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Author(s): RICHARD D. SCHEUERMAN and MICHAEL O. FINLEY

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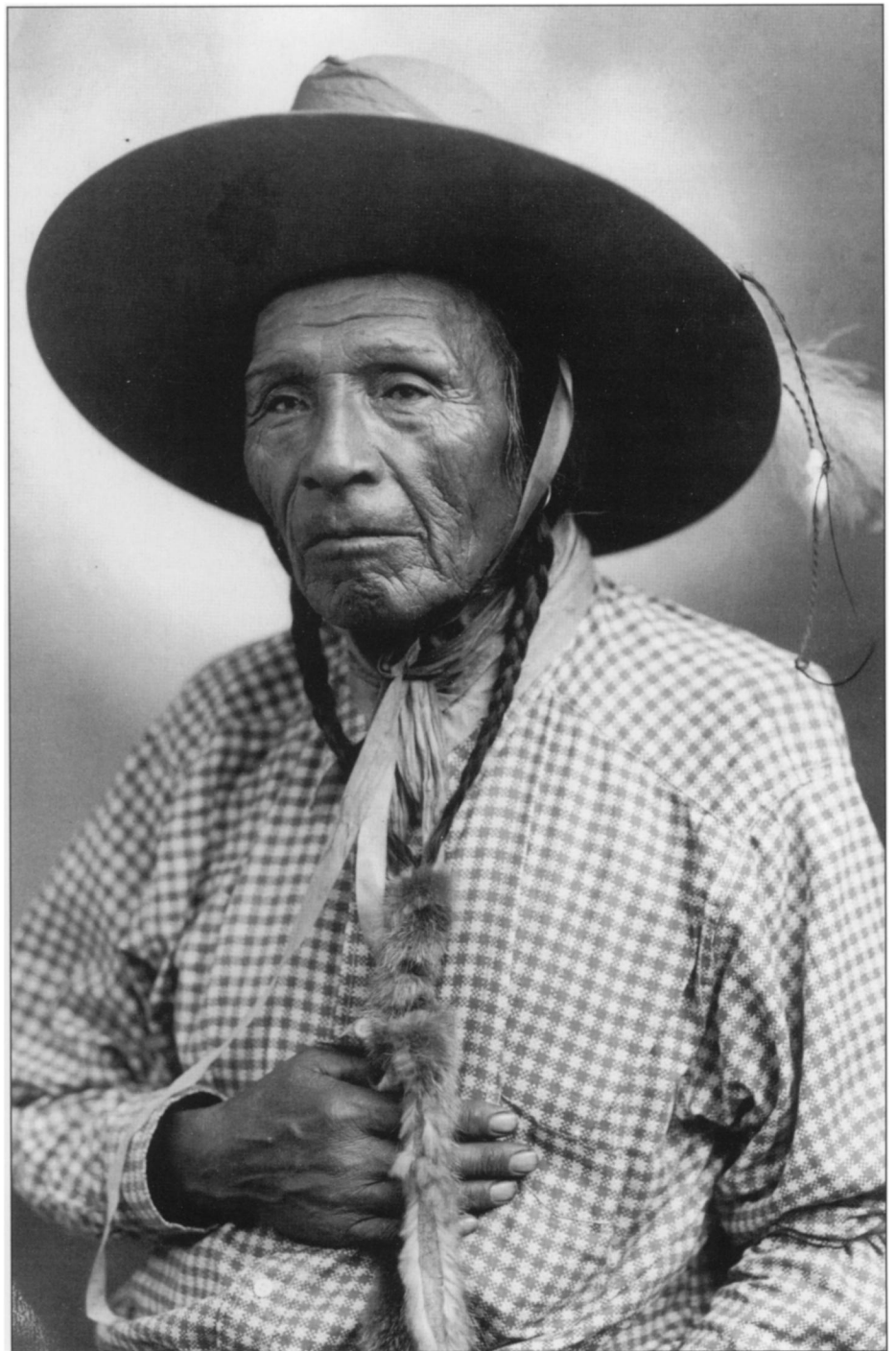
Chief Cleveland Kamiakin and 20th-Century Political Change on the Colville Reservation

RICHARD D. SCHEUERMAN AND MICHAEL O. FINLEY

A remarkable journey took place on the Columbia Plateau in the early fall of 1956. Several carloads of men, women, and children, both Indian and white, converged on the rural community of Ephrata, Washington, on a special mission: to learn more about the area's sacred landscapes and original inhabitants. A cool breeze swept across the sage lands, signaling the change in seasons, but the wooden windmill at the town's north side Holland Motel was not engineered to turn. Three Native American elders waited inside their small room there for a ride to breakfast and a field trip with their hosts. Cleveland Kamiakin, Billy Curlew, and their interpreter, Harry Nanamkin, were being feted that weekend by the Grant County Historical Society, at the invitation of Nat Washington, an area civic leader and historian who sought to record information about the region's disappearing Indian trails and campsites.¹

According to Nat Washington, Cleveland Kamiakin and Billy Curlew were probably the last two surviving tribal members who had "really lived and camped and hunted in the area."² Washington had arranged for Cull White, a Coulee City rancher and long-

