with the Federal government's desires to "subjugate and civilize the Indian," and to reduce the size of the reservation. For those wishing to transform the "soul" and culture of the Indian, what better way to influence and control a population than to limit their mobility, take their "soil," their land. On the other hand, Smith was a strong critic of Spalding, disapproving of Spalding's actions, tactics and intentions, certainly against Spalding's "evangelization of the Indian." Smith didn't advocate transforming the Indian into farmers, as Spalding sought, as he felt their fishing and hunting culture was too well established to be changed. Smith held that you needed to learn the language of those you sought to serve, and he did so. In fact, Smith wrote the first *Grammar of the Language of the Nez Perce* in 1840*,* that for many is credited with helping maintain the *Nimipuutímt* language. In contrast, Spalding didn't learn *Nimipuutímt*. These contrasting missionary approaches planted a seed that would contribute to the schism between more assimilated Christian and less assimilated Traditional *Nimíipuu*.

It should be noted that Unitarians also did 19th century missionizing and set up boarding schools among the Utes of Colorado and the Crow of Montana. Though both endeavors were short-lived, ending in failure. As it turned out, Unitarian Universalists ultimately don't make "good missionaries."

See texts and videos from **L3:**
Missionaries and Christianity:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/missionaries.html

Treaties, Trust Status, Reservations and War. For the *Nimíipuu*, Manifest Destiny and the Federal government's assimilation policies culminated in the Treaties of 1855 and 1863, which reduced the once 13-million-acre aboriginal *Niimíipuu Héetewit Wéetés "*Precious Lands" to a reservation in 1855 of some 7.5 million acres (though still approximating the "Heart"-land of the *Nimiipuu*). And with the 1863 Treaty, the *Nimíipuu* were confined to a reservation of 750,000 acres. This would in turn lead to the Nez Perce Conflict of 1877.

Before proceeding let's clarify a few key elements of what makes up a Federal government's **Treaty.** Prior to the United States Federal Treaty making process, as we've

read, the prevailing policy governing Colonial-Indigenous relationships was known as the "**Doctrine of Discovery**." It established and codified among other things the right of the conquering and "civilized peoples" to occupy and possess the lands and resources of the "heathen" inhabitants, without their consent. Interestingly, the emerging United States of the late 18th and early 19th century elected to add a spin to that Doctrine, one not fully of assimilation, but also of **alliance** making. As a newly forming nation-state, the United States also needed to convey an image to the established European nations that it was law-abiding and law-making, and hence worthy of the designation as a "legitimate government" and "nation." In the fledgling years of the United States (especially 1770s-1850s), the Federal Government saw Tribes as potential allies against adversaries, e.g., England, with the Federal Government approaching the Tribes as "sovereigns" from which treaties of alliance could be established. This desire was overtly symbolized in the Peace Medals used by Lewis and Clark. Ironically, in a quest for legitimacy and alliances, as the United States sought to be a sovereign nation, so too would those they interacted with, i.e., the Indian nations, be considered and granted Federally-based sovereignty. This is of course distinct from acknowledging tribally-based inherent sovereignty. Given the power of the Federal Government, it is Federal treaties, and their modified definition of "sovereignty," that are the basis of much of Indian law and rights today.

Key treaty elements of **United States Federal treaties** include:

a) Indian tribes are not "foreign nations," with their own inherent sovereignty, but rather constitute "distinct political" communities within the United States, i.e., tribes are *"**domestic, dependent nations**."* Their relation to the United States resembles that of a ward to his guardian (Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* 1831). This ruling gave birth to Federal ***trusteeship*** of the Indian.

   Today, Indian **Trust responsibility** by the Federal government is handled within the Department of Interior by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It seeks to legally protect Tribal lands, rights and resources, and fulfill treaty mandates, including health care delivery (via the Indian Health Service). Land is held in trust by the Federal government for the Indian. Land is not owned by the Indian per se. How that trust responsibility is interpreted and implemented can depend on the particular political administration in power in Washington D.C. and their assertion of "congressional plenary powers" (see below). Keep in mind the "Termination legislation" unilaterally imposed on some Tribes in the 1950s (see below). History can repeat itself; treaties have been broken.

b) In the Supreme Court ruling "*Worcester* v. *Georgia* (1832)" the court recognized that Indian nations were "distinct political communities, having territorial boundaries, within which their authority is exclusive, and having a right to all the lands within those boundaries." That is, **state law is not applicable** within reservation boundaries, unless abrogated by Congressional consent (e.g., Gaming Compacts with states).

c) As established in Article VI Section 2 of the United States Constitution, treaties are the **"*supreme law of the land*,"** are bilaterally-constructed, nation-to-nation agreements, intended to be legally binding for all time.

d) Ownership of the land and the **resources is to be held by the tribes** unless *explicitly relinquished* in the language of an agreement/treaty. For example, the ownership of a lake or river, if not explicitly granted to the United States, would remain with the tribe. As such, the agreements entered into were *not grants of rights to Indians* but rather *grants of rights from Indians to the United States*, i.e., "reserved rights doctrine." Property should not be taken without consent of the Indian. (*United States v. Winans*, 198 U.S. 371 1905) .

e) Treaties/agreements are to be interpreted as their signers intended, i.e., **"cannons of construction."** Hence the need for the transcripts of Native speakers at the treaty talks.

f) In exchange for the cession of vast tracts of land and resources, i.e. "ceded territory," the tribes would receive educational and health benefits, and other services. Such Tribal services and allocations are thus "*purchased*" and **"*contracted*" *services*,** and not "social entitlements" or "special rights."

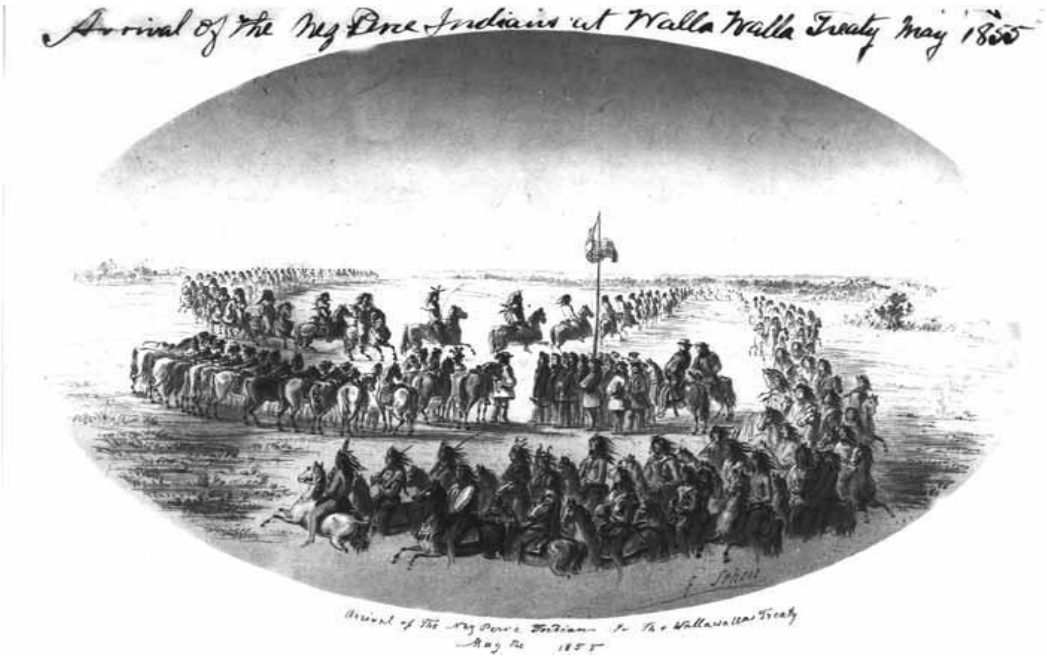
g) Especially during the late nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, the Federal government's record of adhering to these principles was far from exemplary. Simply because one party in an agreement did not honor the accords of that agreement **does not negate** the legal status and continued integrity of the agreement/treaty.

h) Over 400 treaties and agreements (executive orders) were established between 1778-1902. Examples of treaties: the **Nez Perce Treaties of 1855 and 1863.**

i) Treaties also contain congressional "***plenary powers***," i.e., rights acknowledged by treaties, can be abrogated by Congress pursuant to its plenary power (*Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock*, 187 U.S. 552 1903 and as exemplified in the Dawes Act of 1887 and Termination Policy of the 1950s and Public Law 280 in 1953).

From a *Nimíipuu* perspective, ultimately, how **sovereignty** is defined and asserted is **dependent** on each **Tribal community**, and **not** on how the **Federal government** or any other outside agency "recognizes" it.

Nez Perce Treaty of 1855. To meet settler demands for representation, **Washington Territory** (inclusive of what would become the states of Idaho and Washington) separated from Oregon Territory in 1853. And with its creation, its first Governor, Issac Stevens, sought to establish boundaries and limit its Indian populations, to better accommodate Euro-American settlement of the lands. In **1855 a Treaty Council at Walla Walla** was convened, involving the Cayuse, Umatilla, Walla Walla, Yakama, and the *Nimíipuu*. It resulted in the cession of over 6 million acres, open to white settlement. For the *Nimíipuu*,



Arrival of the Nez Perce at the 1855 Treaty Council.

represented by headmen of all 56 bands, they exchanged a once 13-million-acre aboriginal *Héetewit Wéetés* "Precious Lands" homeland, for a reservation of some 7.5 million acres (though still approximating the "Heart"-land of the *Nimiipuu*). With that exchange came the promise of secured reservation boundaries (to keep non-Indians out), the right to

continue to hunt, fish and gather in their "usual and accustomed areas" off the reservation, such as fish at Celilo Falls on the Columbia River, and important contracted services and supplies – mills, hospital, schools and financial stipends for the headmen.

Nez Perce Treaty of 1863. The Federal government elected not to uphold the Treaty of 1855's stipulation that they would keep non-Indian settlers and miners from residing on the reservation (Euro-Americans were increasingly populating the Orofino Creek area, where gold was discovered, and the Lewiston area). Instead, the government elected to greatly reduce the size of the reservation, allowing these settlers to remain. To expedite reduction in the size of the reservation and knowing they could not get the buy-in they had in the Treaty of 1855, the Federal government decided to designate a single *Nimiipuu* headman, *Hallalhotcuut* (also known as Lawyer by local whites), who could thus speak for all the *Nimiipuu*, giving him title of "head-chief." Even though Lawyer was also designated "head-chief" by the government in the 1855 Treaty, he did not represent that non-existent rank with the other 55 signatories of the Treaty, each of whom represented their own bands. There was no autonomous, overarching "tribal" *Nimiipuu* government, nor any corresponding "tribal head-chief" in 1855, nor in 1863. Rather, there were many autonomous bands, each with their own headman. See pages 38-40 for a discussion of "tribe" and "band." In the **Treaty of 1863**, Lawyer, as "head-chief," along with a few other band headmen, thus signed for **all** the other bands. The other band headmen did not consent to the loss of their homelands and, of course, did not sign the 1863 Treaty.

As it turned out, the band leaders, who signed the Treaty of 1863, aided by the encouragement of and loyalty to Henry Spalding, not only contributed to the dispossession the homelands of many *Nimiipuu*, but as many of the signees were Christian headmen, it contributed to the assertion of Christianity over Indigenous religion. Hence the schism between the non-treaty and non-Christian bands, and the treaty Christian bands of *Nimiipuu*. The **seeds of the Conflict of 1877** and **schism between bands** were planted, etched into the cultural memory and historic trauma of the *Nimiipuu*.

It should be noted that Ulysses S. Grant, as a junior officer in the 1850s, was stationed at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River and familiar with the *Nimiipuu* and the Wallowa area. As President, Grant wrote an Executive Order in 1873 establishing a reservation in the Wallowa area of Oregon for the "roaming bands of Nez Perce." But with pressure from white settlers in the region, the Order was rescinded in 1875. Joseph's band and the other non-Treaty bands, without hope of retaining some of their "homeland," elected to journey

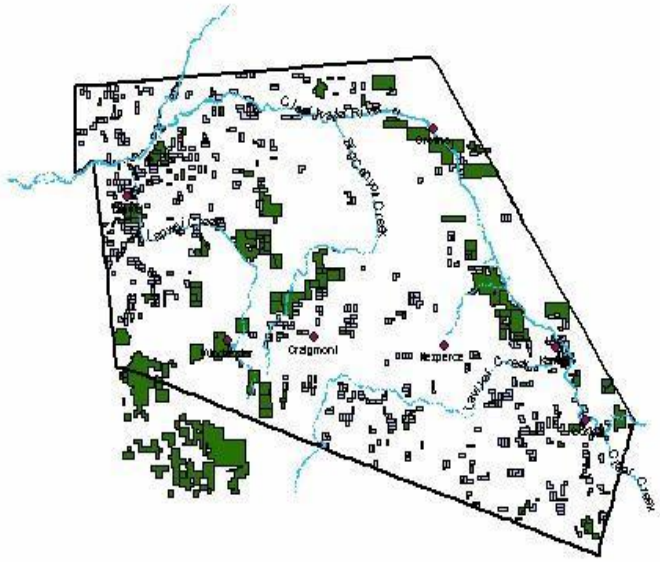
to Crow Indian country in Montana, seeking their protection. However, not receiving help, the *Nimíipuu* eventually sought asylum in Canada. Meeting defeat by the US army at the Battle of Bear Paw, Joseph spoke, "Hear me my chiefs! I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever." A few *Nimíipuu* did escape Bear Paw to travel to Canada, such as White Bird, with some 50 others. Joseph and remaining non-treaty bands were harshly imprisoned in Oklahoma and were eventually relocated to the Colville Reservation in Washington, separated forever from relatives and homelands.

See texts and videos from **L3:**
Treaty of 1855:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/treaty-1855.html
Treaty of 1863:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/treaty-1863.html
Conflict of 1877:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/conflict-1877.html Otis Halfmoon 1:53; 1:24; :51; 2:24; 1:20; 1:53; 1:29; 1:33

General Allotment Act of 1887 – also known as the "Dawes Act." To encourage Indian individual private property ownership and farming, the Federal government unilaterally imposed the allocation of 160 acres to each adult person (regardless of agricultural viability of the particular reservation lands, be it irrigated or dry lands), to be held in "trust status" for 25 years. See more on "trust status," page 19. The Americanizing of the Indian was thus furthered by imposing "individualism" and "landownership."

As of 2025, the *Nimíipuu* have over 3,500 **enrolled citizens**, with about two-thirds living on or around the Reservation. The Nez Perce Reservation's total population is some 18,400, with an overall median household income of around $58,000. Whites represent about 86% of the total Reservation population. The Tribal members own only a **small portion of the land** on the Reservation, with non-Tribal members owning approximately 90% of the land (largely the result of the Allotment Act). The Tribe is actively working to acquire additional lands on the Reservation and in the Wallowa area of Oregon.

The Act had a second intent. In a desire for more land availability for Euro-Americans, reservation lands not allotted were opened up to non-Indian ownership. Of the 140 million acres of Indian reservation land within the United States in 1887, the Dawes Act reduced the total reservation lands to some 50 million acres by 1932. Ninety million acres were transferred to non-Indian ownership within reservation boundaries. The Act's inheritance



Allotment and Trust Lands on or near the Nez Perce reservation,
with Wallowa Lake area lands not seen, circa 2000.

policy called for land being divided equally among all heirs, so that over generations, it resulted in "checker-board land ownership," and an inability to economically use the land. The Act created economic dependency on the Federal government. As a result of the Dawes Act, the 750,000-acre Reservation of the Nez Perce was reduced to some 100,000 acres, held in trust by the Federal government, for the *Nimíipuu*.

As a third consequence of allotting the land, the *Nimíipuu* were severely curtailed from access to the seasonal abundance of traditional food "gifts" of fish, meats, berries and roots, offered by the animal, fish and plant Peoples. Aboriginally, the *Nimíipuu* had a well-balanced, nutrient-rich diet. If one survived infancy (given high rates of infant mortality), life expectancy could be into the 70s and even 80 years of age. The Allotment Act rendered the *Nimíipuu* increasingly dependent on government "commodities," handouts of foods, which were high in fat and sugar and low in nutrition. This diet resulted in deteriorating nutritional intake and ill health, with increases in diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and susceptibility to diseases generally. Life expectancy was greatly lowered.

Prior to the Act, it should be noted that in Indigenous communities, who maintained their traditional extended family orientation, approached farming more collectively as opposed to individually and successfully integrated farming into their traditional hunting, fishing and gathering seasonal round activities. The Coeur d'Alene Indians of the 1890s, for example, were known as the most successful farmers on the Palouse, using state of the art farming

equipment, on relatively large acreage farms, employing non-Indian laborers, and owning two homes, one on the farmland and the other in DeSmet where they gathered on weekends, while all along maintaining their traditional seasonal round. After the Act, they like, the *Nimíipuu* faced economic ruin, health deterioration and social dysfunction.

See texts and videos from **L3:**
Treaties and the Dawes Act:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/treaties.html Clifford Allen 6:47; Rick Eichstaedt 3:42; Mylie Lawyer 1:38

Dual Citizenship. In 1924, the Federal Government bestowed United States citizenship on all Indians, in part to acknowledge their voluntary enlistments in the US Army during World War I, but also as another means to further assimilate the Indian into American society. The *Nimiipuu* thus today hold dual citizenship, in the Nez Perce Nation and the US Nation. Having US citizenship does not abrogate the Federal government's treaty obligations and responsibilities.

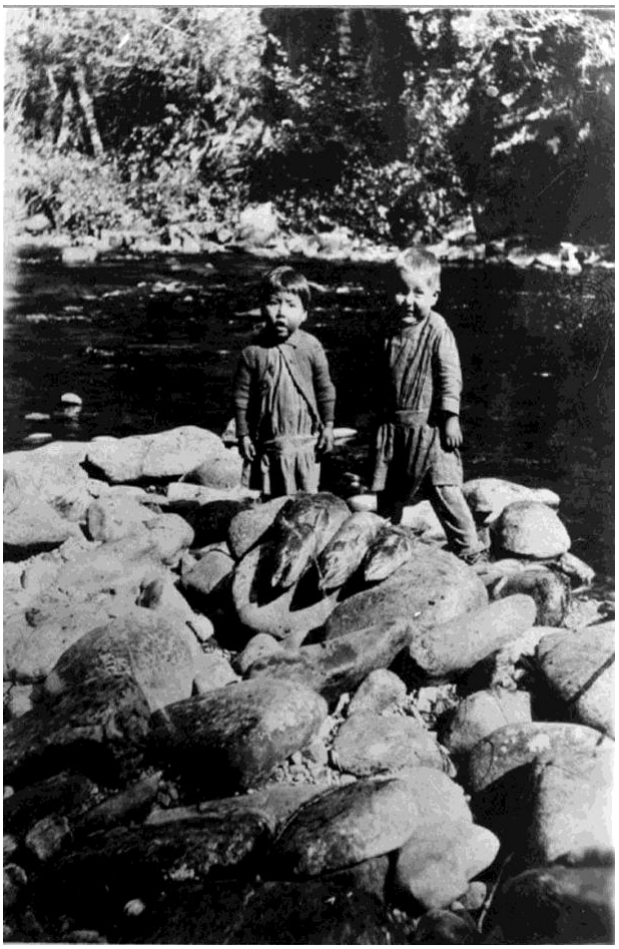
Termination. The Federal policy of the 1950s, known as "Termination," relying on the plenary powers of congress, unilaterally terminated Indian trust status and rights, and all reservation lands. While not directly imposed on the Nez Perce, other tribes were not so fortunate, such as the Menominee of Wisconsin and Klamath and others of Oregon. While the policy was short-lived, the threat of unilateral Federal termination of trust status and reservation lands remains today, with the abrogation of Indian sovereignty at stake.

For Further Readings on *Nimiipuu* history, see Josephy. 1965. *The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest,* McWhorter, L.V. 1940. *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story,* Pinkham and Evans. 2013. *Lewis and Clark Among the Nez Perce: Strangers in the Land of the Nimiipuu,* Slickpoo and Walker. 1973. *Noo Nee-Me-Poo (We, the Nez Perces): Culture and History of the Nez Perces*, and Walker. 1985. *Conflict and Schism in Nez Perce Acculturation: A Study of Religion and Politics,* 2nd edition.

Discussion Question.

1. In the context of this chapter, reflect on the implications of the **MOU statement** on p.10.
2. What have you newly learned about the nature of "Indian rights" as granted through treaties made between the United States government and Indian Tribes?

3. If the cultural themes and expressions just discussed had been the dominant hegemonic pressures placed on your family over the many generations, how might you react?
4. What were the causes and the nature of the Conflict of 1877 and what are its lasting effects on the *Nimiipuu* and their *Nimíipuu'neewit*?
5. What was the Allotment Act (Dawes Act) and what are its lasting effects on the *Nimiipuu* and their *Nimíipuu'neewit*?
6. A critical element affecting the *Nimiipuu* today is their "trust status" with the Federal government. What is the origin and meaning of "trust status" and what are some of its implications for the *Nimiipuu* and their *Nimíipuu'neewit*?
7. **KEY:** Have you gained a better appreciation of the factors, processes and events that have contributed to the "historic trauma" experienced by the *Nimiipuu*?
8. What questions, not addressed here, do you have?



Relatives Sizing Up Each Other, back in the day.
Photo Courtesy NEPE-HI-074.

The "Noble Savage" and the Romanticization of the Indian.

There is another cultural thread in the emerging American culture, distinct from other threads already considered. It is the view that the "American Indian," uncontaminated by "civilization," represents "pure human virtues," living in "harmony with nature." Hence an image of the "Indian" is idealized and stereotyped, that results in a position that Indians not only have a right to exist, but Euro-Americans should emulate the American Indian. This is a conceptualization expressed by the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the 1760s, who coined the term "noble savage," and contained in the writings of Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson in the 1840s (though not Henry David Thoreau). This thesis of American history was discussed in the work of Nash's *Wilderness and the American Mind* 1982. A stereotype of any kind can be culturally destructive, but ironically, also at times politically useful for those stereotyped.

Expressive Examples: a. motivations of John Collier (who was influenced by Indian culture will he lived at the Taos Pueblo in New Mexico) and of other idealists in the 1930's while serving in the Bureau of Indian Affairs; b. in popular literature venues of James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, and Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves*.

Importantly, the romanticization of the Indian significantly contributed to **changing federal policies,** resulting in: a. the **Indian Reorganization Act of 1934,** also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act (the Act of 1934 halted many assimilation policies, including the Allotment Act, sought to establish Tribal authority and governance over local issues while maintaining Federal Trust responsibilities, and sought to revive tribal enterprises and cultural expressions); b. the Self Determination Act of 1975; c. the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978; d. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990; e. the Native American Free Exercise of Religion Act of 1993.

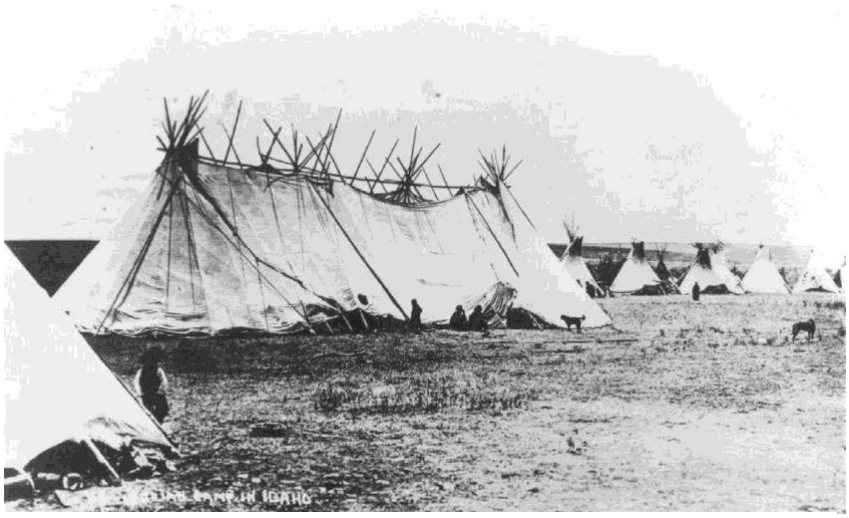
The **Indian Reorganization Act of 1934**, was ushered in under Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal" of the 1930's. The Act reversed Federal assimilation policies by ending the allotment of Tribal lands, promoting Tribal self-governance, and encouraging the preservation of Native American cultures. Key provisions included protecting existing Tribal lands and returning surplus lands, creating a revolving loan fund for Tribal economic development, and empowering Tribes to adopt constitutions and form corporations.

The Nez Perce Tribal governance was thus established, resulting in the **Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee** (NPTEC). It is made up of nine elected members with three-year

terms. In pursuit of their own self-determination, while still under the Trust responsibility of the Federal government (via Treaties), the Nez Perce Tribe have their own justice system of **Tribal courts** and **police department**, that works in coordination with, support from, and oversight by the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The Tribal courts hear a range of cases, including criminal (misdemeanor) and civil, like divorce, child support and contract disputes, as well as local ordinances. Felony cases are handled by the Federal government's FBI. In addition to the **Nez Perce Tribal Housing Authority** and such programs as **Natural Resources** and **Fisheries Management**, the Tribe operates the **Nez Perce Tribal Enterprise,** which promotes the Tribe's economic stability and growth by investing in Tribal business and enterprises. Such endeavors have resulted in the Nez Perce being one of the top regional employers, contributing millions of dollars to Idaho's economy. Keep in mind, the resources needed to support Tribal governance are limited to sources owned and controlled by the Tribe, like casinos, natural resources sales, such as timber, and a small portion from taxes on tobacco and motor fuel. Other sources of funding include grants and assistance from the BIA and philanthropic organizations. Given Federal policy, NPTEC has no means to impose other taxes or raise its own funding. See the official **Nez Perce Tribe website** for current information on Tribal governance and affairs.

Discussion Questions.

1. To what extent does the stereotyping of the Indian as "the Noble Savage" still act as part of Euro-American popular culture and perception, and even your own view?
2. What questions, not addressed here, do you have?



Traditional Longhouse (covered in canvas, not with tule-mats).
Photo Courtesy NEPE-HI-1677

Indicators of Trauma

Let me provide a contemporary glimpse (circa 2000's) into the resulting historical trauma caused by Euro-American hegemony. Regarding **education**, in the elementary and middle schools, students tested at or above 62% in reading and math proficiency. The high school graduation rate is around 74%, compared with the overall state of Idaho rate close to 85%. The *Nimíipuu* have a higher percentage of adults holding a bachelor's degree, about 20%, than the national average for American Indian adults at 16.8%. Because of lack of resources and job opportunities, as well as chronic absenteeism, along with other factors, there are persistent disparities in American Indian education compared with education in the country as a whole. The Tribe is striving to address these disparities.

The **employment rate** for the Nez Perce Reservation is about 45.0%. For the Nez Perce Tribe, addressing employment and underemployment has been a historical challenge, partly due to past discrimination and educational levels. The largest employers on the Reservation are with various Tribal programs, the Indian Health Service, *Nimíipuu* private enterprises and the Clearwater Casino.

With respect to **alcohol and illicit drug use**, work remains for Tribal governments and public health practitioners. In 2013, the rate of drug substance abuse was about 15% for Native Americans aged 12 or older, as compared with 8.4% for Whites. High rates of alcohol abuse are also of serious concerns for the *Nimíipuu*. These problems are often linked to historical trauma, socioeconomic factors, and a lack of resources. But the Nez Perce Tribe is actively working to combat them through cultural and wellness programs that promote resilience and healing. **Health services** are supported by the Indian Health Services (IHS), through Federal congressional appropriations. While diseases, like diabetes, are still of serious concern, life expectancy has risen to 71 years (compared to the low life expectation following Allotment, but today still lower compared to the 77 years for Whites). The Tribe provides a full range of state-of-the-art health services.

Housing on the Nez Perce Reservation is addressed through the **Nez Perce Tribal Housing Authority** (NPTHA), which manages programs like low-rent housing, homeownership assistance, and transitional housing for Tribal members. These programs aim to provide modern housing solutions to meet the needs of the community, though challenges like a shortage of available units persist.

As of 2021, *Nimipuutímt*, the *Nimíipuu* **language**, is classified as an Endangered Language by UNESCO, with an estimated 30 to 40 speakers of varying levels of fluency, with only around a dozen fluent speakers. The *Nimíipuu* are actively working to preserve and revitalize their language through immersion schools, language programs for Tribal employees, after school programs, and language courses at local colleges.

Self-Determination and Participatory Empathetic Adaptability: The *Nimíipuu* Resilient Response

When I first engaged the *Apsáalooke* (the Crow of Montana) in 1974, working on a collaborative health-care delivery project the Tribe desired, I expected to see an Indigenous population shattered and in disarray, given the 150 years of intense hegemonic assimilation pressures. Indeed, there were significant levels of unacceptable poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, dysfunctional families, and ill-health relating to obesity and diabetes. The marks of historical trauma were certainly evident. The lenses through which I viewed the Indigenous were a product of 150 years of anthropological research and theory I had been taught in college. In the assessment of the great theorists of the field, they declared that the aboriginal culture of the Indigenous peoples was rapidly vanishing, that true aboriginal culture no longer existed: there are only mere threads of a rich tapestry that once had been.

But as I engaged in listening, observing, interacting with and talking to *Apsáalooke* elders and young people, donned in cowboy hats, boots and blue jeans, driving Ford pickups, speaking fluent English, watching game shows on TVs, I came to realize that it was a veneer of assimilation, though accompanied by the deep wounds of historic trauma. Throughout a history of hegemony, there remained a strong core of very traditional values that vibrantly resurfaced in the behavior and identity of the *Apsáalooke*. I needed new lenses though which to view those I sought to serve. And as I continued working collaboratively in other Indigenous communities, with the Coeur d'Alene, the Flathead, the Spokane, the Warm Springs, and the Nez Perce, and given the intense Euro-American contact history each had experienced, I found in each a culturally resilient people, holding strong to their core traditional values. There was a Euro-American veneer, holding both deep traumatic scars but also a heart beating strong, with inherent sovereignty, equivalent with what the Nimiipuu call *Nimíipuu'neewit*.

And for years I asked, how could **traditional values** not just thrive but **prosper** in such a **volatile sea of destruction**? I took a hard dive into the nature and dynamic of what it means to be "traditional." And in each of the communities in which I'd worked, all revealed the same key components embedded in "traditionalism." The following are a few illustrations exemplifying *Nimíipuu* traditional resilience and what I've come to identify as "participatory empathetic adaptability."

The **Horse.** In the 1730s, up from the south, came the Spanish horse, via trade with other tribes and running wild on the open prairies. With it *Nimíipuu* culture was enhanced and transformed. Upon first arriving on their lands, instead of ignoring it or even hunting it, the *Nimíipuu* elected to adopt the horse and bring it into their family. Far from a beast of

burden, they transformed the Spanish horse. The *Nimíipuu* nurtured their new relatives, in fact, over generations raised their horses into becoming a new breed of horse, one smaller, more agile, and able to travel great distances. One with "spots."

The *Nimíipuu* loved their horses so that they adorned them with richly-beaded martingales and fine saddles and found opportunities to parade them for all to see. Their herds grew in great numbers. It was in the Conflict of 1877 that the *Niimíipuu* horse, in the face of the US military, proved so beneficial to the *Nimíipuu*. The adoption of the horse illustrated the ability of the *Niimíipuu* to be attentive to something new on the land, envisioning its potential use, and then taking it in, modifying its nature, and applying it to enhance aspects of their *Nimíipuu'neewit* lifeways and to the horse. With the horse, distant travel was made easier, transporting greater loads. Such adaptability is presupposed on the sovereignty of the People.

The *Nimíipuu* horse reported by Lewis and Clark was a colorful spotted horse that roamed the Palouse countryside in what would become north-central Idaho. Referred to by white settlers as the "Palouse horse," over time the words were slurred, resulting in the term, "Appaloosa." It was formally recognized as a breed in 1938. Over the same time the *Nimíipuu* horse was crossbreed with Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse lines, modifying the horse of 1805, to create an outstanding breed unto itself, while maintaining its distinctive "spots."

The *Nimíipuu* love for their horses has continued, as today they *have continued to* "nurture" their kinsmen. In addition to the love and care given the Appaloosa by some families, the Nez Perce Tribe has itself crossed the spotted and sturdy Appaloosa with the swift, hot-blooded Akhal-Teke of Turkmenistan. The Nez Perce Horse Registry created a new breed, the *Nimíipuu Sik'em* "the Nez Perce horse." The Akhal-Teke is an ancient Asian breed from Turkmenistan, known for its endurance and stamina, and is very similar to the original Spanish horse brought to North America. That horse has a long sleek body, narrow chest and long neck and legs, and is well adapted to the distance travel of its former desert homeland. With the success of the Nez Perce Horse Registry, the *Nimíipuu* horse of the 21st Century is again akin to its ancestor of the 18th Century. Continued attentiveness to their horses, envisioning something anew (or renewed), and then modifying it, reflects persistent empathetic adaptability among the *Nimíipuu*.

See texts and videos from **L3:**

Horse in *Nimíipuu* Culture:

https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/horse.html Josiah Pinkham 1:30; Angel Sobotta 1:38; Lynn Pinkham 2:10; Josiah Pinkham 3:07

Horse Program:

https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/horse-program.html Rudy Shebala 2:24; 3:11; Angel Sobotta 1:38

See Idaho Public TV:

Appaloosa Horses:

https://idahoptv.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/nat40-appaloosa-history-video/nature-season-40/ Rosa Yearout 7:00

Horses and Riders. Photo Courtesy NEPE-HI-0220

Salmon and the Fish Hatchery. As we have previously witnessed (see page 6), following Coyote's bringing forth the human Peoples from the parts of the Monster, the Creator called in all the plant, animal and fish Peoples, and asked them who would provide sustenance for the human Peoples. It was Salmon who first stepped forward and said he would. He would offer his flesh and body as nutrition, as food for the human Peoples, so long as the human Peoples always respected and cared for him. And so, a **"covenant"** was entered into between the Salmon and *Nimíipuu*, each would assist the other, as would any kinsmen for another.

Each year, from spring through fall, and with the meat added to their bones acquired while traveling the ocean, the salmon People swim upriver, returning to their places of birth, to complete their life's journey. When exactly the salmon People will return to a particular bend or falls in the river is always variable, but it is announced in advance with the song sung by the Dove. Always attentive, upon hearing of their coming, the *Nimíipuu* Salmon leader, an elder wise in the ways of the salmon People, begins his prayers of thanks and respect to the Salmon. He instructs the families to prepare the dipnets and build the scaffoldings, to be placed at each family's designated river's bank. The leader cautions all not to begin fishing too early but wait for the lead Salmon to first be

honored. The leader also instructs the fishermen not to dipnet the salmon in abundance. The human Peoples are to help ensure that some salmon People will complete their life's journey. In so doing, the salmon People will lay their eggs, giving birth of the smolts that will migrate their way back down to the ocean. As their parents' mission is now completed, their decaying bodies bring nutrients into the waters and thus aid the next generation.

With dipnet in hand, standing on the wooden scaffolds arching over the fast rush of torrent below, one relative to another offers its meat and sustenance. Women clean and prepare the salmon and hang them on racks to dry in the warm sun. The entrails are returned to the flowing waters, more nutrients added, a way of honoring those that just gave their lives and those about to swim downriver. The leader makes sure that all the meat that was acquired from the salmon People is re-distributed to all the families, so that none go without; yet another way to honor those that came from the river.

And the covenant of mutual sharing and respect continues. Today some families continue honoring their Salmon relatives, as their own ancestors did, since time immemorial. The prayers are still given, dipnets prepared, scaffolding built and salmon shared with all. Yet the construction of dams along the rivers has greatly impeded the salmon cycle and infringed upon the covenant. But the *Nimiipuu* have responded to the original request by Salmon, "always respect and care for us" and have built a fish hatchery at Cherry Land along the Clearwater River, designed with *Nimíipuu'neewit* traditional lifeway knowledge blended with state-of-the art ichthyology or fish and conservation science. And strongly advocate for the removal of the dams impeding the Salmon. A great application by the *Nimíipuu* of "participatory empathic adaptability," is their attentiveness to the salmon, envisioning something renewed, and then modifying it to bring it about. And the salmon People are beginning to be replenished, and in turn, nourishing the human People.