Cleveland Kamiakin, shown here in 1937, was the son of the famed Chief Kamiakin. He worked tirelessly to protect the culture of the Native peoples of the inland Northwest. (L. V. McWhorter Photograph Collection, Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections [MASC], Washington State University Libraries, Pullman)



time acquaintance of the elders, to travel with them from Nespelem.³ Washington and historical society officials had also made arrangements with a local Grant County Public Utility District administrator, Ken Crow, to record some of the group's conversations, because he realized the value in preserving the memories of the few remaining elders who had been raised off the reservation. Those interested in local history were well advised to speak with Cleveland Kamiakin of the Colville Yakama-Palouse band and Billy Curlew of the Moses-Columbia band if they sought knowledge about the land. But as is evident from the recordings, the two men offered their listeners much more than information about place names, deceased family members, and events from bygone days. They also shared wisdom about the sacredness of the land, their people's relationship to the land and area resources, and mutual respect between Native Americans and whites.

The two elders' willingness to share perspectives with an audience of Columbia Basin farmers and businessmen so far from their home bespeaks a remarkable spirit of generosity as well as stamina, because both men were of great age. Billy Curlew, born in 1862, was returning to his birthplace, present-day Ephrata, and to the ancient gathering place at Rocky Ford Creek southeast of town, which he identified in his distinctive high-pitched voice by its name in the Moses-Columbia dialect of Interior Salish, Skau-tu-wun. Conversing in Yakama Sahaptin, Cleveland Kamiakin told another of the participants in the conversation, the Moses Lake physician and historian Robert Ruby, that he had been born at Rock Lake (Tax'liit) in the Palouse country a hundred miles to the east. According to family accounts, this would have been in about 1870, when Cleveland's father, the famed Yakama-Palouse leader Kamiakin, lived with his extended family beyond the reach of interfering settlers and reservation

agents. Cleveland's mother was Hoske-la-pum, one of the great chief's four Klickitat sister-wives; she also bore Kamiakin a daughter, Ka-you-tonay, future wife of Ben Awhi (Owhi), one of the few Yakamas who participated in the Nez Perce War of 1877.⁴

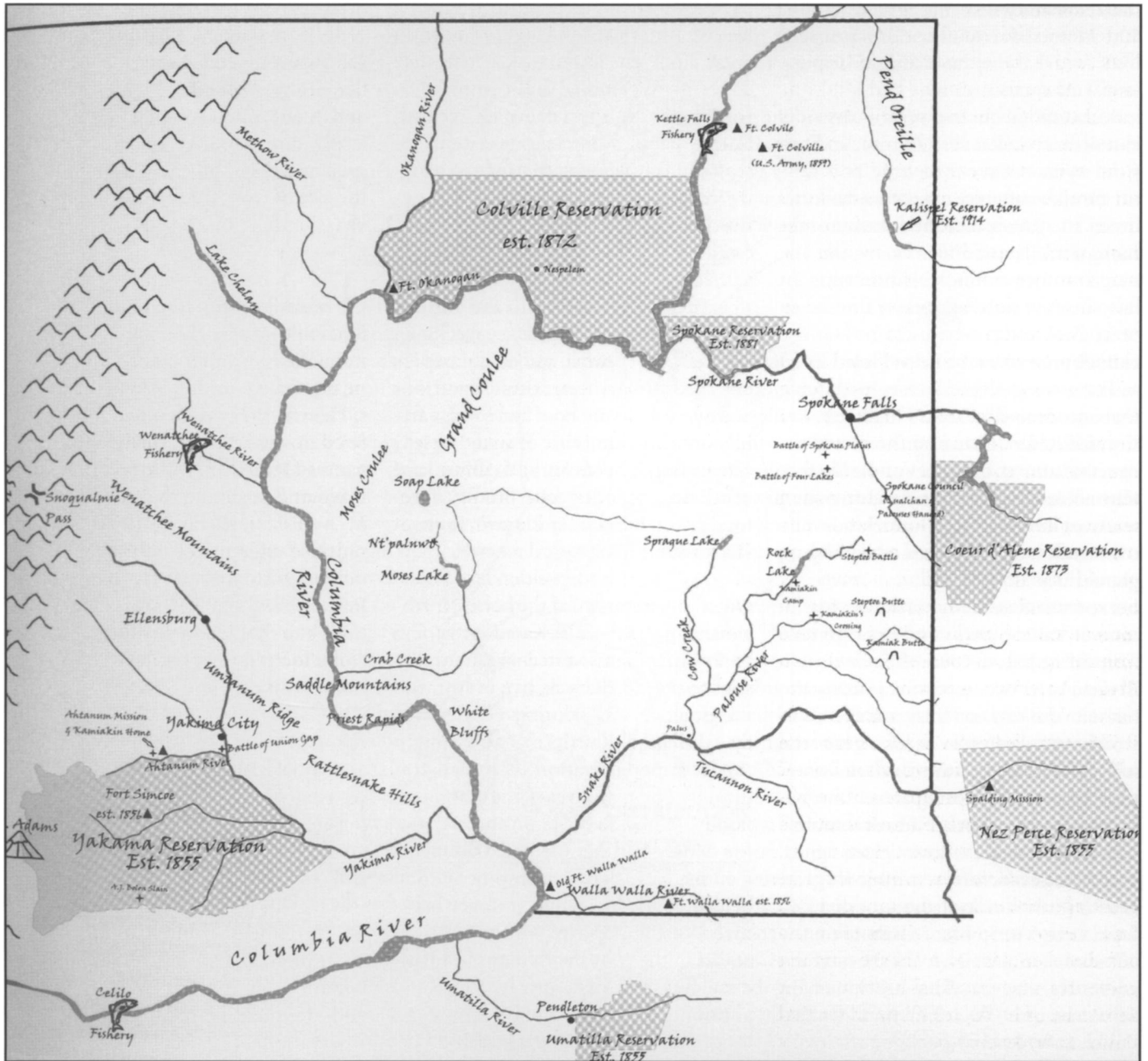
Both of Cleveland Kamiakin's parents died about 1877, but he remained in the Palouse with his brothers Tomeo, T'siyiyak (Williams), Lukash (Luke), Tesh Palouse, and Skolumkee; two of his sisters, Kiatana and Yumasepah; and his father's surviving wives. For many years after the elder Kamiakin's passing, the family maintained extensive livestock herds and gardens on the south end of Rock Lake. Here Cleveland, then known as Peopeo Kownot (Bird of the Morning), spent his boyhood and adolescence. He traveled widely throughout the region on seasonal excursions to visit relatives and to fish and hunt. In this way and because of his family's stature, he came to