See texts and videos from **L3:**
Fisheries Resources Management:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/fisheries.html Aaron Penny 1:20; 1:15; 1:15; 2:22; 1:40; Elmer Crow 1:00
See Swiftwater Films Video:
Covenant of the Salmon People:
https://www.swiftwaterfilms.com/covenant-of-the-salmon-people 3:00

Song, Dance and Regalia of the "Powwow." In the song and drumbeat, and dance movements and sway of the regalia of the Powwow, we vividly witness the pride, resilience and reaffirmed identity of the *Nimíipuu*. During the Grand Entry, military veterans lead the way, holding Tribal and National Flags and the Eagle Staff, followed by Traditional and Fancy and Grass dancers, elders and children, and men and women, family members all: a

gymnasium basketball court is reclaimed and transformed into sovereign *Héetewit Wéetés* Precious Lands.

See texts and videos from **L3:**

Traditional Clothing Styles and Appearance:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/clothing.html Josiah Pinkham 2:22; Nakia Williamson 1:35; Josiah Pinkham 1:04; Mylie Lawyer 1:00; Beatrice Miles :49; Lynn Pinkham 1:38

To Sing and Dance: In the Past:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/sing-past.html Leroy Seth 1:33; Sam Morris recordings 2:00; 2:30; 2:12; 2:03; 2:19; 2:10 (1897-1909 audio wax cylinder recordings)

To Sing and Dance: In the Present:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/sing-present.html Looking Glass Powwow 3:57; Tutxinmepu Powwow 1:53; Owl Dance 1:31; Prairie Chicken Dance 1:16; Young Ones 1:10; Strips and Feathers 1:18; Women's Traditional :54; Intertribal 1:01; Jingle Dance 1:03; Retiring the Colors 2:15; Redtail Swingers 3:55; Leroy Seth 2:06, 1:22, 3:13; Angel Sobotta 2:24; Three Redtail 3:29

See **Idaho Public TV** Experience Video: –

Song of the Nez Perce:
https://idahoptv.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/song-of-the-nez-perce-video/idaho-experience/ Nakia Williamson 4:01

As an observer, to learn about "**powwow etiquette**," see:

Songs: of the Pow Wow:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/songs-powwow-cda.html

Contemporary Arts. In the contemporary arts, we see individual *Nimíipuu* artists blending the traditional designs and inspirations with modern techniques and technologies, keeping the traditions vibrant and illustrative of participatory empathetic adaptability.

See texts and videos from **L3:**

Contemporary Artists: Continuities:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/artists-continuities.html Lynn Pinkham 3:05; Ethel Greene 2:51; Angel Sobotta 2:15; Josiah Pinkham 1:55; Archie Lawyer 2:42; Josiah Pinkham 2:04; Nakia Williamson 3:13; Larry and Pam White Eagle 2:11

Contemporary Artists: Fusions:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/artists-fusions.html Angel Sobotta 2:09; Ethel Greene 1:19; 1:26; Angel Sobotta 2:33; Yvonne LeCornn 2:07; 2:13; 2:38; Abe Yearout 3:18; Nakia Williamson 4:49

Cultural and Natural Resources. A wonderful example of how the *Nimíipuu* are actively pursuing the perpetuating of their *Nimíipuu'neewit* and its intimate relationships with human and animal, plant, fish Peoples, helping assure the vitality of *Héetewits Wéetes*, is through the creation of Nez Perce Tribally-sponsored departments and programs. The

Nimíipuu have deliberately directed monetary and personnel resources into "Natural Resources Management Department," "Cultural Resource Program," and "Language Program." The horrendous trauma brought by Euro-American hegemony to *Héetewits Wéetes* has been effectually countered by their own reliance, in their *Nimíipuu'neewit*.

See texts and videos form **L3**:
Natural Resources Management:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/natural-resources.html Aaron Miles 1:33; Arron Miles 1:53
Cultural Resource Program:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/cultural-resource-program.html Vera Sonneck 2:00; Josiah Pinkham 1:38; Josiah Pinkham 3:16; Nikia Williamson 1:42
Language Program and Some Lessons:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/language-program.html Vera Sonneck 1:00; Harold Crook and Cecil Carter 1:16; Horace Axtell 2:00; Horace Axtell 10:15

Revisited: Self-determination is not only reflected in the regaining of legal, political and economic sovereignty, but also in terms of cultural sovereignty as witnessed in the adoption of the horse into the *Nimíipuu* family, in caring for the Salmon in the Cherry Lane Fish Hatchery, in aesthetic expressions such as the powwow and contemporary arts, and the creation of specific Tribal departments and programs. At the core of self-determination is "**traditionalism**." To be traditional is not to be static and fixed in time, but dynamic and adaptable. It is a foundation for cultural sovereignty and the resilience of the *Nimíipuu*. Today, traditionalism helps overcome the negative results of assimilation, i.e., historic trauma, alcoholism and drug abuse, unemployment, dysfunctional families, etc. Refer back to "traditional" in *Nimíipuu'neewit* on page 7.

Another way to view traditionalism is through one of its key components, **"participatory empathetic adaptability**." It is the sovereign ability to effectively participate with, and to deeply listen to and understand one's environment and surroundings, and then the ability to adjust to it, without giving up one's core principles and values. It is a skill honed and perfected in being deeply attentive to the smallest environmental details and to climate and weather changes, and then properly adjusting your preparations and travel timing within the seasonal round of visiting your neighboring relatives - of spring and summer root gathering in the prairies, summer berry picking on the mountains, summer and fall salmon fishing in the rivers, and fall and winter deer hunting in the forests. Not to be attentive to one's relatives and their changing homelands and then adjusting appropriately, could mean disaster for the family**.** With their traditionalism of participatory empathetic adaptability, over a hundred years of fierce assimilation and genocidal winds could not up-

root the resilient *Nimíipuu'neewit* and its Peoples. Traditionalism is the best cure from the ills of historic trauma. See pages 40-41 and 51-52 for further discussion on participatory empathetic adaptability.

For another example of participatory empathic adaptability, as expressed among the *Schitsu'umsh* (Coeur d'Alene), see https://www.sqigwts.org/lesson-empathetic-adaptability.

To view a moving example of how Indigenous people are resilient in the face of great despair, see the YouTube Video – "**We Shall Remain"** About 6 min.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gs0iwY6YjSk

Discussion Questions.

1. Reflect on what you have just seen and heard in the many voices of the *Niimíipuu* (via the streaming video L3 interviews). Remember, this is a people who have "suffered immeasurable trauma brought by the Euro-American." Can you imagine the suffering brought on by wave after wave of deadly diseases sweeping each of the *Nimíipuu* villages, being denied access to your traditional Lands and to the gifts the animal, plant and fish Peoples had to offer, being coercively taught that everything you've been doing in ceremony is the work of the "devil" and you must now accept the "one true religion," suffering a costly war and surrender at Bear Paw, and still more of your sacred Lands are taken? Compare how you might react with how you now assess the *Nimíipuu* response as reflected only in their L3 interviews?
2. What is the significance of the horse, both in the past and in the present, for the *Nimiipuu* and *Nimíipuu'neewit* and when did the horse arrive?
3. How have the *Nimiipuu* sought to protect and nurture the salmon and other fish Peoples?
4. What is the significance of song and dance, both in the past and present, in the *Nimiipuu* Powwow?
5. What is the significance and how have the arts and aesthetic expression continued and changed among the *Nimiipuu*?
6. **KEY**: What is the meaning and significance of "tradition" in *Nimíipuu'neewit*?
7. Can you provide examples of "participatory empathetic adaptability "in your own life?
8. **KEY**: Have you gained a better understanding and appreciation of *Nimiipuu* resilience in the face of Euro-American assimilation and hegemony?
9. **KEY:** What can be learned from how the *Nimíipuu* have faced challenges that can assist in how you engage challenge?
10. What questions, not addressed here, do you have?

Nimíipuu Héetewit Wéetés, where camas is dug and deer is hunted, since time immemorial. With the Treaty of1863, this land was ceded to the Federal government. And by the 1870s, homesteaders were arriving. Soon after new names were imposed on the land, Moscow and Pullman. This is the image of *Nimíipuu* land seen through the eyes of artist John Mix Stanley, a lithograph, circa 1855.

Yéeye "family" and *Téek'e* "to share with others": *Nimíipuu* Kinship, Family and Relationships

Kinship

(from the Memorandum of Understanding 2025)

Acknowledge that "sacred kinship" is a central Indigenous cultural attribute, inclusive of relationships with multiple sentient beings and with the Land. It is a critical part expressed in the *Niimíipuu* concepts, *Nimíipuu'neewit* "traditional lifeways of the People " and *Yéeye* "family." These concepts embody deeply held spiritual teachings from the Creator and the Animal First Peoples, such as Coyote or Salmon. To propose an "acknowledgement" relating only to a "territory" is to deny the intimate interconnectedness of the Land and its multiple sentient beings, is to perpetuate a Euro-American conceptualization of "land." It is essential to acknowledge "Land held in sacred kinship" as the basis from which trauma occurred and to which healing and nurturing will occur. "Kinship" helps identify ***the who*** of the MOU, including such sentient beings as the animal Peoples, bird Peoples, fish Peoples, human Peoples, and plant Peoples. The *who* can also include Non-Indian, Euro-American Peoples of the Church community(s), working in collaboration with the others, in a granted "fictive kinship" relationship.

"**One's Family**" is at the heart and soul of being *Nimíipuu*, from which one's identity and purpose evolve, from which the world revolves, to which one gives unselfishly. It's not so much that the family supports the individual, which it does, as the individual does all they can to support the family. It is not, I think therefore I am, but rather, we act therefore we are. "Individualism" and "self-interest" are greately subordinated to "interconnectivity" and the health and well-being of the whole. One is motivated less by self-interest than by collective welfare.

Family is expansive and interdependent, inclusive of **consanguineal** (by blood line), **affinal** (by marriage) and **fictive** (by friendship, a fraternity/sorority membership, or a close association of mutual support, e.g. MOU relation) relationships. Family is so inclusive that **animals, fish and plants** are considered part of the family kinship web. The social category of "otherness," e.g., animals distinct from and "other" than humans, is difficult to find within this Indigenous non-dualistic kinship system. In fact, the *Nimíipuu* family, indeed, *Nimíipuu'neewit,* cannot be said to be a part of or in anyway associated with a Cartesian Dualistic worldview, i.e., the premise that there is an intractable separation between the self of the mind and the physicality of the world, that humans can be autonomous viewers of the world. The Indigenous worldview holds the opposite, i.e., that

the self and the world, that thought and material, are intricately interwoven, humans are participants in an interdependent world with other participants.

> *They had come up from Lapwai, to present their own research at a conference on the university's campus. The audience was full of college students and their faculty, strangers all. Their seasoned Nimíipuu teacher knew her shy high school students were nervous, and a bit intimidated. And she knew what to do. She had each student clearly state their personal name, as they told the names in their family's lineage. For some, these were not short lists of names. Each began their talk and continued it with pride and confidence as a Nimíipuu. (From an observation in 2010 by Rodney Frey).*

Key Family Values. In addition to the key family value of hospitality and sharing toward others - ***téek'e***, other values expressed throughout the kinship network include: an equality toward all of one's peers; tremendous respect for and deference to elders; ***tuk'ukí*** - "honesty," truth and integrity in one's actions toward others; and ***cikáw*** - "bravery" and courage in the defense of one's family in the face of adversity. It is a family of inclusivity and extension. Above all is the importance of maintaining the integrity, health and well-being of the family and all its members. The individual is to be strong and vital in support of the health and welfare of the family and, in turn, is made strong because of the strength of the family, and not the reverse. Family members are compassionate and self-effacing toward each other, reserving the trickster and self-serving "Coyote" behaviors for potential adversaries often found among members of other tribes.

See texts and videos from **L3:**
Growing Up *Nimíipuu:* Family and Community Life:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/family.html Josiah Pinkham 3:18; Lynn Pinkham 2:09; 2:00; Horace Axtell 3:51; 1:24; :53; Nakia Williamson 3:09

Bilateral Kinship . The non-dualistic *Nimíipuu* worldview is witnessed and expressed in the structure of the extended family unit. A family's immediate relationships extend out through both sides of one's parents. A family is made up of relatives from one's father's **and** one's mother's sides of the family, what is called "bilateral kinship." One then traces their descent back through to either male or female founding ancestor, usually to a well-known and respected ancestral leader. A family is often named, "the children of (the name of ancestor)." While the nuclear family existed (limited to two parents and offspring), it was the extended family that was the centrifuge of one's life.

To illustrate a little of this bilateral kinship, and using English equivalent terms, the family members of your generation, on either your mother's or father's side, are classifed as **siblings**, and are only differentiated by **age**, older or younger, and by **gender**, brother or sister. What Euro-American's address as "cousins," are part of your sibling group, addressed as **older sister** or **younger brother**, for example. In your **parents' generation**, your biological parents are classified as distinct from their siblings (mother's brother, mother's sister, father's brother, father's sister), and differentiated by **gender**, but critically, all relate to you as "parents," i.e., both your mother and father, and your uncle and aunt behaving toward you and having responsibility for you as parents. In your **grandparents' generation**, while distinct terms are used to distinguish all four grandparents, all of them equally relate to you as a "grandparent," calling them "**grandpa**" or "**grandma**." All the grandparents played a critical role in your upbringing.

Now for the technical anthropological terminolgy. The basic *Nimíipuu* family unit is a **non-unilinear descent group**, i.e., an **extended family** based upon a **bilateral**, **kindred-based system**. **Kinship terms** are of a **bifurcate collateral type,** with generation and gender stressed, resulting in what is classified as a "Hawaiian kinship system." (You will not be tested on the above!)

Besides a name, each extended family is associated with a particular location, regarded as "**homeland**," often the site of a family's winter village. While born into a particular family, individuals have the option of choosing another family to establish membership, even within another band, i.e., the family's structure having a quality of permeability. Given the traditional seasonal "fission and fusion rounds," individual extended families congregated and cooperated together during certain times of the year, as in a communal deer hunt, while at other times of the year, they dispersed throughout the land into smaller groupings of related families, as when they were berrying in the mountains, what is called a "**transhumance pattern**." It would be these closely aligned kinsmen, one's "brothers" and "sisters," as well as "fathers" and "mothers," and "grandparents," that each individual would most rely upon for hunting, fishing and gathering endeavors, as well as the entire series of life-cycle rituals and activities. From vision questing and marriage, to child birthing and raising, and to one's own funeral and burial, the life-cycle support provided by one's family would allow the individual to mature successfully and become integrated into the larger life of the community. The extended bilateral-based family provides an individual his/her identity, the nurturing/rites of passage unit, the primary mutual social and economic support and assistance unit, and the right of first use to the roots and berries, and fishing and hunting locations within that family's territory. The dynamic and

adaptive nature of the family units provided tremendous stability and support for its members. Given the transhumance pattern, it was necessary for the social structure to be flexible and provide for situational leadership. The *Nimiipuu* bilaterally-based kinship system was very adaptative to the situational realigning of family groupings throughout the year's seasonal round. This is a great example of **participatory empathetic adaptabilty**, of the dynamic stability of ***Nimíipuu'neewit***. Reflective of these needs, *Nimiipuu* society was and is fundamentally egalitarian-based, without the rigidity of hereditary, unilineal descent clans, nor with class structures.

Discussion Question.

1. Do you see and understand that in the interrelationships of a non-dualistic based family, key *Nimíipuu* family values and a bilateral, bifurcate collateral family system, how each element supports the others? What are the implications and significances of this type of inclusive, interdependent family structure and dynamic?

Ethic of Sharing

(from the Memorandum of Understanding 2025)

Acknowledge that the "ethic of sharing" is a central Indigenous cultural attribute. The collaborative relationship between Tribe and Church partners is premised on the Indigenous kinship relationship expressed in an "ethic of sharing," similar to the *Niimíipuu* concept expressed in the word, *téek'e* "to give and share food." Relatives and friends freely assist and give to others who are in need, without thought of return or expectation of direct reciprocity, resulting in a kinship network of on-going, intertwining exchanges, of generalized reciprocity. The "ethic of sharing" helps identify ***the how*** of the MOU, the dynamic of interrelations, i.e., the responsibility each has toward the others. In a time of challenge and turmoil, the flow of empathy and compassion among extended kinspeople can bring comfort, renewal and fortitude.

Love and **Hospitality.** The *Nimíipuu* family's ethos is one of love and hospitality, derivative of the traditional value of an "ethic of sharing," as expressed in the term, ***téek'e*** "to give and share [food] with others." This extensive kinship system continues to express and facilitate love, hospitality and support among and between relatives, with an extremely wide-ranging family network. A fundamental skill necessary to benefit the members of a constantly adjusting family configuration, in an ethic of sharing, is one's ability to participate with and engage others, to realize and acknowledge the condition and situational status of another, and then to be able to adjust and respond

appropriately to members of the family. Does this sound familiar? It is another expression of the overall structure and dynamic reflected in the *Niimíipuu* extended family, that of **participatory empathetic adaptability**. Today where there are so many challenges facing individuals – within a community that may have high rates of illness and sickness, unemployment, alcoholism and drug abuse, crime and incarceration, inter-family misunderstandings and rivalries, and continued discrimination coming from many venues, and where death seems prevalent with the passing of beloved elders and the many accidents – the outpouring of love and care so readily shown by family members is a powerful refuge in a sea of turmoil and confusion for many in need of help, assistance and protection.

Among the many expressions of support of family members, providing an "**Indian name**" to a child or young person, or even an adult, is critical. In a ceremonial setting, such as during a community powwow, or an evening set aside by the family at its home, a designated elder would bestow the name. A give-away would likely accompany the naming. The specific name given might have been inspired by an elder's dream, derived from the name of a distinguished ancestor or even the action of a powerful animal, e.g., "Dancing Hawk," or it may reflect some quality or disposition seen by an elder in the child or a quality and ability yet desired to manifest itself in that child. The Indian name will thus help provide that individual a lifetime of guidance and protection, helping him or her become that which is described in the words of the name. Distinguished from one's personal and family names, an Indian Name is seldom used in public, but reserved for prayer and the ceremonial context, known within the family.

Another expression of family love is the practice of the **giveaway.** It is held at every important transition event in a person's life, each rite of passage for each member of the family. Such occasions include a Naming ceremony, a First Kill or Root Gathering ceremony, being a member of the team which won a state championship in basketball, marriage, a healing ceremony, and following the wake at a funeral and a year later at a memorial for the deceased. The giveaway involves gifts given to every person attending the event, sometimes numbering in the hundreds, with especially important gifts given particularly by individuals of importance to the person the focus of the giveaway. The elders would receive special acknowledgements in the role they played In the person's life.

Among the gifts could be Pendleton blankets and other blankets, Pendleton bags, sections of calico cloth, various colored handkerchiefs, jewelry, socks and other articles of

clothing, dried meat and jarred salmon, freshly prepared huckleberry syrup and preserves, and an assortment of small toys for the kids, most of which were new and recently purchased. At a boy's First Kill ceremony, the young hunter might even give his rifle to a prominent hunter or respected elder. Preceding the giveaway, a meal in abundance is served, with many traditional foods of roots, berries, fish and meat. Provided by the extended family for the recipient of the Naming or healing, the giveaway reiterates the level of support and love the family has for a young child or a grandmother, further linking him or her with the vitality and care of the entire community. Each time that handkerchief might be used or those preserves spread across a piece of toast, that child or grandmother would be remembered and a prayer of love sent forth. For a funeral and memorial, the giveaway might also include a vast array personal items having belonged to the deceased, many of which would have been purposely assembled by the deceased during his or her lifetime explicitly for this purpose, and in the act of giving these and other items away, the giveaway provides a way of "sharing the sorrow with all the people."

Also expressive of family support is the widespread **hospitality** shown among and between extended family members; visits are always warmly welcomed. Someone could come for a visit for an economic need (in pursut of a job), a ceremonial reason (Naming, First Kill or Healing Ceremony or a Funeral and Wake), or a social reason (friendship or just a "get away"), and even take up residence there for a short time, or evolving into a potentially permanent basis. One elder always leaves his home unlocked, while at work, so that any relative, who may be just passing through and needs a place to take a short rest or get a bite to eat, is always welcome to stop and make themselves at home. And then when rested, they can resume their trip. He asks only that they leave the home the same way they found it. Young people, especially before marriage, are prone to make long visits elsewhere. This practice tends to promote intermarriage between families of different communities, as for example between Lapwai and Warm Springs. All this contributes to the strengthening of intergroup relations, **an expansive "family"** and the ease of mobility among its members to effectively participate in economic, social, and ceremonial activities throughout the greater region.

Marriage. There is a strong prohibition against marrying any known relative. Marriage could be arranged by the parents or more typically today, the couple may simply fall in love and elope. Marriage is validated through an exchange of goods in what is known as a "wedding trade" between the two families. Upon marriage a couple typically practiced patrilocal residence, living with the groom's family, although the couple could easily move into the bride's family. Marriages tended to be monogamous, although in the past polygamous marriages were accepted. While divorce was relatively easy as was re-

marriage, strong supportive bonds developed between a couple, so long marriages predominated. To whatever extent an instability surfaced in a marriage bond, it is not equated with instability within the family, but reflects its flexibility and adaptive qualities. The extensive breadth of family brothers and sisters and parents and grandparents assured everyone would be cared for.

Gender Roles. While gender roles are traditionally clearly demarcated, e.g., males as hunters, fishermen and warriors, and women as gatherers and food preparers, *Nimíipuu* families are nevertheless characterized by strong gender equality, with men and women ultimately having equal access to power, authority, and autonomy in their respective economic, domestic, political and religious spheres of family life. Men had little to no prerogative or authority over women's roles, while women had little overt say over the activities of men. Likewise, the members of each gender had full access to the power and privilege within their gender-structured roles. And when viewed community-wide, both sets of gender roles contributed equally to the well-being of the whole, each complementing the other. And today, while many families continue this gender role differentiation, the members of other families have begun to blur many of these gender-based distinctions.

While not common, in traditional times this gender role differentiation did not preclude the possibility of a male purusing and being accepted by others into the female role, with all its responsibilities and duties, and doing so on a complete and full-time basis. Nor did it preclude the possibility of a woman pursuing and being accepted as a "hunter" or "warrior." In Indigenous North America this practice is generally termed, "**Two-Spirits**," and is somewhat pervasive. These individuals were and still are often afforded special and respected responsibilities in the community, such as healers, storytellers, mediators, and artists, and often have special roles in ceremonial practices.

See texts and videos from **L3:**
Grwoing Up *Nimíipuu*: Headmen and Leadership:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/leadership.html Leroy Seth and Josiah Pinkham 2:53; Mylie Lawyer 1:53; Leroy Seth 1:26

Leadership Roles. In pre-reservation times, important decisions were reserved to the elders and those with expertise in a particular social, economic or political activity under consideration. Elders were granted authority by others because of the example they set while adhering to the key cultural values. Reflective of the egalitarian and flexible qualities of the family structure, leadership positions were typically achieved, and not ascribed or inherited roles. Any man was eligible to become a chief, although sons of former chiefs were often elected. While no women could become a chief, speaking at

social gatherings, many women were well respected for their wisdom and "chief-like qualities," and exerted considerable influence over public opinion. Whether as a village "chief," or as a band head "chief," their leadership position was signified by publically possessing a "stone pipe." The role of the chief, often referred to as "headman," was at all levels advisory. They led by their example and ruled by consensus. Headmen, whether village or band, had no coercive or punitive powers. There was thus no necessity to have a "police society" to carry out and enforce the decisions of the headmen. Skills in empathy, oratory, and gentle persuasion were the means to build consensus.

The influence of the headmen often was first articulated and then expressed through the actions of the village and band council meetings. Made up of the village elders, the headmen would facilitate the ensuing discussion during the council meetings. But any decision arrived at was by the consensus of all the elders, based upon the welfare sought for the entire village or band. When the pipe was finally smoked at these councils, the decisions agreed to were binding by all families represented by the elders in attendance.

The influence of the headmen also was expressed at the talks and storytelling sessions held during the winter ceremonies and social gatherings. The headmen encouraged the people to conduct themselves properly and morally, and to be industrious. They would emphasize the importance of empathy, cooperation and generosity. "Don't put yourself above others." "If you look down your nose at someone else, all you'll see are your moccasins," followed by a big laugh. The headmen would also publicly admonish those who were acting selfishly, quarrelsome, or cowardly, calling them "coyote." In fact, the most important social control of deviant behavior was in public joking and ridicule, and, if necessary, the threat of ostracism. A "thief" or "vain" person would be laughed at and socially isolated from his or her family. The only way to control what amounted to "cruel ways" was to "banish him" into the mountains. While a hospitable land for the families, to attempt to live alone in this land was to assure one's own demise. The ultimate responsibility of the headmen was to attend to the general health, safety and welfare of all members of their respective villages, bands, or extended families, seeing to it that no individuals or particular families went without proper provisions and assistance throughout the year. Their's was a nurturing role. They would help regulate and distribute community food stores and other supplies to all in need. If someone was struggling in some endeavor or activity, the headmen would see that assistance was provided. A headman would continue to enact these nurturing and leadership roles so long as he had good empathy skills, his decisions were sound, and his actions moral. He ruled by the consensus of those he represented.

In addition to the village or band headmen, specific ad hoc leaders would also be selected for particular gender-related tasks. In communal hunts, fishing camps, root gathering and in warfare, separate hunting and fishing headmen, gathering headwomen and "war chiefs" would be elected, but serving in that capacity only for the duration of the activity at hand. Men and women so elected had distinguished themselves as great hunters, fishermen, root gatherers or warriors, possessing expert knowledge and perhaps spiritual power - *wéeyekin* - relating to their particular skills. And like the role of village headmen, the more specialized hunting, gathering and fishing headmen and women would supervise the redistribution of the game meat, roots and fish, assuring that those in need were all cared for.

While the contemporary political and economic structures have changed, particularly given the Indian Recorganization Act of 1934, the qualities defining leadership, such as oratory skills, gentle persuasion, empathy for others and care for the welfare of the community, continue, manifested in family decision making, promotions in a tribal job, and election to the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee, the governing board for the Tribe.

Discussion Questions.

1. Compare and contrast *Nimíipuu* love and hospitality with that found within your own family.
2. Compare and contrast gender and leadership roles in *Nimíipuu* and Euro-American societies.

Ancestral Homeland and Representation

(from the Memorandum of Understanding 2025)

Acknowledge that the Land upon which our Church was built was part of the northern ancestral homelands of the *Niimíipuu,* since time immemorial. "Since time immemorial" acknowledges a "homeland" as originally brought forth by the Creator and the Animal First Peoples and as expressed in oral traditions, from the beginning of time. The Nez Perce Treaty of 1855 included the Lands of the Moscow-Pullman area to be designated for the *Niimíipuu,* and in the Nez Perce Treaty of 1863, those lands were ceded to the United States. The Indian Claims Commission (ICC) of 1967 (Docket #175 18 1, 11) defined the aboriginal homeland of the *Niimíipuu* of some 13 million acres, inclusive of the Moscow area. This MOU will apply to *Niimíipuu* living on the Nez Perce Reservation, represented by the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC). "Homeland" is defined as a place/area associated with one's ancestral origins and cultural and spiritual affiliation, expressed in oral traditions, and is often (though

not necessarily) codified in and demarcated by legal documents and treaties. The *Niimíipuu* equivalent term for "homeland" is *Héetewit Wéetés* "Precious Land." The "Homeland" helps identify ***the who*** entailed in the MOU.

***Nimíipuu* Homelands:** Access to the camas, deer, huckleberry and salmon is bound in a **particular land-human relationship.** Each extended family and band has its own "**homeland**," generally an area inclusive of certain deer and elk populations, as well as specific berry and root plants. The concept of "homeland" best corresponds with the *Nimíipuu* term and conceptualization, *Héetewit Wéetés* "Precious Land."

Tribe and Band. At this point in our discussion, the designation "tribe" and "band" do need some clarification. A **tribe** is a loose association of bands, each sharing language, cultural practices and demographic proximity with each other, and the term "tribe" was given particular political importance by the US Federal government during the treaty-making period. The **bands,** in turn, were made up of numerous kinship-based, extended families. At the outer margins of each tribal homeland were likely extended families made up of individuals, via intermarriage, of mixed tribal identity. Aboriginally, it was at the band level that critical political, economic and social leadership and decision making originated, and that was the source of aboriginal sovereignty. Hence, the construct and meaning of "tribe" was and continues to be significantly influenced by the federal government during treaty deliberations in order to identify the demographic range and focus of Indigenous groups and is subsequently the basis of tribal treaty rights and federal Indian law.

Nevertheless, the most important social unit designated for a territory prior to Euro-American contact was the **band**, the association of several related extended families. As we already considered, these extended families were autonomous, bilateral kin-based units. Leadership roles were situational, acquired by the consent of others, and associated with the task at hand, for example, a hunting or gathering leader, a root digging or fishing leader, a war leader or political leader. And with the yearly cycle of transhumance (see page 52), the configuration of the family units would change, from small extended family units as roots are gathered in the summer to large band units made up of many extended families during the winter stays in the longhouses. Men's and women's roles were fundamentally egalitarian although distinct, with the women focused on gathering and child-rearing activities, while the men hunted, fished and provided protection.

Traditionally, each extended family and associated band had on-going access to their territory over the generations, areas where the family had hunted, berried and dug roots "since time immemorial." The family's territory itself was not likely to be of one continuous contiguous area, but distinct areas scattered over a wide range of ecological zones –

mountains, valleys, rivers, lake shores and prairies. While there were distinct family hunting or root digging areas, it also was often the case that a number of families would gather together at a camas site or collectively hunt the deer using the "drive" method. The roots and meat were then distributed among all participating families.

The families' access to their distinct "homelands" is based on the "readiness" of the plant or animal within the seasonal cycle. Given the changes in residence and subsistence patterns, the *Nimíipuu* of today are no longer reliant on a transhumance pattern for their survival. Nevertheless, the animals, fish and plants remain important, especially as supplemental sources of food and healing medicines, and as spiritual links to the Creator and the Ancestors. The game meat and salmon are critical for meals served at all wakes and funerals, community and family gatherings, pow wows and celebrations. And while winter camps are no longer set up, for many families, venison and elk remain an important source of meat within their households. Even more prevalent is salmon, with many families continuing to set up fishing platforms and dipnet fish for the spring and fall salmon runs along the Clearwater and Columbia rivers. As such, the pattern of the seasonal round, while generally observed, is abbreviated. Today a family might spend an extended "weekend camping" at a summer camas or fall huckleberry site, instead of making that site their residence for several weeks. The hunting of deer and elk continues, and while still mostly in the fall and winter, will be done over "a weekend" or "after work." It is a seasonal round that, nevertheless, will vary from year to year given changes in the weather and rainfall. But it is also a round that will vary for individual families given their current residence relative to the location of their "homelands."

From the *Handbook of North American Indians: Plateau* Smithsonian 1998.

For many families, such berrying, hunting and root digging continues in their lives, as memories of bygone days.

For the *Nimíipuu*, the **aboriginal homeland** for their bands and collectively, the tribe, was an orbit centered and extended out from the Kamiah and the Seven Devils Mountains areas (origin points conferred in the Coyote and the Monster oral traditions), along the Clearwater and Snake Rivers, northern portions of the Salmon River, and upper reaches of the Grande Ronde River: a homeland encompassing parts of central Idaho, and adjacent Oregon and Washington. Depending on seasonal variance, in 1800, the *Nimíipuu* numbered approximately 6000 individuals, living within more than 70 permanent village sites (remember some sites lay vacant during parts of the year), varying in size from 30 to 200 individuals.

Partnership: The relationship of a given family to their "homeland" was and still remains one of what could be termed, "**partnership**," rather than one of "ownership." The land is in partnership among its **kinsmen** — Animal, Plant and Human relatives. Each enters into kinship and sharing patterns with the other, following the "teachings" set forth by the Creator and the Animal Peoples of the Creation Time. For example, as set forth in the "covenant" between Salmon and the *Nimíipuu*. Among the key teachings are the understanding that the Animal Peoples are our "brothers," that we are to enter into a kinship relationship with them, and that all kinsmen are governed by an ethic of sharing and respect. One hunts by consent of those hunted. The Animal Peoples and the Land voluntarily offer to their Human kinsmen foods, medicines, *wéeyekin*. In turn, the Human relatives "respect" their kinsmen, never taking more than they need, sharing with others who are in need, offering gifts of tobacco and prayers of thanks, and not abusing the "land and water." Not "taking" from the Land. If it had been a tough winter for the deer, for example, a family will hold off on the hunt until the deer and elk populations grew stronger. Together, the Animal Peoples and their associated Human family provide and nurture a "home" for each other in that land. Homelands "belong" as much to the animal and fish Peoples, as they do to the human Peoples. The right of access to that "home" is only assured as long as kinship and sharing patterns continue.

See texts and videos from **L3:**
Seasonal Round: Winter into Summer:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/winter-to-summer.html Josiah Pinkham 2:22; 2:51; 3:13; 2:20; 2:42; 2:09; Jack McCormach 3:07
Seasonal Round: Summer into Winter:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/summer-to-winter.html Jack McCormach 2:24; Josiah Pinkham 2:22; 2:15; 2:20; Mylie Lawyer 1:38; Josiah Pinkham 1:51

An Exchange of Gifts Between Relatives: Story Vignettes from a Family.
We walked out into the field, tuukes and gifts in hand. As she had done as a young girl, at this very place, Grandmother sat down in front of a beautiful camas; its bright blue flowers glimmering in the sun. She pulled out a cigarette, holding it high in hand, without lighting it and offered the tobacco. Her voice was gentle and quiet as she sang her wéeyekin root gathering song and asked the camas if they could be dug today. She promised to gather only what they needed, not anymore, to be baked and prepared with care, to be shared at a feast during a wake and to be given to a family in need. With deep appreciation and a clean mind, thanks were given to the camas. Grandmother then placed the tobacco of the cigarette at the base of the camas and gently inserted the tuukes into the ground beside the plant, deep near the root. Moving the earth so, its gift could now be received and placed into the twined cornhusk bag tied to grandmother's hip. The other women then proceeded to walk out among the field of blue, with tuukes in hand and gathered only that which would be needed. Gifts now received and in turn, gifts to be shared with others.

Before he left in his pickup, he'd been singing his wéeyekin hunting songs. He headed to the mountains where his family had always visited the deer. After the long drive, it was a short walk to the wooded thicket. His songs and prayers continued. He asked for their assistance, their meat to help feed a family, making sure all are fed. The deer knows what you are up to, they're smart. Knows if you have a clean mind. The songs honoring a brother continued, gifts of respect. Then out from the tree line stepped a buck. The deer knew of his visitor and had accepted his gift. The deer just stood there, completely still. A shot rang out, and a brother offered his gift so others could be fed. As the meat was cut from bone and hide, so too did his wéeyekin songs, gifts heard and received by the deer. Gifts now received and in turn, gifts to be shared with others.

As it is with the camas and deer, so it is with the huckleberry and salmon, and with all the Peoples. This could have occurred by a grandmother's or hunter's ancestors two hundred years ago in what will come to be called the Moscow-Pullman area. (These two vignettes are reformatted from lecture notes1998-2017.)

***Héetewit Wéetés* "Precious Land": Traveling the Land's Seasonal Round with the Animal, Bird, Fish and Plant Peoples.** To appreciate the *Nimíipuu* relationships with what can be called their "ecological" and "natural world," is to apply the structural and dynamic principles found within the *Nimíipuu* family. Specifically, an inclusive equitable kinship and the ethic of sharing are just as applicable to the animal, bird, fish and plant Peoples as they are to human Peoples. All the Peoples, linked by a web of kinship and sharing with each other, thrived within *Héetewit Wéetés* "Precious Land." There is no fundamental ontological distinction between human and natural worlds, no dualism of "otherness," no separate "natural world," per se.