know prominent Snake River Palouse-Nez Perce families such as the Poyahkin-Andrews and the Paweens, whose daughters, Yup-cha-sin (Annie Billy) and Alalumt'i, Cleveland would eventually marry. All three would live to great age—Cleveland passed away at the age of 89 in September 1959, Yup-cha-sin died in 1965 at age 98, and Alalumt'i in 1977 at age 92.⁵

Cleveland's brother Lukash married Sinsinq't, the daughter of Chief Moses, in about 1882, and they came to reside near Moses on the Colville Reservation. The couple had one child who lived to adulthood, Nellie Kamiakin Moses (1883-1958); she married Louis Friedlander, son of the frontier trader J. H. Friedlander. The Friedlanders' oldest daughter, the Kamiakin-Moses family historian Emily Friedlander Peone (1902-84), related that Chief Moses offered a safe haven on the Colville Reservation to Lukash's brothers and sisters as well because he had

Cleveland Kamiakin made his home, shown here in the 1940s or so, near the Nespelem River. (Photo by Richard T. Lewis, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture/Eastern Washington State Historical Society [NMAC], Spokane, L91-166.120)





Map detail from Richard Scheuerman and Michael O. Finley, *Finding Chief Kamiakin: The Life and Legacy of a Northwest Patriot* (2008), used with permission of Washington State University Press.

high regard for their legendary father and had welcomed members of Kamiakin's family into his household.⁶ For this reason and because of increasing conflicts with white ranchers in the Rock Lake area, Cleveland and most of his brothers and sisters relocated to the Colville Reservation in 1885. With the assistance of the Colville Indian agent, Benjamin Moore, they established

homes on the outskirts of tiny Nespelem, along the grassy flat near the first falls of the Nespelem River.⁷

Within the year, the reservation received Joseph's Nez Perce band from its eight-year exile in Oklahoma. Joseph's winter camp was located along the west bank of the river about a quarter mile south of the Ka-

miakins; he and his band were flanked by the prominent Nez Perce War veterans Yellow Wolf and Two Moons. Elijah Williams, nephew of Yellow Wolf, remembered how his family often joined in activities with the Kamiakins: cutting firewood on nearby pine-covered slopes, drying salmon and venison outside their houses, and traveling to root and berry grounds.⁸ Together

the men hunted in the Grand Coulee and Waterville vicinities in April and May, while the women dug bitterroot and wild carrots. Camas and wild onion abounded in the prairie districts east of Soap Lake, near Almira, and beyond Wilson Creek. In June and July, the families often converged with hundreds of others at Kettle Falls, Chief Kamiakin's favored fishery, for the annual summer chinook salmon runs. In late summer and fall, they gathered to hunt and collect berries in the Grand Coulee area and around Willow Lake.⁹

During periodic treks between the Colville Reservation and the Nez Perce Reservation, east of Lewiston, Idaho, Kamiakin family members also visited relatives in their old homeland. The route followed ancient trails now being graded for motor traffic. Travel by horse from Nespelem to Lapwai, Idaho, took at least a week. The long procession of riders forded the Columbia River at Moses Crossing (near the hamlet of Barry) or three miles downstream at Seaton's Ferry, near the mouth of Spring Canyon. Often traveling in groups of more than a hundred, they camped where pioneer hamlets had emerged at Wilbur, Harrington, and Sprague before reaching the Kamiakins' old home at the foot of Rock Lake. Following a night's respite on the lakeshore and visits to nearby family gravesites, the travelers continued on to camp near St. John, then Colfax, Pullman, and Lewiston.¹⁰

Kamiakins frequently served in ceremonial roles at grand intertribal powwows and summer rodeos held annually in the 1920s and 1930s on the Colville, Yakama, and Spokane reservations and in neighboring communities such as Wilbur and Coulee City. During many of these colorful events, Tomeo, Cleveland, and relatives from the extended Moses family led parade processions that served as solemn ancestral memorials. After riding on horses magnificently adorned with beaded martingales and other regalia

passed down for generations, visiting Native Americans stayed for days in great circle encampments, where they danced and gambled and competed in rodeos. These special events recalled Native peoples' ancient traditions of seasonal travel and gathering to socialize, celebrate, and offer thanks. The native Plateau peoples had met for generations at the summer solstice to gather late roots and early berries and to express appreciation to the Creator for this annual blessing. Weeklong reservation powwows and rodeos emerged in part from these traditions and were held in late June and early July to coincide with Fourth of July celebrations in Almira, Wilbur, and other area farming communities before grain harvest and summer livestock roundups.¹¹

On many reservations in the Northwest, dancers were assessed entry fees and non-Indians were charged admission to attend these festive events, but the practice was strongly condemned by Cleveland Kamiakin, who fought this commercialization of Indian traditions. For many years the Kamiakin family, Willie Red Star Andrews, and Joe Moses had handled arrangements for the Nespelem encampment, first held in 1899, but when younger organizers of the popular powwow moved ahead in the 1940s with plans to introduce fees and cash prizes, Cleveland announced that his family would no longer participate. The venerable Yakama-Palouse leader believed that restricting participation violated a sacred responsibility. Rather than entertain spectators, ceremonial dances were intended to reveal the "deep beauty, spiritual guidance, consolation and disciplinary power" of Indian ways to everyone present and help foster wider appreciation for tribal traditions.¹² The chief's intransigence on the issue and the prospect of his absence led the younger organizers to abandon their plans, and the event continued to attract as many as 1,500 people, with Cleveland and Willie Red

Star Andrews serving for many years as general managers. Organizers of the special events, including Joe Redthunder, Tom Andrews, Elijah Williams, and others, often congregated at Cleveland's home on the outskirts of Nespelem to plan powwow activities and to gather for traditional longhouse Wáashat religious services.¹³

The Kamiakin family's influence went beyond ceremonies and extended through the years. Cleveland Kamiakin's brother Tesh Palouse Kamiakin died at his home near Nespelem in 1932; his brother Tomeo suffered a debilitating stroke two years later and died in February 1936. The following decade witnessed the passing of his sister Kiatana (1946) and his brother Skolumkee (1949), leaving only Cleveland as the last living direct link to the great Indian leader. When the elder Kamiakin brothers had become too old to participate in reservation political and business affairs, Cleveland had assumed a more active role and was often consulted in family and tribal matters. Recurrent problems of tribal enrollment and individual allotments had emerged after 1920, when the same person might claim title to property on various reservations. This often happened because of enrollment complications involving extended families, name changes common in the Indian community, and frequent moves between area reservations.

Cleveland possessed a capacious memory and intimate knowledge of the complex relationships among individuals in the Yakama-Palouse, Nez Perce-Joseph, and Moses-Columbia bands, and he was frequently asked to provide testimony for resolution of pending enrollment and probate cases. He kept abreast of events within his extended family through his frequent visits to other reservations and looked forward to visiting the Yakama Reservation in particular, where he was greeted by a host of relatives, including



Cleveland Kamiakin, pictured above, and other Native leaders dressed in ceremonial regalia at events such as regional powwows and religious ceremonies. (Photo by Richard T. Lewis, NMAC, L91-167.156)

the families of Alex Shawaway, Watson Totus, and Louis Sohapp—descendants of Chief Kamiakin’s brothers Showaway and Skloom.¹⁴

Cleveland Kamiakin was willing to take action beyond his family when he felt the need. In response to rumors circulating in the early 1940s that reservation Indians might lose property tax exemptions, hunting and fishing rights, and other privileges derived

from federal statutes, he began contacting the state’s congressional delegation. The controversy arose in part after a new game code proposed regulating reservation fishing and hunting around the newly formed Lake Roosevelt.

In a petition to Congressman Walt Horan during the winter of 1943, Cleveland reminded the legislator of federal obligations:

I always consent[ed] to live the old custom, all the game, fish, berries, and roots, I retain them which was given to me by [the] Treaty [of] 1855. . . . Our first president of the United States made a proclamation [that] Indians are owners of United States soil, but white farmers can farm and . . . pay taxes, not Indians. . . . I pray to the United States government to make a path for [the] younger generation to have all the privileges of wild game, fish, berries, and so on, so [they] can carry on and not forget race and custom. This was laid down, generation after generation and should carry on.¹⁵

Horan favorably acknowledged Kamiakin’s letter and expressed hope that an “equitable assumption of the cost of government” could be found that balanced reservation benefits with agency expenses.¹⁶ But elders such as Cleveland and Willie Red Star Andrews noted that since “the allotment period came, with the limiting lines, corners, and boundaries, . . . changes in Indian life began to appear; and the Indians since have been continually losing their lands, rights, and heritage.”¹⁷

The discussion of Native rights may have revived Cleveland’s abiding hope even in the eighth decade of his life that he would yet return to his native Palouse country or at least help clarify title to properties there still claimed by members of the Kamiakin, Paween, and other families. The Indian agency superintendent, F. A. Gross, noted in the spring of 1944 that Cleveland had been visiting with him “for some time” about the disposition of Indian homesteads filed in the 1880s along the lower Snake River.¹⁸ Cleveland’s older brothers were among those who had lived at Palus and acquired a tract of contiguous property along the lower Palouse River in the late 19th century; others, such as Húsí Paween, had homesteaded near Almot and Penawawa on the Snake River.¹⁹ Family members now enlisted Cleveland’s help as they sought to clarify the legal status of these lands, and the chief met with Gross on their behalf. Subsequent investigation by county officials in Colfax revealed that

several parcels remained under Indian title. Although relocation to these lands proved impractical (most of the heirs were living on the reservation), through the efforts of elders such as Cleveland Kamiakin and Joe Redthunder, younger family members became reacquainted with their ancestral heritage along the Snake and Palouse rivers and worked to retain this legacy.