Nimíipuu land was not only a land that sustained what was necessary for food, lodging, transportation, tools, and clothing, it was a land *richly endowed* with roots, berries, fish, and game animals. A *richly endowed* land that offered spiritual guidance and healing powers. All of which, from the salmon to *wéeyekin* spirital power, as acknowledged in the oral traditions and recorded in the land, are "gifts" given by the Creator and through the actions of the Amimal Peoples during the creation time, "gifts" originally given to those "yet to come," the human Peoples. Indeed, a *richly endowed* ***Héetewit Wéetés***.

Essential prerequisites for a successful life within the dynamic of the seasonal round was and continues to be: 1) having tremendous attentiveness to and empathy in understanding subtle seasonal variations, 2) having great knowledge about the dispostion and character of the various Peoples of the land, and 3) having the ability to be moble and adjust the functioning size of the family unit. That is, having **participatory empathetic adaptability**. (See page 35 for definition.) Given subtle seasonal changes, it was critical to know exactly when the various berries and roots would be ready, when the salmon runs would occur, when and where the deer would be. As the huckleberries were to be gathered in the fall, a young man would be sent ahead to search out and bring back to camp a twig from a berrying bush. Upon observing the stage and growth of the berries, the grandmother could tell exactly when the berries would be ready for picking. The family's camp could then anticipate when they needed to move and be at the appropriate hill sides. The particular knowledge and behavioral ability associated with the participatory empathetic

Dipnet Fishing for Salmon at Celilo Falls on the "Big River," circa 1955. (before the destruction and damming of the falls) Photo Ed Roby

adaptability's adjusting to the seasonal round is also known as "traditional ecological knowledge" or TEK.

Camas and Bee: Relatives All.
Photo Rodney Frey

As we have seen, mobility and ability to travel within their land also was an essential prerequisite for successful *Nimíipuu* life. Ease of movement was provided by the navigable rivers which connected the heartland of this area. But to access and benefit from what was provided, *Nimíipuu* families had to be able to freely travel this land and adjust the structure of the family accordingly, as particular roots, fishes or game animals would be available for digging, fishing or hunting at specific locations at particular times during the year, from camas root digging on Weippe Prairie to salmon fishing at Celilo, on the Columbia River. Leadership duties and role resposibilities within the family had to be adjusted given the breakup into smaller root gathering activities or the gathering into large winter encampments. The equitible bilateral-kinship system of the *Nimíipuu* family allowed these seasonal adjustments. The *Nimíipuu* practiced what is called a seasonal **transhumance pattern**, a deliberate, informed, calculated, adaptive navigation within one's land, as opposed to a random, nomadic wandering over it. During a yearly seasonal round, extended family members could have up to six to eight separate camping and village sites and travel up to 300 miles, potentially ranging from buffalo country to Celilo Falls, from the Snake River to Kettle Falls.

I have provided below (page 53) a generalized outline of the seasonal cycle of berrying, fishing, hunting, and root digging that is reflective of the ***Nimíipuu'neewit*** transhumance pattern. Variations due to changes in the weather, and the annual snow and rainfall would adjust and slightly alter this pattern from season to season.


NEZ PERCE SEASONAL ROUND
WILÚUPUP
JANUARY
'ALATAM'ÁAL
FEBRUARY
LATÍIT'AAL
MARCH
QAQ'IIT'ÁAL
APRIL
'APA'ÁAL
MAY
TUSTIMASÁAT'AL
JUNE
TÁY'AAL
JULY
WAW'AMAAYQ'ÁAL
AUGUST
PIK'UNMAAY'Q'ÁAL
SEPTEMBER
HÓOPL'AL
OCTOBER
SEḴLIW'ÁAL
NOVEMBER
HA'ÓQOY
DECEMBER
Mariposa Lily
Gray's Desert Parslay
Bitterroot
Mountain Whitefish
Lamprey Eel
Arrowleaf Balsamroot
Sharp-tailed Grouse
Cous
Spring Chinook
Spring Beauty
Camas
White Dogwood
Bluebak Salmon
Golden Currant
Chokecherry
Fall Chinook
Gooseberry
Mule Deer
Huckleberry
Bighorn Sheep
Indian Hemp
Bulrush
Source: Bureau of Land Management
NEZ PERCE (NEE-ME-POO) NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL / U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Respect and Relationship

(from the Memorandum of Understanding 2025)

"We will inform the Tribe of our presence on their traditional Lands and while on those Lands, will seek to exhibit respect and responsibility toward that Land in a manner consistent with Indigenous practices. Not unlike the instance of a neighboring tribal family, who's "homeland" resided elsewhere, when desiring to dig camas, for example, that *visiting* family would enter *Niimíipuu* Lands only when those lands were not first occupied by a *Niimíipuu* family who were digging camas, and even then, they would attempt (though not always successful) to contact the appropriate *Niimíipuu* family, notifying them of their intent to dig camas. All along the assumption being, that the neighboring family would respect the Land and exhibit responsibility toward it consistent with *Niimíipuu* and Indigenous practices.

Those practices are a part of a larger context of cultural conceptualizations, such as *Nimíipuu'neewit*. Aboriginally, "Land" was not owned by a family. But rather, the Land and its associated fish, plant, bird and animal Peoples are bonded in an extensive kinship relationship with their human Peoples counterparts, a relationship significantly predicated on an ethic of sharing. Each human family was associated with traditionally demarcated territories (for camas digging, deer hunting, salmon fishing, etc.). Given the kinship relationships, the Land and its varied Peoples are to be honored, respected, kept in balance, entailing responsibilities toward each other (e.g., sacred songs and prayers given, and not to be over hunted, over fished or over dug). There are expected responsibilities each of the Peoples had toward the others, e.g., human to deer and deer to human, responsibilities akin to equitable stewardship. When the Land and its Peoples were abused and disrespected, a family could lose access to that Land.

In acknowledging a Church's presence on and responsibilities toward *Niimíipuu* Lands, the Church's membership has in effect entered into a temporary "fictive kinship" relationship with the *Niimíipuu*, such that the Nez Perce Tribe is as a "host" and the Church is as a "guest." This MOU seeks to continue these Indigenous practices; practices predicated on the Nez Perce Tribe's cultural entitlement and inherent tribal sovereignty with the Land; practices predicated on cultural, symbolic relationships, that are legally non-binding. To "Notify" and show "Respect" helps identify ***the who*** and ***the what*** of the MOU, who it entails and what is sought."

Ritual and the Land: Spiritual Exchanges with its Peoples. Let us explore more fully the spiritual framing of the structure and dynamics of animal, fish and plant People relationships with human Peoples. One important aspect of Nez Perce ritual and ceremonial expression, as a reflection of the recent past into the contemporary, revolves around **spiritually maintaining** the proper relationships with the land, and its fish, plant and animal populations. Through these rituals and ceremonies, the Nez Perce seek, among other intentions, to gain foods and other subsistence assistance as well as spiritual guidance for the human communities, to maintain

the health and vitality for the fish, plant and animal communities, to assure an equitable redistribution of foods to all those in need, and to give thanks for what is received. While Christian missionary and federal government agent activities over the past one hundred fifty years have modified and, in some instances, eliminated many of the former ritual dance ceremonial practices, but a core has continued to be practiced among the Nez Perce. These include rituals associated with the seasonal round, such as First Foods Ceremonies, and rituals associated with the life cycle, such as seeking of a *wéeyekin* or guardian spirit. The ancient term, *wéeyekin*, specifically refers to "moving with and being guided," and implies to be guided by something greater than the self. The underlying relationship sought throughout these rituals and ceremonies is one of "kinship" in which human, animal, fish, plant, and spirit are in a partnership with one another. When the salmon, for example, are understood and engaged with as kinsmen, both human and fish communities are benefited.

There are a number of ceremonies held as part of the subsistence seasonal round. While the reasons for conducting a *Hitemyekse*, **Sweat House ceremony**, are many and varied, such as prayer, as spiritual cleansing and renewal, as healing, or as enjoyment, it is a critical ceremony held prior to activities associated with fishing and hunting, as well as root and berry gathering. A Sweat House is a domed-shaped, canvas-covered structure some six-to-eight feet in diameter and may be located in the backyard of someone's home or along a valley creek outside of town. After rocks are heated red hot and placed in the small pit within the lodge, the ritual begins. Generally, men and women will sweat separate from each other. Water is ladled on the rocks in a prescribed manner, while songs are sung and prayers are given in the intense heat.

> *A short time after I was diagnosed with 3rd stage cancer in December of 2005, Josiah Pinkham, a close Nez Perce friend, had me down to his home, just south of Lapwai, for a "Healing Sweat" and meal of traditional foods. Joined by two elders and his brother, it was a powerful Sweat of prayers, sharing, and heart talk. As Josiah said, "we wanted you to know that we would be there with you for your entire journey." One of the elders, Leroy Seth, in fact, shared even more, "a little bonus," he said with a smile. As he sat next to me in the darkened Lodge, the steam thick in the air, Leroy began to swoon and became listless. Once outside and clear-headed, he told us that while in the Lodge he "heard a song, coming from near the fire pit, sung by the Little People or, maybe, Children!" He went on to relate how he had felt and shouldered some of my challenges, a "gift to you." After the meal, Josiah*

> *presented me with a beautiful Pendleton blanket, while his wife, D'Lisa, gave me a candle in a dragonfly holder and a supply of "qhasqhs," a medicine root used in the Sweat Lodge. I had brought with me my Buffalo Skull, wrapped in a black blanket, a blanket Leroy had given me a couple of years prior as part of his give away. I presented it to Josiah. In the days leading up to the Sweat, it had come to me that the Skull should now belong to Josiah. I had received it many years before from Joseph Epes Brown (a student of the Lakota elder, Black Elk, and author of The Sacred Pipe, 1953), when I taught courses for him during his sabbatical leave at the University of Montana in 1979-80. (From Gifts received in 2006 experienced by Rodney Frey and printed in "Religion and Healing in Native America*," edited by Suzanne Crawford, *Praeger Press, 2008).*

A very special and spiritually powerful form of ritual bathing is known as the "**Mud Bath,**" *Teméeyenwees*. It is often accompanied with an emetic ritual in which a willow stick is inserted down the throat. A Mud Bath is conducted in a water-filled pit with the "right type of clay-like earth." Hot rocks are added to the pit causing the "mud to bubble." In both forms of ritual bathing, the ensuing prayers seek success in the subsistence endeavor, asking the elk or salmon to take pity on the hunter or fisherman, for example. The hunter becomes "so clean that he is almost invisible" and no longer smells like a human, but as "Mother Earth." The emetic causes him to be "so light that he runs as fast as deer."

Another seasonal round preparatory ceremony is known as the *Qilloowawya*, literally "rawhide hitting" (*qillilu*, "rawhide" and *wawya*, "to hit repeatedly as in drumming") and commonly referred to as "**Nez Perce Serenade Songs**." Dressed in their finest ceremonial regalia, men would gather in front of the lodges of each man who was about to begin an important journey, such as to battle or to buffalo country to hunt. The men would then sing the unique *Qilloowawya* songs as they beat sticks on the stiff rawhide of buffalo, elk or deer. No drum is used. Following the song, women would present their male relatives with newly-made moccasins and bundles of dried foods, thus showing their support for the endeavor. Because of the dangers involved with such travel, the *Qilloowawya* seeks to instill "good memories of family and friend togetherness," for it may be the last time these men might be seen. Individual rituals are also associated with the subsistence activities. Most common among these are the singing of personal *wéeyekin* songs, *weyekwenipt*. These are songs acquired in a vision quest or handed down from generation to generation within the family, and are designated specifically for some particular activity, such as hunting elk, fishing for salmon or gathering root or berries. Gender roles are extended to

these songs, with males singing hunting and fishing songs, while women sing berry and root gathering songs. The salmon fisherman, camas root gatherer, or elk hunter would sing his or her *wéeyekin* song as a means of communicating with the animal population. The song would be a way to demonstrate one's humility, as well as to honor and respect the salmon or elk. The implicit desire is that the animal in question would reciprocate by "offering itself" to the hunter or fisherman. In the prayer that might accompany the song, the salmon or elk would likely be referred to as a "brother," thus having entered in a kinship exchange - respect given for the anticipated gift of meat.

Throughout the seasonal round, as each new food becomes available, an annual community-wide ceremony, *Ké'iyyit* or **First Foods Ceremony**, is held. Held in a community hall or hosted by a particular family in their home, family and friends gather to ritually partake of the newly harvested food, be it salmon, bitterroots, or huckleberries, for example. Along with the honored food, a full meal is prepared and served. With all people assembled, the prepared foods are placed on a central table and an elder offers a prayer. The words convey thanks to the Creator and to the particular food for its bountiful harvest. The prayer might also convey certain important subsistence values, such as not gathering, fishing, or hunting "too many" roots, salmon or deer, but only what the family needs at the time. Those assembled would are reminded not to take "the biggest deer" or "first fish" for fear of endangering the health of the entire animal population. "We are to hunt, fish and gather not for trophy or the biggest, but for the welfare of our families and to look after the health of the animals." After the prayer is given, each person ritually sips water from a glass before him or her, acknowledging the vital role water plays in the health of all living beings. Then the foods are distributed and eaten by all the attendees. Explicitly implied in the *Ké'iyyit* is the value of redistributing the salmon, elk and roots throughout the community, so no family suffers from hunger, and all are cared for. With the *Ké'iyyit* completed, the full harvesting of the food just honored commences.

Two important rites of passage ceremonies are directly related to the successes or failures in the seasonal round. They involve the seeking through fasting and acquiring of a personal *wéeyekin,* and the First Food Gathering celebrating, for example, the success of a boy's first hunting of a deer or a girl's first gathering of bitterroots.

In the **fasting to seek guidance and spiritual power**, a critical relationship with the land and its animal peoples is initiated. In this relationship, a person can acquire his or her *wéeyekin*, a specific spirit guide or tutelary animal spirit. Following the proper instructions provided by an elder and the ritual cleansing from a Sweat House ceremony, an individual goes to the high mountains or some other sacred place to seek his *wéeyekin*. Going

without food and water, the duration of the fast may last from a couple of days to as many as several days. Humbling himself, the young person prays for his particular needs and the needs of his family. During this spiritual quest a Spirit Being, such as an Eagle, Elk, Bear, or even Cloud may come to the faster and bestow a vision. He or she would hear a *wéeyekin* song and also may be instructed in the proper care and use of the *wéeyekin*. In addition to vision questing, *wéeyekin* can also be passed down from generation to generation inherited from an elder kinsman, for example. Once received, and if respected and cared for properly, one's personal *wéeyekin* is with that person for the rest of his or her life, helping protect and nurture the individual. It may be that the person's *wéeyekin* songs are to be used for some specific intention, such as in curing ceremonies, or they are to be applied generally, as in the welfare of one's family. Particular *wéeyekin* songs also are essential if success in hunting, root or berry gathering, and fishing is to be obtained. A salmon headman, for example, would use his *wéeyekin* songs to seek permission from the salmon to fish them, to assure that only what is needed is taken, and to safeguard the fishermen so that no one would be injured in the dangerous fishing operations.

When a young person kills his first deer or elk, catches his first salmon, digs her first roots or gathers her first berries, a **First Food Gathering ceremony** is held. The gathering of relatives and friends may be a community event, held in a community hall, or limited to family members, held in a residential home. Hosted by the immediate parents and kinsmen of the young hunter or gatherer, a large meal is prepared for all who are anticipated, including the particular meat, fruit, or roots just acquired by the young person. A special Sweat House ceremony might also be held for the young person prior to the meal. Once all have arrived but before the meal is served, an elder will provide songs and prayer, along with words of guidance to the young hunter, fisherman, or gatherer. These talks could reiterate the proper values in hunting and gathering, such as in "keeping your mind clean." "An animal is looking for [the clean mind of the hunter or fisherman], because it's the animal who chooses you, blessing you, offering itself to you." It is sometimes said that salmon go on a long journey only to come back bearing gifts for people when they are respected and honored by the people. The hunter is cautioned against hunting for "trophy" or personal status, but to hunt only for what is needed by the family. Words of thanks to the animal, fish or root are also offered, and the new role of the young is acknowledged. As the meal is served and consumed, all will partake of the foods except the young hunter or gatherer. In abstaining from the meat of the newly caught salmon or shot deer, for example, the new role of the fisherman or hunter is established and reiterated to the young person. He or she is now a provider for the others within his or her family, not seeking to kill for personal reasons but to look after the needs of others. "As a hunter his work is honorable work." The entire ceremony thus also emphasizes the role

and importance of the traditional foods for Nez Perce families.

One other rite-of-passage ceremony, the **Marriage Trade**, or *Misqóoyit* (literally "wedding trade"), reiterates the close association each individual has with the foods and activities of the seasonal round. This ceremony occurs when two people begin their lives together in marriage. It is initiated when the family of the bridegroom selects an elder of the family to go and speak on his behalf before the potential bride's family. The elder explains to the family of the potential bride the particular personality qualities and skills of the young man. If the young man is a proficient hunter or fisherman, as well as industrious and a hard worker, approval of the marriage would likely be granted. In the actual trade, food exchanges are made between the relatives of the two families. The wedding trade typically focuses on the female relatives of the two families, but occasionally the male relatives are involved as well. The items themselves are called, *misqoyíit'as (*literally, "wedding trade items"). These items include corn husk bags with dried *qáaws* (cous) and *qém'es* (camas). Dried fish and meats also are included as trade items, as well as hides and other useful items. In contemporary times, blankets and cookware also are included.

See texts and videos from **L3:**
Spiritual Life:
https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/spiritual-life.html Leroy Seth 1:25; 4:31

The Indigenous Experience with the Temporal Land. With an appreciation of the structure and dynamics of the *Nimiipuu* "Seasonal Round" and with the addition of spiritual relationships within the cycle, the Indigenous temporal experience is rendered that much more intelligible. Time becomes an extension of the seasonal round, as it is a cyclical, nature-integrated concept. It is intertwined with natural rhythms, seasons, and recurring events. Time is viewed as dynamic made up of interconnected relationships, rather than time as a rigid, measurable chronological progression, an intractable sequence of discrete concrete moments. Specifically, Indigenous time is an unfolding event, "the transitory intersection of those participating." Indigenous time directly contrasts with the linear (past, present and future), clock-based model of Western time.

While often used by Euro-Americans as a derogatory term, the expression "Indian time" actually refers to time as determined by those participating, i.e., when they assemble, rather than those participating being determined by an arbitrary time regulated by a clock. This perspective emphasizes the holistic experience in which past, present, and future are seen as interwoven and contemporaneously existing , i.e., Creation Time can be Present Time, and you can run and talk with the Coyote as he kills the Swallowing Monster. As Mari Watters deeply listened to an unfamiliar "Sioux story," she fully participated in and

was part of its temporally unfolding ancient past. And then when she immediately retold the story to those assembled on the shores of Lake Coeur d'Alene, the events she had participated in were told from her own experiences, recounting the storyline told earlier (see pages 4-6).

This is not to suggest that unique idiosyncratic events of significance, not part of the normal seasonal cycle, are ignored. But rather they could be so fully integrated into the cyclical round and lifeway of the *Nimíipuu* that the actual event of its introduction goes unnoticed, such as in the case of the 1730s arrival of the horse, as if it had always been here. Or an event of such significance, as the Conflict of 1877, could be so integrated into the cyclical round and lifeway, that it is annually retold and re-engaged, with pilgrimages to the places of significance, parading with song, dance, regalia and horse. It is an event re-traveled and relived, made a part of the cyclical season.

And further, this is also not to suggest that Indigenous time inhibits the cognitive capacities of remembering and reflecting on what had occurred in the past, nor of anticipating and strategizing on what could occur in the future. Traditionalism, as now in consideration with its embedded Indigenous time, is not synonymous with rigidity, conformity, or uniformity, as previously noted. But rather it entails qualities of pliability and flexibility, which are reflective of the deeper, underlying cognitive capacities of creative and integrative thinking. Indigenous time entails the ability to imagine a concept or a phenomenon anew, never previously imagined, of creative thinking. Indigenous time also entails the ability to think divergently, distinguishing between ideas or phenomenon, and then of thinking convergently, reconfiguring the diverse into a new idea or phenomenon, of integrative thinking. These abilities are vividly illustrated in the examples of participatory empathetic adaptability, as with the adoption of the horse, or as with bilateral family adjusting within the seasonal round. And certainly, the wealth of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) is a testament to this skilled dynamic ability. Indigenous time simply reframes the cognitive capacities of thinking about the "what was" and the "what could be" into a cyclical, rather than a linear timeline. It does not preclude them.

It is important to understand that Indigenous time is anchored in the ontological principle of monism, i.e., a participatory integration of interrelationships. This is distinct from the modern Euro-American ontology of Cartesian dualism, i.e., the inexorable separation between mind and body, neither reducible to the other, the cognitive viewing of independent discrete objects, where the temporal can be delineated into chronological chunks, where "history," "present" and "future" can be demarcated, and where the spatial can be delineated into "subjects" and "objects." From an Indigenous perspective, "history

means disrespect for the Ancestors." Not only are the hegemonic events of that history disrespectful, but so too is the imposition of the very conceptualization of the term itself. As history negates participation with the Ancestors, it negates the Ancestors.

Equally important is the understanding that Indigenous time is mediated through an orality-based linguistic structure, which spawns a participatory, non-dualistic unfolding engagement with reality, one of "becoming." The world is viewed, and do I dare say, made and animated by what we speak aloud. This is distinct from a literacy-based language configuration, which conveys reality as "objects" to be viewed, estranged from "subjects." This contrast is nicely exemplified in the differing verb tense forms in each linguistic arrangement. For Indigenous languages, extensive variations of "walking," contrast with English, "walked," "is walking" and "will walk." Orality-based storytelling is not the act of "suspending of disbelief" but rather the ritual act of intensifying what is most real.

Perhaps the closest experience that we all have actually had to this Indigenous "transitory intersection of those participating" is something similar to the following.

I was driving home on the Interstate, having had a great summer of fieldwork on the Crow Reservation. Feeling good, going 70 miles an hour or so down the road! And then it appeared, to my left, this most beautiful vibrant Rainbow I've ever seen, arching high, from base to base. Surely a good sign. And then I noticed the Rainbow was following me south, as we kept pace with each other. As the terrain flattened out, the Rainbow moved farther east, then as a hill came up, the Rainbow moved closer to me. Magical. And then I wondered, was this special gift of mine also seen by those driving north at 70 miles an hour? Did they see my Rainbow, as we moved together going south at 70? Or?
What does it take to experience a Rainbow? Is it something that exists as a natural phenomenon, independently suspended in the sky as a discrete object? Or something else? What is needed to create a Rainbow? We certainly need tiny water molecules suspended in the sky (after all, Rainbows often occur after a rain shower). What else? How about the bright light of the Sun? Not many Rainbows are seen in the dark of night. What else? The Sun has to be at a certain angle with the water molecules. In this instance, the Sun was to the west, while the water molecules were to the east. What else is needed to have the experience of a Rainbow? Hmm? How about your ability to physically perceive the water molecules and Sun's light? Anything else missing? Actually, the Rainbow only comes into being and has a temporal duration when there is a particular **aligned relationship** of all the players participating – water molecules with the Sun's light with you.

A Rainbow's duration, indeed, its very existence, as with Indigenous time and reality, are ultimately "the transitory intersection of those participating" – an experiential event of unfolding relationships in alignment, existing momentarily, moment-to-moment, to be re-aligned into a new configuration! A moment within the seasonal cycle, with its varying confluent relationships, is exemplified in the marking of *'elwéht* "spring," as the time of the coming together of the relational changes among and between the flowering of the camas People, the right amount of water in the fertile earth, the air warmed and lit with the Sun, the sharpened *tuukes* held in hand by human Peoples with good intentions, all framed within the spiritual domain of the Creator's blessings. The Indigenous temporal experience is thus a series of participatory relational moments, one after the other, all imbued within the changing cycles within the Precious Land. *Nimíipuu* time is so much a part of *Héetewit Wéetes* that it is indistinguishable from it – the melding of time and space.

For Additional Readings on kinship and the family, see Ackerman *Handbook of North American Indians* 1998:515-524 and Walker *Handbook of North American Indians* 1998: 420-438. For the larger Indigenous ontological and epistemological context, i.e., the "traditional lifeways of the People," and such topics as monism and dualism, and Indigenous time and space, see Frey *Carry Forth the Stories* 2024:156-98. For additional reading on empathetic adaptability and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), see Frey *Carry Forth the Stories* 2024:215-223.

Relationships
(from the Memorandum of Understanding 2025)
"At its heart, this MOU is about Relationships."

Final Thoughts on Family. As we complete this phase of our journey into the *Nimíipuu* family and *Niimíipuu'neewit*, it is critical to reiterate and acknowledge that as ***Nimíipuu* identity is interwoven** with **family**, that by extension, *Nimíipuu* identity is also inseparably intertwined from the ***Héetewit Wéetés* "Precious Land"** and all its Peoples. To be removed from the "Precious Land" is to be estranged from one's *Nimíipuu* identity. The traumatic effects of the Treaty of 1863 and the Dawes Act of 1887 not only contributed to the loss to economic and sovereign viability for the *Nimíipuu* but also threatened the very core of *Nimíipuu* family and identity. Nevertheless, it is also critical to acknowledge and appreciate that despite the threats, the resilience of the bilateral kinship-based family structure, the family's key values and its ethic of sharing, the leadership styles, the traditionalism of participatory empathetic adaptability, and the Precious Land with its animal-fish-plant-spirit-human relationships and exchange partnerships, as essential as they were in the 18th century, have continued and are just as applicable and vital today, in the 21st century. The extended, inclusive ***Nimíipuu* family** remains the resilient bedrock from which the **challenges** of continuing **historic trauma** and of **contemporary life** are **met**. Family remains the foundation for *Nimíipuu* identity, adaptability, sovereignty and aspiration today.

Discussion Questions.

1. In the context of this chapter, reflect on the implications of the **MOU statements** on pp. 38, 41, 46-47, and 63.
2. What was the most important thing you learned about the *Nimíipuu* family and their relationships?
3. Given your upbringing and current family relations, what would be most challenging and most rewarding in living within the relationships of a *Nimíipuu* family?
4. Given the transhumance seasonal cycle, how might your own nuclear family adopt to this aboriginal life-style?
5. **KEY:** A prerequisite and essential skill for successful life within the *Nimíipuu* family is one's ability in participatory empathic adaptability. Can that skill also be applied for a successful life within your own family? If so, how might it be applicable?
6. **KEY:** Have you gained a better appreciation of "Indigenous Time" and its role within *Nimíipuu'neewit*? What remains unclear?
7. What aspects of *Nimíipuu* family life remind you of relationships in your own family?
8. Let's revisit one of our first questions. If "values" can be defined as fundamental cognitive patterns helping guide decision making and behavior, and "ontology" is the underlying

philosophical principles that categorizes the nature of reality, based upon all that you have read and listened to, reflect once again on what may be the values and ontological principles evident in the *Nimíipuu'neewit*.

9. **KEY:** If we are to engage others, should we not be guided by how they engage others? If there is a positive correlation between ***how*** you seek to do something and ***what*** you seek to do (the ***how*** helps achieve the ***what***), are you able to embrace elements of the structure and dynamics of the *Niimíipuu* family and become a "fictive relative" (the ***how***), as you move toward the goal of the MOU – to work "with its resilient Peoples to show respect and contribute to the healing and nurturing of this *Héetewit Wéetés* 'Precious Land' and all its Peoples" (the ***what***)? If need be, are you willing to modify aspects of your own behavior, to better communicate and collaborate, to be a "fictive relative"?
10. What questions, not addressed here, do you have?

Dipnet Fishing from a Scaffold on the Big River.
Photo Courtesy NEPE-HI-0701

With Our *Tuukes* in Hand, Let's Dig Deep and Discover What Lies Close Beneath: What's Missing?

I was educated and spent my professional life as an ethnographer, trained to critically and deeply observe, garnering all my empathy to do so, and then to clearly articulate and provide description, from the perspective of those studied, so as to better appreciate the human cultural experience, especially that which is distinctive and different from my own experience. I've been humbled and honored to have Indigenous peoples, especially the *Apsáalooke*, *Nimíipuu* and *Schitsu'umsh*, welcome me into their homes and families, and working collaboratively with them, tell their special and unique stories. We had some success doing so. You've glimpsed a little of my ethnographic effort in the *Nimíipuu* Lifelong Learning Online web module, in the short article I wrote with Josiah Blackeagle Pinkham, and in the collection of lecture notes, developed while doing collaborative projects with the Tribe over a span of some 20 years. You've glimpsed, and I hope can now better appreciate and respect, the unique historical experiences and distinct cultural expressions of the *Nimíipuu*, so different from the Euro-American experience. From Coyote and the Swallowing Monster and the creation of human Peoples to the Treaties of 1855 and 1863. From a deer or salmon understood as a brother to devastating death from diseases. From bilateral extended families with bifurcate collateral kinship terminology to a trail of tears in the Conflict of 1877. From a transhumance seasonal round to the Dawes Act and allotment. Then there was the imposition of the Bible over an Eagle Feather. Such differences most of us can only begin to imagine. But differences, now more clearly illuminated, that can allow you to begin to appreciate and respect the *Nimíipuu*.

Discussion Question:

1. But I wonder if our *Nimíipuu* ethnography remains incomplete? If something critical is missing? And I'm now going to ask your help in this discovery endeavor. While acknowledging the differences, what might we come to observe and appreciate as similarities? What might you, as a non-Native or of Euro-American descent, share in common with the *Nimíipuu*? What is it that unites and aligns the kinship of our shared humanity?

   Based upon what you've just read, seen and heard in the voices of the *Nimíipuu*, and based upon your own life experiences, reflect high and low, deep and wide, on the surface of cultural behavior, to the underlying ontological principles. **What do we share in common?** I have some ideas (that I'll share later; see page 85), but now it is your turn to

speak up and help guide the way. Let's take some time, reflect in that quiet place, write down your thoughts and ideas, and come back and share what we share in common.

Perhaps the best way to engage and solidify our MOU kinship with our *Nimíipuu* neighbors is by appreciating, honoring and respecting our differences, while also acknowledging our shared humanity. Does not the "shared in common" reflect a more synchronized heartbeat, rendering kinship all the more possible? Perhaps it is easier to appreciate and engage in what is different, when we can also appreciate and engage in what we share in common? The *Nimíipuu* have certainly shown the way for us. With an acknowledgment of a shared in common, the *Nimíipuu* have differentiated the many distinctions between animal, plant, fish, bird, spirit and human Peoples, while also acknowledging that all share in and abide by the same principles of kinship, share in *Yéeye* and *Téek'e;* all are People. With an acknowledgment of a shared in common, the *Nimíipuu* have shown the way by successfully engaging and navigating in the Euro-American religious, workplace and educational systems, in navigating lineal time, which is predicated on a dualistic philosophy and worldview, while continuing to maintain their *Nimíipuu'neewit,* with its cyclical time, predicated on a participatory, non-dualistic philosophy and worldview. These seemingly mutually exclusive worldviews can nevertheless be mediated by a shared in common.

With tuukes in hand, gathering one of our root relatives. Photo Courtesy NEPE-HI 0452

Your Role: What is to be Shared in Relationship?

Working With

(from the Memorandum of Understanding 2025)

"Acknowledge tribal sovereignty, fictive kinship and an ethic of sharing, such that the Church(s) seeks to build and maintain a collaborative relationship with the Nez Perce Tribe and its Peoples. It is a relationship in which the Church membership, as a guest, actively listens and acts upon the desires and voices articulated by their Indigenous host, in a partnership of equity and ethical practices." "We are working with its resilient Peoples to show respect and contribute to the healing and nurturing of this *Héetewit Wéetés*." "It seeks to provide action behind its words." "Collaborative relationship," "actively listens and acts upon," "working with," and "provide action" help identify ***the who, the how*** and ***the what*** of the MOU.

What Do You Do When Asked, "Do you see that Sweat Lodge?"

You have an opportunity to visit with an esteemed elder at their place. You sincerely want to learn and want to help. Sitting there eagerly, on a hard wooden bench, in the heat of the hot summer's day, under the cooling shade of the Cottonwood, you're all questions, almost non-stop. The elder sits there still, few words spoken, letting you ask, about this and that. And then suddenly a hand is raised, and you stop with the questions, and the elder asks, "Do you see that Sweat Lodge over there? (a domed shaped structure, covered with old tarps and blankets, no more than four feet high, a small door opening to the east). It's like my culture, it's about what you're really asking me. If we remain on this bench, you really won't know what's inside. You've got to get up, move from the cool and comfort of this shade into the heat and dark of the Lodge. You gotta go inside. I might even come along. But there will be someone in there who will pour the water and lead the prayers. Once inside, always listen, be attentive before you act. What do you see in the dark? What is lit by the penetrating heat of the rocks? What do you feel in the intense heat, from the steam coming off the rocks, from the sweat pouring out of your body? Can you see from the inside, looking out? When all the others in there have finished their prayers, for the health of this person, for the wellbeing of that person, and it's your turn to pray, what are you going to say? What are you going to do with the experiences gained from inside the Lodge?" And the elder turns to you and says, "Have I not answered your many questions?" (Reformatted from lecture notes 1998-2017).

Communications and Collaboration: A Consultant List Option (This MOU is not contingent also on the implementation of a "Consultant List option." The following is from the MOU).

"There are multiple ways to express respect, healing and nurturing, that can be developed between the Tribe and Church communities. The Church communities, as guests, will listen to the suggestions, needs and requests emanating from their hosts, and, if able, respond accordingly and collaboratively with the Nez Perce Tribe. Effective on-going communications shall be maintained. The means for such communications will be developed in collaboration between the partners of this MOU (TBD).

One way to express a respectful, healing and nurturing commitment will be proposed to the Nez Perce Tribe in the form of services offered associated with individuals on a "consultant list." A model for this type of relationship was informed by numerous applied, ethically based, collaborative research projects initiated and developed separately by an Indigenous host, the *Apsáalooke* (Crow), the *Schitsu'umsh* (Coeur d'Alene), the *Spoqín* (Spokane), and the *Nlimíipuu* (Nez Perce), with ethnographer Rodney Frey, over the last fifty years.

Each church community is made up of a large number of currently employed and retired specialists and experts willing to offer their services to the Tribe on a volunteer basis. Services could range from consultation in health care, education, environmental systems, legal affairs, fisheries, forestry, human resources, grant writing, etc. The assemblage of consultants would be identified on a shared consultant list (name, specialization, along with credential and/or degree, level of time/schedule availability, contact information, etc.).

Membership on the consultant list will be selected through an application process, based upon technical skill and behavioral qualifications (e.g., cultural sensitivity and ability to work collaboratively), and overseen by a selection committee made up of an official from the Church from which the applicant attends, an official of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse and an official representative from the Nez Perce Cultural Resource Program.

When a Tribal initiative of any kind, scope or duration is proposed, or is on-going, the personnel with appropriate skills on the consultant list can be contacted by the Tribe for assistance. Only the Tribe can initiate a request for assistance from the list. A consultant member cannot initiate his or her services to the Tribe or propose an initiative to the Tribe. A Tribal request for services will be coordinated through the UUCP MOU representative, to help assure effective communication and services.

The benefit to the *Niimíipuu* of a Tribal initiative, as stated in the Tribal initiative, will be **defined and determined by the Tribe**, and not by a consultant or some other external source. The consultant list does not imply or assume the Nez Perce Tribe is in any way

deficient in its own expertise and skilled specialists. The consultant list is conceptualized as an added supplement, complementing any given Nez Perce program and its initiatives, a way to be a good neighbor, in an ethic of sharing relationships.