Like tribal leaders before them, Cleveland and Charley Williams (Te-meh-

yew-te-toot), T'siyiyak Kamiakin's son, had long hoped to one day secure for their people a portion of their former holdings. Williams also had been born in the Palouse homeland but relocated to the Colville Reservation about 1888. He later married Alalumti (Susie Chief), whose family was among the Nez Perce War exiles to Oklahoma. Williams and Cleveland were close in years and had grown up together; they shared a lifetime of friendship and devotion to their people's heritage. The

two men maintained a strong spiritual attachment to the land of their birth, and Cleveland still spoke about selling his allotment and returning to Rock Lake to spend his final years. But for the benefit of future generations, Cleveland and Williams rigorously opposed termination.²⁰

Federal efforts to terminate reservations followed a progression of policies viewed by many Native American elders as an attack on traditional values and treaty rights. The General Allotment (Dawes) Act of 1887 had been devised by lawmakers to advance assimilation and to placate paternalistic Indian agency bureaucrats, zealous religious leaders, and land-hungry whites. Individual Indians were to receive allocations of 40, 80, or 160 acres, depending on the condition of the land and its intended use—for habitation only, for farming, or for grazing, respectively. But provisions and adjustments in the law eventually permitted agents through various means to disperse unallotted reservation tracts to non-Indians. Within two decades, property maps of reservations in the Northwest and across the nation depicted checkerboard ownership patterns, with many parcels lost to outsiders. The problem was compounded on the Colville Reservation following the government's expropriation of the 1.5 million acres constituting the area known as the Northern Half in 1891 for a dollar an acre. Although the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the controversial agreement, these lands rich in minerals and timber were designated public domain in 1892 and opened to white settlement in 1900.²¹

Concurrent with efforts by Native American leaders to organize nation-

Cleveland Kamiakin fought hard to retain his people's land claims and fishing and hunting rights despite strong federal pushes for termination of Indian reservations. (Photo by Richard T. Lewis, NMAC, L91-166.20)





Kamiakin joined other influential families, including the Garrys, to advocate for Native rights both locally and nationally. Adults left to right: Isadore Garry, Cleveland Kamiakin, Joseph Garry. (Photo courtesy of author)

ally to protect Indian rights, Cleveland Kamiakin, Frank George, and other leaders from the Spokane, Umatilla, Nez Perce, and neighboring tribes decided to form a regional political association. Supported by the Colville Agency superintendent Wade Head, a planning group first convened in Nespelem in the summer of 1947. Attendees included the leaders from several reservation bands—Cleveland, Willie Red Star Andrews, Peter Dan Moses, Victor Nicholas. These elders realized that though elected tribal council members endeavored to formulate policies and programs, the very existence of tribal governments was being threatened by political forces that had to be met by a united front. The older leaders, Cleveland contended, were prepared to take the fight beyond any one reservation to create a regional or even national response. He may well have recalled the challenges faced by his father in forming an alliance of the region's tribes a century earlier. Yet he also understood that in the absence of such an alliance American Indian

tribal identities might disappear.

As if launching an ambitious campaign for political office, Cleveland and the younger tribal leaders went to work organizing a November gathering of northwest tribal representatives while also formulating plans to lobby the state's congressional delegation and influence public opinion through the regional press. The chiefs prevailed upon their friend the Reverend C. A. Burris, a Methodist minister at Nespelem, to compose a lengthy article for the *Wenatchee Daily World* to draw attention to the rumored changes in Indian trusteeship. They also traveled to Wenatchee to meet with the paper's influential owner and publisher, Rufus Woods, who turned their story into front-page news.²²

Throughout the fall of 1947, Cleveland worked with Frank George, Harry Owhi, and the Indian agency superintendent to build support among reservation leaders throughout Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana for

the upcoming conclave. In response to formal invitations and the substantial personal respect commanded by Cleveland, some 200 delegates assembled in Nespelem November 18-19, 1947, for the organizational meeting for what would become the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI). The Colville council chairman, John B. Cleveland, introduced Cleveland Kamiakin, whose opening remarks focused attention on the most imminent threats:

I want to talk about our tribal holdings. This problem is very important. We want to retain our rights as Indians. The white man tells us that the Indian should relinquish his rights on his lands and other property. . . . I want the government to know that I want to retain all of my rights. We want to retain our Indian way of life. We have our ancient beliefs and traditions, and we should be accorded the right to retain them under the democratic way of life as practiced in this country.²³

At the end of the day, Cleveland's nephew, Frank George, a graduate of the Haskell Institute (now Haskell Indian Nations University), was assigned the task of drafting the ATNI constitution and bylaws while the rest of the delegates discussed legislative priorities over a feast of venison, fresh fruit, and berry pies. As might be expected, Cleveland Kamiakin, Willie Red Star Andrews of the Nez Perce-Joseph band, Jim James of the San Poil band, and others spoke strongly in favor of affirming treaty rights to reservation lands and guaranteeing payment of veterans' benefits. The Spokane representative Clair Wynecoop also raised the issue of education and argued passionately about the need for adequate schools, capable teachers, and child labor reform. Andrews, who had been raised in the deprived conditions of Oklahoma exile, told the assembled elders, "The time of 'getting by' without an education is past. Everyone must be educated in order to compete in all things."²⁴ On the following day, November 19, 1947, after further discussion on the draft constitution, Cleve-

land Kamiakin formally moved to approve the document; the motion passed unanimously with 116 votes. Legislative priorities included Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) accountability, education and business training, health care, and greater recognition of Indian contributions to the war effort and to the development of the country.

In May 1950, Kamiakin joined Peter Dan Moses, Jim James, and members of the Colville Business Council in composing a document to draw White House attention to the matter. They presented the Truman Scroll to President Harry Truman on May 11, 1950, during his visit to Grand Coulee Dam to activate the second powerhouse. The document, signed by 823 members of the Colville tribe, eloquently expressed the tribe's commitment to self-reliance and stewardship of natural resources.

Our holdings have diminished through the years. This at one time was Indian country. God created this Indian country, and it was like He spread out a big blanket, and He put the Indian on it. The Indians were created here in this country, truly and honestly, and that was the time our rivers started to run. Then God put fish in the rivers, and He put deer and elk in the mountains and buffalo upon the plains, and roots and berries in the field, and made laws through which there came the increase of fish and game. This land was ours, and our strength and our blood was from the fish and the game, the roots and the berries. These are the essence of our life. We were not brought here from a foreign country. We did not come here. We were put here by the Creator.²⁵

Throughout the 1950s, Cleveland Kamiakin traveled to meetings across the Colville Reservation and from Spokane to Wenatchee to advocate the plan devised by the Colville Business Council to expand the reservation by purchasing unoccupied areas in the former Northern Half. He urged tribal members to remember the sacrifices made by Kamiakin, Moses, Joseph, and other leaders of bygone times and to affirm the treaty rights for which those

elders had so long struggled. Kamiakin also continued to press Walt Horan and Senators Warren Magnuson and Harry Cain to support legislation authorizing such land transactions in defiance of the BIA and to preserve the tribe's treaty rights and the federal government's responsibility to administer tribal lands.

In addition to recurrent attempts by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and state authorities to restrict tribal hunting and fishing rights, northwest tribes also faced outside incursions into the resource-rich but sparsely settled slopes between the northern tier of the Colville Reservation and Canada. White-owned timber and mining businesses sought to develop unallotted areas in the region, while some tribal leaders, encouraged by provisions in the 1934 Indian Reorganization (Wheeler-Howard) Act, explored again the possibility of purchasing back unoccupied tracts in the reservation's former Northern Half. The In-

dian New Deal overturned 19th-century federal policy that had privatized commonly held tribal lands and sought to promote economic and political development on reservations. Conflicts between area Indians and whites over development issues were complicated by the depletion of traditional Indian fisheries, destruction of wildlife habitat, and relocation of Indian burials on the upper Columbia River after the construction of Grand Coulee Dam in the late 1930s. Local and regional BIA officials, however, seemed to turn a deaf ear to the tribe's petitions for compensation for the loss of their traditional resources.

After having little success with local battles, Cleveland acknowledged the need to join national efforts to protect Indian rights. In late 1944 he had strongly encouraged his nephew Frank George to take part in the inaugural meeting of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in Denver. Like his uncle, George possessed nota-

Grant County Historical Society officials invited Billy Curlew (left) and Cleveland Kamiakin (right) to speak about Native byways and campsites. Harry Nanamkin (center) served as translator. (Cull A. White Photograph Collection, MASC, WSU Libraries, neg. 92-071)



ble leadership skills, and he went on to serve from 1951 to 1953 as the NCAI executive director. George used his various state and national platforms to further a wide range of Indian causes, and with his cousin Lucy Covington and other tribal members he helped lead the fight against the federal government's termination policies.

These efforts, however, were met with significant opposition from a small number of tribal members, especially those of mixed race and those working at Grand Coulee or off the reservation. They believed that termination would benefit members who wanted to develop individual holdings unfettered by agency regulations or who wanted to sell their land and pursue business interests elsewhere. This viewpoint, however, was not widely shared by members of other northwest tribes. On the Kalispel and Spokane reservations, where Cleveland Kamiakin often traveled throughout the 1940s and 1950s, tribal representatives spoke as one voice against termination. Back at his home along the Nespelem River, the son of the legendary leader, now in his 80s, regularly emerged from his small clapboard home to help nephews and nieces such as Frank George, Charley Williams, Lucy Covington, and other younger leaders turn the tide of sentiment away from termination.