A contacted consultant specialist, upon review of a proposed Nez Perce initiative, is not under obligation to provide said services and can decline assistance. If the consultant specialist accepts the request, he or she offers services on a volunteer basis, i.e., is not to receive monetary or other compensation. If the consultant is employed by a university, that person may have to complete an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application with the university. The scope of services provided by the consultant specialist is limited to the expertise of the consultant, and under no circumstances is the consultant to offer religious opinions or to proselytize.

Any culturally sensitive material associated with a Tribal project involving a consultant, upon completion of the project and prior to public release of findings, shall first be reviewed by the appropriate Tribal cultural resources program, for appropriateness and authenticity, adhering to Tribal sovereignty and cultural property rights.

The Tribe holds the right to end a volunteer's services at any time and without explanation. The UUCP in consultation with the Nez Perce Cultural Resources Program and a representative from the affiliated Church partners will be responsible for maintaining an updated consultant list for all participating Churches and the Tribe."

Lessons From the Sweat Lodges. I pause and reflect on what was said regarding the Sweat Lodge by an elder as we sat on the hard wooden bench under the shade of the Cottonwood. As we sat there, what was meant when the elder began with declaring, "You gotta go inside," followed by other assertions? And I again pause and reflect on the Healing Sweat with Josiah, Leroy and two others. As we sat in the heat and steam of the darkened Lodge, what was meant by the words, "we would be there with you" and we'll shoulder some of your challenges? Each of us may have differing reflections on their meanings but let me offer what came to me as I reflected on the lessons of both Sweat Lodges.

1. To engage with another, to enter their culture, you first need an invitation, **permission** given by your host. This is ultimately a question of respecting Tribal sovereignty and cultural property rights. An invite to a Healing Sweat was first made. The L3 project could have been rejected but was welcomed. When he raised his hand, the elder could have stopped the questioning but instead said, "Do you see that Sweat Lodge?" Respecting cultural property rights also entails **Tribal review and approval** of any documents generated because of your engagement, containing "cultural knowledge," before they go public, as was the case in the public releases of the L3 web module in 2002 and the MOU in 2025.

2. To learn is to **participate**, rather than simply to view from afar. Go to the powwows and other public events, have lunch in Lapwai or the Casino, sharing a conversation and a meal, walk the streets of their neighborhoods, with an openness in your step. It's the quality of the engaged experiences, not the quantity of time spent. And that quality must reflect your behavior coming from the heart, be true to it. Don't compromise your principles. To try to be other than who you are is to attempt a disguise, a deception, which is always obvious.

3. While on unfamiliar lands, you need to **listen,** be attentive before you act. There is so much to learn – the proper etiquette, the cultural terrain. Know where to plant each of your steps as you travel the unaccustomed lands. It's too easy to stumble and fall. And it is okay to stumble, now and then, as your host can be forgiving of a *soyappo*, a "white person." To stumble is to learn.

4. While on unfamiliar lands, you need a guide to help lead the way, you need the helping hand of an "elder brother or sister." It's difficult if not impossible to go it alone. Listen as you **collaborate**, let your host "pour the water." Follow their lead. Be in **relationship.**

5. To learn is to "**feel**" from the heart, as well as think from the mind. Indigenous ways of knowing and learning are holistic and interconnected. The logical and empirical are not the only ways of learning and knowing. As Leroy swooned and became listless, the song sung near that fire pit was felt deep inside.

6. To learn of someone else and guided by your host, is to try to see it from **their perspective**, having empathy for them, "seeing from the inside looking out." Your own view alone will only distort.

7. "And what are you going to do?" If you've been invited into their Sweat Lodge, their most cherished of places, a sacred, spiritual space, a place of healing and nurturing, where relationships of honesty and love abound, spoken from the heart, what might be your response? **What are you going to do**? How might you bring action to your words? What gift might you give freely? But in so doing, have you also **listened** deeply? Have you asked? What is it that your **host desires**, what gift benefits them, as they define "benefit," from their **perspective**? History has shown, with its tragic consequences, that there has already been too much "doing" and "giving" in the name of "it's good for the Indian." Only you can answer this most elemental of questions, as you reflect within your own heart, yet attentive to the hearts of others. In whatever way and to what degree you engage, it's not necessarily going to be easy, with so many considerations to juggle, so much time in commitment. But the effort can be so gratifying, for so many.

Perhaps the lessons of Sweat Lodges can provide a road map for an ethically and culturally sensitive engagement, a methodology for partnering with the *Nimíipuu*.

Discussion Questions:

1. In the context of this chapter, reflect on the implications of the **MOU statement** on p. 67.
2. What lessons were learned at the Sweat Lodge?
3. What are your thoughts on the proposed "Consultant List" option?
4. To become an ally, a "fictive relative," how do you reconcile and mediate the possibility that there might be aspects of your own behavior that need changing, yet there is the need to always remain true to your heart and not compromise your core values?
   Perhaps reconciliation of this seemingly contradictory pull is to be found in the example of the *Nimíipuu*. Consider "participatory empathetic adaptability"? Consider "engaging in difference while sharing in common"? How might these be applicable in addressing possible tension between how you behave with others and what you believe in your heart?
5. **KEY:** What are the takeaways gained from learning about the *Nimíipuu* and their *Nimíipuu'neewit f*or you personally, regardless of any future involvement with the *Nimíipuu*?
6. What questions, not provided here, do you have that need addressing?

Revitalized Stories Yet to be Written: Final Discussion Questions. As we began our journey into the *Nimíipuu'neewit* with story, with Mari Watters retelling the story of Coyote, the Animal People, and the Swallowing Monster, a story embedded with the foundational relationships that would spawn the most essential of exchanges and sharing among all the Peoples, let us leave by continuing to retell stories. As the objectives of the "*Nimíipuu* Notes" curriculum go far beyond a descriptive ethnography, beyond retelling an existing story, though it seeks to do that as well, the NPETC-UUCP Memorandum of Understanding and "*Nimíipuu* Notes" provide an opportunity for us, inviting us to tell newly resuscitated stories, perhaps stories yet not written.

As we also began and have continued our journey into the meaning and implications of our Memorandum of Understanding with the *Nimíipuu* (see page *ii* for a definition of a MOU), and with the help of the "*Nimíipuu* Notes" curriculum, have traveled the mountains and valleys of *Héetewit Wéetés* 'Precious Land' and all its Peoples" and gained a better appreciation and understanding of *Nimíipuu'neewit* "traditional lifeways of the People," let us now reflect and consider the discussion questions below, on what the MOU uniquely means to each of us.

Discussion Questions:

Built upon emerging ethically and culturally sensitive personal relationships of collaboration and exchange between the members of the Nez Perce Tribe and the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse:

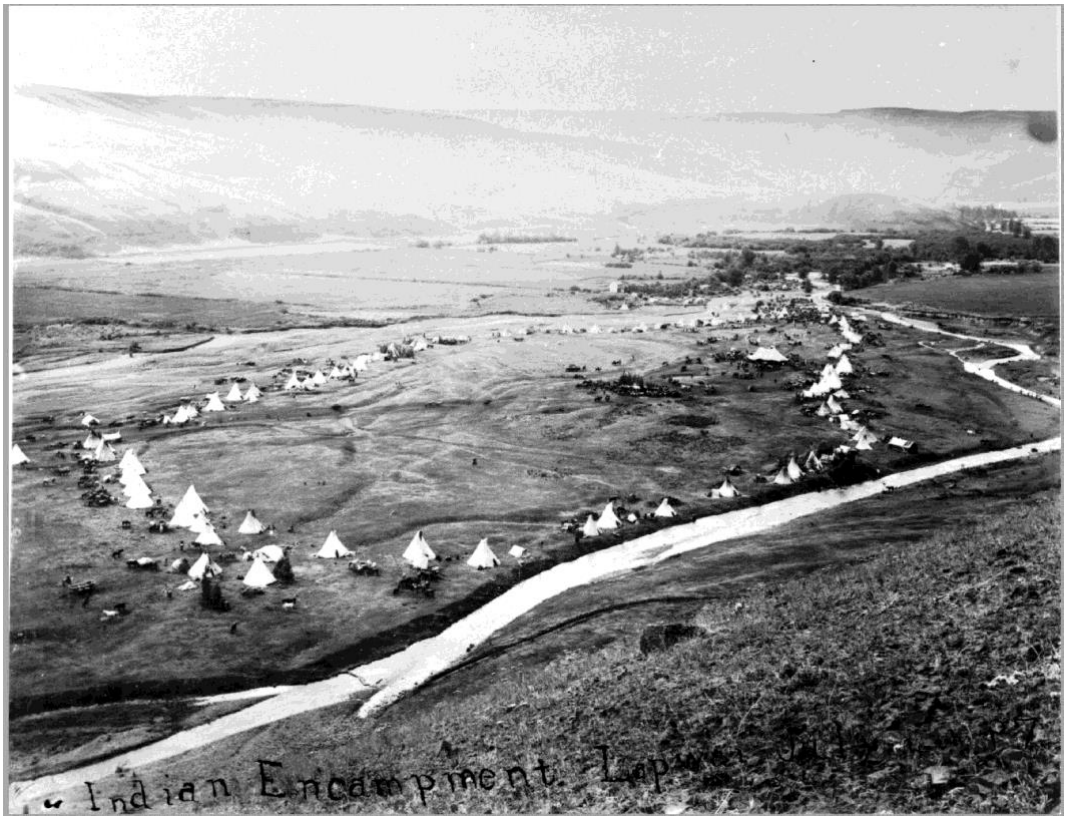
1. What values and/or vision do you feel you share with the *Nimíipuu*?
2. In partnership with the *Nimíipuu*, how are you defining your role with them?
3. In partnership with the *Nimíipuu*, how are you defining your responsibilities to them?
4. In partnership with the *Nimíipuu*, how are you defining your expectations toward them?
5. What are you going to share in relationship? What newly revitalized stories or even one's not yet written might you bring forth?

    Re-phrased. What are among the ways you can appropriately and ethically become an "ally," or as stated in the MOU, a "fictive relative" of the *Nimiipuu,* and work "with its resilient Peoples to show respect and contribute to the healing and nurturing of this *Héetewit Wéetés* 'Precious Land' and all its Peoples"?

* * * * *

"If all these great stories were told, great stories will come!"

Tom Yellowtail (1993)



Nimíipuu Encampment Along Lapwai Creek. Photo Courtesy NEPE-HI 0218

Appendices

The Path to a Memorandum of Understanding Between the Nez Perce Tribe and the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse.

Process

(from the Memorandum of Understanding 2025)

"This Memorandum of Understanding draft was initiated in December 2024 by Rodney Frey. It was reviewed, modified, and approved by the UUCP Board of Directors on 27 February 2025, and signed by the Minister and vice-chairperson of the Board on 28 May 2025. Collaborative talks on the MOU with the Nez Perce Cultural Resources Program (Nakia Williamson, Director, and Jonathan Moon, ethnographer) began on 18 March 2025, reviewing, modifying and eventually approving the draft. The modified MOU draft was subsequently reviewed by various tribal offices and programs, including the Natural Resources Sub-Committee on 20 June 2025, and was approved. On 24 June 2025, the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC) reviewed and approved the MOU. As a covenant, continued adjustment to the MOU text language and thus relationship between signees can occur, initiated by Tribe and/or Church partners. Upon the MOU approval by NPTEC, partnership talks with other Moscow-area churches becoming part of the MOU relationship, have begun."

The path toward a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) began with Reverend Dr. Elizabeth Stevens' desire to improve the UUCP's relations with the Indigenous peoples of this land. It was a desire I observed in her actions, particularly on past Indigenous People's Day Sunday Services, and a desire she spoke to me about.

With my knowledge of the regional Indigenous communities, knowing of their contact histories with Euro-American society and their aboriginal homelands, I was uncomfortable with the wording of the "Territorial Acknowledgement" read aloud at the start of each UUCP Sunday service. Of need for clarification were the statements: "ancestral homelands" upon which "our church was built," "ground that was stolen," and the use of "Territorial." And I felt that we needed to put more specific action behind the words spoken. The previous "Territorial Acknowledgement" read:

> "We preface our service by acknowledging our church was built on the ancestral homelands of the Niiimíipuu (called "Nez Perce" by the French-speaking traders), the Palouse, and the Schitsu'umsh (called the Coeur d'Alene). Let us pause and remember that we live on ground that is sacred, ground that was stolen, ground that cries out for justice and for responsible stewardship. May our remembering help us find the courage to do our part to restore wholeness to the earth and all her peoples."

Regarding "**homelands**," for the *Schitsu'umsh* (Coeur d'Alene), their homeland orbit surrounded and emanated out from Lake Coeur d'Alene (their origin point conferred in the Chief Child of the Yellowroot oral tradition) and extended out from the lake along its river tributaries. Their southern extent was marked by the Palouse River, a homeland encompassing parts of central/panhandle Idaho and adjacent Washington (north of *Nimíipuu* Lands and northeast of *Palúus* Lands). As the *Nimíipuu* and *Schitsu'umsh* were typically in adversarial relations (having differing linguistic families, Sahaptin and Salish), to claim overlapping "homelands" would only have reflected continual confusion, tension, and possible conflict.

The aboriginal homeland orbit of the *Palúus* (Palouse) bands centered and extended out from the confluence of the Palouse and Snake rivers, and upriver along those rivers, and downriver along the Snake River to the confluence with the Columbia River, a homeland encompassing parts of southeastern Washington. The *Nimíipuu* and *Palúus* shared linguistic and cultural affiliation with each other, both speaking variants of the Sahaptin language family (with subtle but recognizable dialectical differences in the way spoken). The majority of extended families identified as making up the band located on the upper Palouse River (inclusive of the Pullman and Moscow areas), we're inaccurately identified by the federal government as associated with the main tribal *Palúus*. This band was in fact made-up of extended families of mixed *Palúus* and *Nimíipuu*, with a majority identifying as speaking *Nimíipuu*, self-identifying as *Niimíipuu*, related through kinship to the main body of *Nimíipuu*, and whose villages were named in the *Nimíipuu* language. Upon the Nez Perce Treaty of 1863 (which significantly reduced the size of the reservation established in the Treaty of 1855), extended families of this upper Palouse River band moved primarily to the Nez Perce reservation, with other extended families moving to the Yakima or Umatilla reservations, depending on kinship and marriage considerations. Nakia Williamson, Director of the Nez Perce Cultural Resource Program, greatly helped me in this homeland clarification.

The homeland orbit and territorial hinterland configuration of the *Nimíipuu*, *Palúus* and *Schitsu'umsh* were reiterated and acknowledged in subsequent treaties and executive orders, and importantly conferred in the Indian Claims Commission (which adjudicated and reaffirmed the territorial aboriginal boundaries relating to claims by Tribes against the US government and which provided monetary compensation), for the Yakima/Palouse – ICC 1963, Coeur d'Alene – ICC 1955, and Nez Perce – ICC 1955, 1967. All sources indicate that the area of Moscow and Pullman was within the northern aboriginal *Nimíipuu* homeland boundary.

Regarding "**stolen lands**," the Moscow-Pullman area was located within the northern boundaries of the Nez Perce Treaty of 1855. That treaty was voluntarily entered into and agreed to by the headmen of more than fifty *Nimiipuu* bands, relating to an area

encompassing the heart of the aboriginal lands. The treaty helped secure a boundary to keep Euro-American settlers out of their lands, assured the right to continue to hunt, fish and gather in their "usual and accustomed areas" off the reservation (such as fish at Celilo Falls on the Columbia River), and provided important contracted services and supplies – mills, hospital, schools and financial stipends for the headmen. The Nez Perce Treaty of 1863, initiated by the US government (given gold discovery within *Nimíipuu* territory and settlers moving into the Lewiston area), was signed by *Hallalhotcuut,* also known as Lawyer, and other Christian *Nimíipuu* leaders. The Moscow – Pullman area was thus rendered ceded lands. The Land around the Moscow area was not technically "stolen" from the *Nimíipuu*. As signers of the treaty, the *Niimíipuu* are acknowledged as legal tribal sovereigns (securing treaty rights that are essential in today's Indian law). The *Niimíipuu* were compensated for the ceded lands with monetary awards, agricultural implements and livestock, a saw and a flour mill, a boarding school for children, building of two churches, etc. Of course, not all *Nimíipuu* signed the Treaty of 1863, especially the non-Christian leaders such as Chief Joseph, which led to the Nez Perce Conflict of 1877 and to the subsequent placement of Chief Joseph's band on the Colville Reservation. While *Nimíipuu* Lands were technically not stolen, it can be easily argued that the Tribe was not fairly compensated for the value of their aboriginal Lands. Nevertheless, the treaty language of both the 1855 and 1863 Treaties is critically important today for the Nez Perce, as they are the key basis of Federally-recognized Indian treaty rights and law. The Land upon which the UUCP Church was built cannot be said to have been "stolen."

Regarding use of "**territory**," the word of "homeland" best corresponds with the *Nimíipuu* term and conceptualization, *Héetewit Wéetés* "precious land." Hence the more appropriate title, "Land Acknowledgement." To propose an acknowledgement relating only to "territory" is to deny the intimate interconnected relationship of the Land and its multiple sentient Beings. It is to perpetuate a Euro-American conceptualization of "territory" as devoid of its Indigenous "kinship," and more closely associated with a monetary commodity, as property. Hence, to address the resulting harm done only to the "territory" neglects to address the harm -indeed, the trauma - done to the multiple sentient Beings (fish, animals, roots, berries and humans) that are an intimate cultural and spiritual part of that Land.

Regarding putting **action behind the words** spoken, the jury is still out, as it is an unfolding and developing story. The optional "consultant list" could help address this concern.

Thus, a proposed new Land Acknowledgment, accompanied with an MOU, framed in *Nimíipuu* words and concepts, its intention to assist the Tribe, was drafted. We then asked, "what next?" Would the proposed MOU and new Land Acknowledgement be invited in or barred from entering?

The **permission process began** with talks with Nakia Williamson, Director, and Jonathan Moon, ethnographer, with the Nez Perce Cultural Resources Program, on 18 March 2025. I knew these two individuals well, and trusted them, having worked with them for over twenty-five years, although in very different capacities, Nakia as my advisor and Jonathan as my student. I presented the draft to them and together, they reviewed and modified it, and they agreed to move the draft forward. The modified MOU draft was subsequently reviewed by various tribal offices and programs, including the Natural Resources Sub-Committee on 20 June 2025, and was approved. Then on 24 June 2025, the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC) reviewed and **approved** the MOU. The UUCP was given permission by the Tribe and invited into the Sweat Lodge of the *Niimíipuu*.