As executive director of the NCAI, Frank George also sought to inform the non-Indian community about the central role that tribal identity plays in cultural well-being and how legislation threatening the status of reservations jeopardizes that identity. His efforts led to the decision that Spokane would host the 12th national NCAI convention in 1955—the centennial year of the Walla Walla treaties, which laid the foundation for the inland Northwest's reservation system. The historic three-day gathering convened during the last week of August within the white stucco walls of the Davenport Hotel, with 700 delegates



State senator Nat Washington (front row, far right) helped gather a diverse group to hear elders talk about not only the physical landscape but Native attitudes toward the land and its resources. (Cull A. White Photograph Collection, MASC, WSU Libraries, neg. 92-072)

representing more than 60 tribes. President Joseph Garry—a close friend of the Kamiakins—guided deliberations over a number of issues brought to the floor of the assembly. No participant at the convention was more feted than Cleveland Kamiakin, still vigorous and articulate in old age and a living expression of cultural pride and Indian rights retained through the agreements negotiated by his father a century earlier. As one observer recalled, his mere presence “stood for everything.”²⁶ Cleveland's trademark braids and broad-brimmed hat may have seemed incongruous to spectators and other guests in the hotel's gilded Hall of the Doges. But his dignified bearing and earnest words of encouragement inspired hope for their efforts.²⁷

Cleveland Kamiakin's efforts on behalf of his people did not go unnoticed by others. In October 1956 Nat Washington, a state senator from Ephrata, invited Cleveland Kamiakin to a meeting of the Grant County Historical Society. Washington had arranged a Grant County tour for Cleveland and Billy Curlew of the Moses-Columbia band

in order to document Native American names of geographic features and traditional campsites. Although he was 86 years old, Cleveland's voice on the recording emerges strong and deep as he and Billy respond to their hosts' questions about local campsite names and locations. Through the Indian agency interpreter Harry Nanamkin, the two men expressed delight at the opportunity to visit ancient Rocky Ford Creek camp northwest of Moses Lake and reminisce about times when their ancestors traded buffalo hides to Rocky Mountain tribes for spring roots and salmon. They responded patiently in measured tones to inquiries on matters ranging from tribal leadership and local place names to the lives of Chief Moses and Chief Kamiakin—distinctly pronounced “K'amáyakun” by the chief's last surviving son.²⁸

The two men's words reflected both their profound sense of loss and their wonder at the landscape marvels created by Coyote (Spílya). Cleveland spoke of his recent walk among the tipi rings still visible at Rocky Ford. “*Íchna áw míimi pawáyániŋxana. . . .* I am not

Note regarding the recordings

When the authors spoke with Kamiakin family elders in the 1980s, they heard references to recordings of Cleveland made decades earlier. Searches of area agency, tribal, and university oral history collections for the material proved futile. The matter arose again in the 1990s when Tillie George, the Colville tribal language program consultant, attended the dedication of a series of historical murals in Moses Lake. Nat Washington was present, and he informed her that he had indeed supervised creation of a recording at a gathering organized by the Grant County Historical Society. He still had the recording, and he would provide her with a copy. He did so, but it was misfiled. A search in 2007 revealed its existence.

In November 2008, at an American Indian Studies conference sponsored by the Plateau Center for American Indian Studies at Washington State University, Glen Lindeman, the WSU Press editor-in-chief, told the authors that Barbara Owen, an Ellensburg historian, had mentioned uncatalogued recordings in the Ellensburg Public Library. One of the cassettes bore a date of October 1956 and the name "Cleveland Kamiakin." A librarian, Milton Wagy, provided the authors with a copy, a separate recording made by Washington at the historical society gathering. Both versions were digitally restored by David Rither and David Wicks at Seattle Pacific University, and the native Yakama-Palouse speaker Carrie Jim Schuster translated the discussion. Copies of the recordings have been placed in several northwest archives, including the history offices of the Colville and Yakama tribes.

strong like I used to be," he said wistfully.

I am an orphan from everywhere. I am separated from all my homelands. . . . This is how it once was. Spilya made everything. Whatever he said, he did it just like that. We came to know such things through stories. He was very smart and brave. He went around, he made this [rock] sweathouse. . . . He had power and was cunning. He was someone to be reckoned with! . . . And he finished it wonderfully. . . . My friend was skillful, intelligent, and masterful, and whatever he said, he made it. That is how it was; how Spilya was.²⁹

Cleveland went on to tell his audience that some things need not change. "We are gathering here at a special place and it still holds its sacredness [*ah-tow'*]," he said before deferring to his longtime friend Billy Curlew to "speak about the sacredness of this land and how it provided all our needs."³⁰ Billy expressed the elders' dedication to the well-being of the youth: "Everybody should try to protect the people coming up—the future." Cleveland then added:

We must live together on the same land; one people to another, face to face. We have families, communities, in friendship on this land. I will not tell [you] how to manage the land, but my food is also here and I hope we can continue to gather it. You use this land for your needs as we have ours. May we live together. . . . I have already shared what is important about maintaining a sacred relationship with the land, and all the creatures, so all of us can dwell here.³¹

In his parting words to the audience, Cleveland did not tell the farmers not to cultivate the land, but he implied that it is not his way. He asked that they respect the Native peoples' belief that the land's natural resources are to be protected as a sacred obligation in order to sustain humanity. According to the Nez Perce-Palouse elder Gordon Fisher, a nephew of Cleveland and his wife Alalunt'i, who lived with the elderly couple in the 1950s, the word *ah-tow'* "suggests a sacred trust," which, if selfishly broken, will result in damaging environmental consequences.