And with that permission, the new Land Acknowledgment is now being used at the start of each UUCP Sunday service. And the work to put action behind the words has begun.

To help formally introduce the MOU to the congregation and celebrate its signing, on October 12th, the **UUCP Sunday service** was so dedicated. It included Honor, Healing and Round Dance songs provided by *Nimíipuu* Pete Wilson's Drum, storytelling by *Nimíipuu* Leroy Seth, and a NPTEC talk by Sam Penney. Reverend Elizabeth Stevens presented Sam Penney with a Pendelton blanket entitled "Unity," centered with a horse. The service was capped off with a Round Dance involving all the congregation and sharing of food in a potluck lunch for all attending.

To help better acquaint the UUCP congregation with the MOU and its responsibilities, an eight-week **class** was held from October through the middle of December 2025. It included guest *Nimíipuu* speakers, a day-long field trip to the reservation to see various sites important to the Tribe, and a curriculum that focused on delving deep into the meaning and responsibilities associated with the MOU. That class included appreciating the core *Nimíipuu'neewit* based in inherent sovereignty and the oral traditions, the trauma created by Euro-American assimilation and hegemony pressures, the structure and dynamic of the family relations (as a means for how UUCP members could engage *Nimíipuu*), what we share in common, and exploring ways UUCP members could ethically, culturally, and appropriately collaborate with the Nez Perce "to show respect and contribute to the healing and nurturing of this *Héetewit Wéetés* 'Precious Land' and all its Peoples." The curriculum of the class is being developed into a sustaining, self-directed, small-group class, to be offered annually, similar to an UU Wellspring class. The UUCP has also acquired all the key written texts and books on *Nimíipuu* culture and history, referred to in the in the class, and placed them in the UUCP library for use by the congregation.

NP 25-396

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee has been empowered to act for and in behalf of the Nez Perce Tribe, pursuant to the Revised Constitution and By-Laws, adopted by the General Council of the Nez Perce Tribe, on May 6, 1961 and approved by the Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs on June 27, 1961; and

WHEREAS, the Nez Perce Tribe (Tribe) maintains a Cultural Resources Program (CRP) that addresses cultural resource concerns of the Tribe; and

WHEREAS, the Tribe's CRP received a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse (UUCP); and

WHEREAS, the UUCP wants to begin each Sunday service with the statement, "The Land on which our Church is built is part of the ancestral homeland of the Niimiipuu "the People," and called the Nez Perce "pierced noses" by French-speaking trappers and traders. We acknowledge the Land is held in sacred kinship, since time immemorial."; and

WHEREAS, the UUCP seeks to re-define the relationship between a Church community and the ancestral Peoples of this Land; and

WHEREAS, the UUCP and the Tribe, are signatories to the MOU.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC) does hereby approve MOU with UUCP; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the NPTEC Chairman and Secretary are hereby authorized to sign all necessary correspondence and the NPTEC Treasurer is hereby authorized to disburse funds accordingly.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee meeting in Special Session, June 24, 2025, at Am'sáaxpa, Joseph, Oregon, a quorum of its Members being present and voting.

BY: Rachel P Edwards
Rachel P. Edwards, Secretary

ATTEST:

Shannon F. Wheeler, Chairman

Stick Game (a simplified version).

One game played at social events and powwows is the Stick Game (Plateau and Canadian), also known as the Handgame (Plains). It's been called a relatively "simple game of intuition," but it is much more and can easily rise in intensity to a "fever pitch!" Major components of the stick game are the use of hand drums or poles (beating upon them, which establishes a rhythm of any songs sung), the rattles to distract opposing team members, the counting sticks, and the marked and unmarked bones (which today often are plastic playing pieces). Played for money and prizes or just for fun, stick games are rich in non-verbal communication and lean in the spoken word. In early times, only men could play, with women assisting with the singing and cheering. Today, women play as the "hiders" or as the "guessers," but the drum still is played only by the men.

To start, two teams (usually of five or more participants each) assemble, seated in a row facing each other. To start, each team leader receives one set of bones and then attempts to correctly guess the "female" (unmarked) bone in the other's hands, with each team getting an equal chance to do so. The winner receives what is called the "kick stick," which is hidden from the rest of sticks, and then offers the other side the choice of which set of five "live" sticks to keep on their side. Thus, each team has two live sets of sticks, with the kick stick hidden.

The objective of the game is to successfully hide your "bones" from the "guesses" of the other team, causing the other team to lose a "stick" with each wrong guess, eventually resulting in your team winning all the sticks and the game. You win when you can trick and hide your bones from your opponent.

As the game begins, the two "hiders" from one team conceal two sets of bones, one in each hand – one is marked and is the "male" bone, the other isn't marked and is the "female" bone. The guesser from the other team will attempt to identify the female bones (unmarked) in the two hiders' hands.

The hand gestures used by the guesser are:

1. If both sets or just one set of the unmarked bones are thought to be in the left hands (i.e., both marked bones in the right hands of the hiders), the guesser will point with his/her index finger to the left.

2. If both sets or just one set of the unmarked bones are thought to be in the right hands, the guesser will point to the right with the index finger.

3. If both sets of the unmarked bones are thought to be in the "inside" hands of the hiders (both marked bones are in the opposite, outside two hands of the hiders), the guesser will hold his/her fingers together, palm flat and vertical, slicing downward.

4. If both sets of the unmarked bones are thought to be in the "outside" hands of the two hiders (both marked bones are in the opposite, innermost hands of the hiders), the guesser will hold his/her palm flat but horizontal, with the index finger and thumb extended in opposite directions.

If a guesser from the opposing team can identify which hand(s) conceal the "female" bone(s), the team wins those bone(s). When both sets are in play and only one set is correctly guessed, only those bones identified correctly are won. When both sets are eventually won, that team becomes the hiders and the other team becomes the guessers.

For each wrong guess the guessing team forfeits a stick to the other team. As a team loses sticks, the team first gives up their own live sticks and then any live sticks from other side they had won, which can be combined, until finally the last stick, the kick stick, is brought out and waved in front of the team and played for. The first team who wins all 11 sticks wins the game. Etiquette requires that the winning team shakes hands with the losing team.

While contemplating his/her guess, the team hiding the bone(s) sings their stick game songs and attempts to distract the guesser with hand and facial gestures, along with cheers of annoyance. The hiders move their arms and hands to the beat of the song and conceal the bones not only in their closed hands, but behind their backs, under a cloth, or even under their "shirt," until the guess is about to be made. Then they hold out their closed hands, still concealing the bones, until the guess is formally made.

While the rules are few and relatively simple, the complicated head movements, fast hand signals, and "curious whelps" can be confusing to the "uninitiated." However, the songs and excitement of the game can be "infectious." It's the simplicity of the game that is said to allow both old and young, Indian and non-Indian to play together. Some stick game players look forward to the tournaments to help bring a laugh and a joy to life and perhaps heal a grief over a year's loss. And there can be some serious cash circulated about the community.

For a fun *Niimíipuu* "game of chance," see **Dice Game**, at L3: https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/culture/ceexstem.html

Further Reading and Listening.

Ackerman, Lillian. 1998. “Kinship, Family and Gender Roles,” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, *vol. 12, Plateau*, edited by Deward Walker. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, pages 515-524.

Aoki, Hanuo. 1979. *Nez Perce Texts* (oral tradition). Berkeley: University of California Publications in Linguistics.

Aoki, Hanuo, and Deward Walker. 1989. *Nez Perce Oral Narratives*. Berkeley: University of California Publications in Linguistics.

Axtell, Horace and Margo Aragon. 1997. *A Little Bit of Wisdom: Conversations with a Nez Perce Elder*. Lewiston, Idaho: Confluence Press.

Baird, Dennis, Diane Mallickan and W. R. Swagerty. 2002. *The Nez Perce Nation Divided: Firsthand Accounts of Events Leading to the 1863 Treaty*. Caxton Press.

Baird, Dennis, Diane Mallickan and W. R. Swagerty. 2015. *Encounters with the People: Written and Oral Accounts of the Nez Perce Life to 1858*. Pullman: Washington State University Press.

Berkhofer, Robert. 1974. *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*. New York: Knopf.

Frey, Rodney. 1995. *Stories That Make the World: Oral Literature of the Indian Peoples of the Inland Northwest*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press.

Frey, Rodney. 2024. *Carry Forth the Stories: A Journey into Indigenous Oral Traditions with Implications for Our Humanity* (Expanded Edition). Pullman, Washington: Washington State University Press.

Frey, Rodney, and Dell Hymes. 1998. “Mythology,” in the *Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 12, Plateau*, edited by Deward Walker. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, pages 584-599.

Frey, Rodney, with Tom Yellowtail and Cliff SiJohn. 2008. “If All These Great Stories Were Told, Great Stories Will Come,” in *Religion and Healing in Native America*, edited by Suzanne Crowford O’Brien. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Press, pages 185-205.

Josephy, Alvin. 1965. *The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest*. New Haven CT, Yale University Press

Landeen, Dan and Jeremy Crow. 1997. *I Am of This Land: Wetes pe m'e wes - Wildlife of the Hanford Site*. Lapwai, Idaho: Nez Perce Tribe

Landeen, Dan and Allen Pinkham. 1999. *Salmon and His People: Fish and Fishing in Nez Perce Culture*. Lewiston, Idaho: Confluence Press.

Marshall, Alan. 1977. *Nez Perce Social Groups: An Ecological Interpretation*. Ph.D. Dissertation in Anthropology, Washington State University, Pullman.

McWhorter, L.V. 1940. *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story*. Caldwell, Idaho, Caxton Press.

Nash, Roderick. 1965. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

Nez Perce Language Program, https://www.nimipuutimt.org/ (cited December 19, 2025) Includes verbal pronunciation of alphabet and many traditional stories.

Nez Perce National Historical Park, https://www.nps.gov/nepe/index.htm (cited September 5, 2025)

Nez Perce Tribe (Official Website), https://nezperce.org/ (cited October 15, 2025).

Paul, Roberta Tawlikitsanmay. 2025. *Listening to the Birds: A Nez Perce Woman's Journey of Self-Discovery and Healing*. Pullman, Washington: Washington State University Press.

Pinkham, Allen and Steven Evans. 2013. *Lewis and Clark Among the Nez Perce: Strangers in the Land of the Nimiipuu*. Pullman, Washington: Washington State University Press.

Pinkham, Josiah and Rodney Frey. 2005. "Ritual and the Land," in *Encyclopedia of American Indian Religious Traditions*, Editors, Suzanne Crawford and Dennis Kelly, ABC CLIO, pages 147-151.

Phinney, Archie. 1934. *Nez Perce Texts* (oral traditions). New York: Columbia University Press.

Plateau People's Web Portal, *Nez Perce*. Washington State University. https://plateauportal.libraries.wsu.edu/community/nim%C3%ADpuu-nez-perce (Cited October 15, 2025.)

Slickpoo, Allen and Deward Walker. 1973. *Noo Nee-Me-Poo (We, the Nez Perces): Culture and History of the Nez Perces*. Vol. 1. Lapwai, Idaho: Nez Perce Tribe.

Swiftwater Films Video: Covenant of the Salmon People. 2025. https://www.swiftwaterfilms.com/covenant-of-the-salmon-people (Cited October 15, 2025.)

Walker, Deward. 1985. *Conflict and Schism in Nez Perce Acculturation: A Study of Religion and Politics,* 2nd edition. Moscow, Idaho: University of Idaho Press.

Walker, Deward, vol. editor. 1998. *Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 12, Plateau*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, pages 1-791. (includes a full range of topics relating to the Nez Perce).

Walker, Deward. 1998. "Nez Perce," in *Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 12, Plateau*, edited by Deward Walker. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, pages 420-438.

Walker, Deward and Daniel Matthews. 1998. *Nez Perce Coyote Tales: A Myth Cycle*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press.

Williamson, Nakia. 2002. "People," seventeen short biographies of prominent historical *Niimíipuu*. https://cdil.lib.uidaho.edu/nimiipuu-l3/people/

Williamson, Nakia. 2025. *Song of the Nez Perce*. Idaho Public Television. https://idahoptv.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/song-of-the-nez-perce-video/idaho-experience/ (cited October 28, 2025)

Williamson, Nakia and Rodney Frey. 2005. *Dances*. in *Encyclopedia of American Indian Religious Traditions*, edited by Suzanne Crawford and Dennis Kelly, ABC-CLIO, pages 213-220.

Traveling the Rivers. Photo Courtesy NEPE-HI 1803

Nimipuutímt Pronunciation

á = short a sound like the **a**'s in D**a**kot**a**. Ex: *h**á**h**a**m* - men.

áa = long **a** sounds like the **a** in h**a**ll or p**a**w. Ex: *taamsas* – Wild Rose

é = short **e** sounds like the **e** in **e**cho. Ex: *siw**é*** – forehead.

ée = long **e** sounds like the **a** in w**a**ck. Ex: *w**ée**ptes* – golden eagle.

i = short **i** sounds like the **i** in **i**t. Ex: *t**i**t* – tooth.

íi = long **i** sounds like the **e**'s in b**ee**. Ex: *p**íi**ps* - bones

o = short **o** sounds like the **o** in p**o**tato & Arapah**o**. Ex: *t**ó**hon* – pants.

*ó*o = long **o** sounds like the **o** in **o**h, t**o**ne. Long **o** doesn't glide into a **w**. Ex: *s**oo**yáap**oo*** – Euro American

u = short u sounds like the **u** in p**u**t and look. Ex: *síil**u*** – eye.

úu = long **u** sounds like the bold in p**oo**h or thr**ough**. Ex: *h**úu**sus* – head

aw = sounds close, but not exactly the same as the **ow** in t**ow**el. Ex: *l**áw**tiwaa* – friend.

ay = sounds like the bold in m**i**ne or p**ie**. Ex: *tamtá**a**yn*-news or *l**a**ymíwt*-youngest one.

eey = sounds like the word "Aye". Ex: *mé**e**ywi* – morning.

ew = sounds close, but not exactly the same as the **ow** in t**ow**el. Ex: *t**éw**liikt* – tree.

c = sounds like the **ts** in "hi**ts**". Ex: ***c**íi**c**yele* – purple.

ł = Special **l** sound. Put the tip of the tongue on the roof of mouth & when trying to say the "**l**" sound, air comes out of the sides of the mouth. Ex: ***ł**eep**ł**ep* – Butterfly.

q = The "back **k**" sounds close, but not exactly the same as the **k** in **k**etchup. Ex: *qéhep*-bobcat. There is no English sound equivalent to a **q**.

x = soft "**x**" hunch up your tongue close to the top of your mouth. Start to say the **k** sound & then move your tongue down just a little. Ex: *tát**x*** – fawn.

x = The uvular or "back" **x**. It is formed much like the soft **x**, but farther back in the mouth. Ex: *túu**x*** –

x̣ = The same as the above. The **x̣** is an updated font which will be used in the future. tobacco.

' = the glottal stop, for popping & stopping sounds. Say the word That like Tha', you cut it off, it's a half consonant, like "**Uh** oh!" Ex: *wáaqo'*- now.

Consonants that Pop and Creak:
p'- *'il**p**'íl**p*** red,

t'- *mí**t'**ip* elderberry,

k'- *s**ík'**em* horse,

c'- ***c'**eew'cew* ghost,

q'- *ci**q'**áamqal* dog,

m'- *ti**m'**íne* heart,

n'- *ti**n'**úun* male mountain sheep,

w'- ***w'**áa**w'**a* fish hook,

y' - *tí**y'**et* laughter,

l' - *hamó**l'**ic* cute.

Letters not included in the *Nimipuutímt* spelling system: B, D, F, G, J, R, V, Z R

Developed by Angel Sobotta and Vera Sonneck 2002
https://www.nimipuutimt.org/uploads/1/4/0/6/14060280/nimipuutimt_volume_1.pdf

Access page 86 ONLY after you have provided your own response to the question, "what do we share in common?" in "With Our *Tuukas* in Hand."

Frey's Thoughts on "Shared in Common."

Look around our UUCP sanctuary, what values do you see enshrined in the seven banners hanging from the walls and pulpit? Upon entering our UUCP sanctuary for the first time, perhaps anticipating what they might expect to see in a church, instead, we've heard so many *Nimiipuu* speakers comment, "those words are what we believe!"

Reflect on the key elements of *Nimiipuu* history and culture, of their *Nimíipuu'neewit* "traditional lifeways of the People." Are they not also reflective on the seven UU values? What is it that we **share in common**?

Niimíipuu: Kinship, *Nimíipuu'neewit* "traditional *Niimíipuu* lifeways" and *Yéeye* "family" -

UUCP: Interdependency (1), Pluralism (2), Equity (3), and Love (4)

Niimíipuu: Acknowledge Trauma and Seek Healing and Nurturing -

UUCP: Justice (5), Love (4)

Niimíipuu: Seek Healing -

UUCP: Transformation (6), Love (4)

Niimíipuu: Ethic of Sharing, *Téek'e* -

UUCP: Generosity (7), Love (4)

Niimíipuu: Imbued throughout *Nimíipuu'neewit, Yéeye* and *Téek'e* -

All: empathy (if there were to be an eighth UU value)

As I reflected on the UU values of interdependency and given the UU's participatory, engaged and activist worldview, along with reflecting on UU's historical threads of Emerson's Transcendentalism and Whitehead's Process Philosophy, the UUCP (or at least many of us) also share in common with the *Niimíipuu* and their *Hetes'wits Wetes, Nimíipuu'neewit, Yéeye*, *Téek'e* and participatory empathetic adaptability, a Non-Cartesian Non-Dualistic worldview, or what can generally termed "monism" (definition: ultimately, all existence is reducible to a single underlying reality, all is unified, "all is one"). Isn't intriguing how similar "monism" is to "unitarianism" (definition: all is interdependent and united in a spiritual oneness).