The desire to get something more than we need and are provided leads persons, families, and even nations to do things that are harmful to the land and to life. This is what Cleveland and our elders meant when they spoke about the "law" to [Governor] Stevens and others who wanted to make the treaties. For the sake of our children and in accordance with these sacred ways we must respect the land and water and not pollute it as is happening now.³²

Although the historical society gathering in 1956 marked one of Cleveland Kamiakin's last public off-reservation appearances, he continued to travel periodically with family members throughout the region. On these excursions he often pointed out landmarks of mythical and historical significance and told of the great changes in the landscape he had witnessed in his lifetime. On a trip to Priest Rapids and Toppenish with Gordon Fisher in the 1950s, he saw massive excavation equipment digging enormous canals in the first phase of the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project to bring water from Grand Coulee Dam to 120,000 dryland acres. In many places the water courses and timeworn trails of his youth were being affected. On the same outing, he ventured east to the Palouse country to visit the graves of his parents and other relatives. At Rock Lake in western Whitman County, where Chief Kamiakin had died in about 1877, he wistfully told his young companions that it was the last time he would see his ancestral homeland. "Always remember who you are, and where you came from," he instructed them.³³

On September 3, 1959, Cleveland died quietly in his sleep in Nespelem. Hundreds of friends and relatives from across the Pacific Northwest traveled to the small reservation community to pay their final respects to Chief Kamiakin's last son, who was buried a short distance from the grave of Chief Joseph. Although termination advocates in Congress continued to introduce bills throughout the 1950s and '60s, the Nixon administration formally re-

puddiated the policy in 1970 and the proposals never again emerged from committee. The matter was substantially laid to rest by Congress in 1975 with passage of Public Law 93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.³⁴

Richard Scheurman is a professor in Seattle Pacific University's Graduate School of Education. He holds degrees in history, Russian, and education and has written several books and articles

on regional themes, including *Palouse Country: A Land and Its People* (1994) and *The Wenatchee Valley and Its First Peoples: Thrilling Grandeur, Unfulfilled Promise* (2005). He is a recipient of the Governor's Award for Excellence in Education and the Washington State Historical Society's Robert Gray Medal for contributions to historical scholarship.

Michael Finley is chair of the Colville Confederated Tribes Business Council

and a graduate of Eastern Washington University in history and American Indian studies. He previously served as an archaeology technician for the Colville Agency's Office of History and Archaeology in Nespelem. Finley is a descendant of Jaco Finlay, the explorer David Thompson's French-Indian guide who established Spokane House in 1810. He and Scheurman are co-authors of *Finding Chief Kamiakin: The Life and Legacy of a Northwest Patriot* (2008).

1. There are two surviving recordings of some of the discussion: Cleveland Kamiakin, Billy Curlew, and Nat Washington, October 1956, Ephrata, Wash., audio recording, Office of History and Archaeology, Colville Confederated Tribes, Nespelem, Wash. (hereafter cited as CCT recording), and Cleveland Kamiakin and Billy Curlew, October 1956, Ephrata, Wash., audio recording, Local History Collection, Ellensburg Public Library, Ellensburg, Wash. (hereafter cited as EPL recording). No full transcriptions are known to exist. Robert Ruby transcribed some of the Ephrata discussion. Cleveland Kamiakin and Billy Curlew, Oct. 8, 1956, Ephrata, Wash., transcription (hereafter cited as Ruby transcription), box 3, Half-Sun Series, Robert Ruby Collection, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture (NMAC), Spokane, Wash.
2. EPL recording.
3. A brief account of Washington's 1956 field trip to the Ephrata area with Cleveland Kamiakin and Billy Curlew appears in Robert Anglin, *Forgotten Trails: Historical Sources on the Columbia's Big Bend Country* (Pullman, Wash., 1995).
4. Ruby transcription.
5. Colville Agency federal censuses (Moses-Columbia, Nez Perce, and Palouse bands), 1885, 1898, and 1910, and Colville Family Histories, file 291, Colville Agency Papers, National Archives—Pacific Northwest Region, Seattle; interview with Arthur Tomeo, June 16, 1972, Nespelem.
6. Interview with Emily Friedlander Peone, April 30, 1982, Nespelem.
7. U.S. Secretary of the Interior, *Annual Report, 1886*, 49th Cong., 2d sess., H. Exec. Doc. 1, pt. 5, p. 450; James Davis Journal, n.d., box 1, Ruby Collection. Davis was a Nespelem storekeeper.
8. Interview with Elijah Williams, June 5, 1984, Nespelem.
9. Peone interview.
10. Nellie Moses Friedlander, oral history, June 28, 1956, Nespelem, transcription in Verne Ray Collection, Foley Library, Gonzaga University, Spokane, Wash.
11. Williams interview.
12. *Wenatchee Daily World*, July 10, 1956.
13. *Spokane Chronicle*, July 7, 1928, July 9, 1931; *Grand Coulee News*, July 6, 1936; *Wenatchee Daily World*, July 8, 1948, July 10, 1956.
14. Interview with Gordon Fisher, June 19, 2006, Lapwai, Idaho. Fisher's grandfather, Sam Fisher (1866-1944), was a legendary Palouse Indian Appaloosa horse breeder who lived at the ancient village site of Palus, at the confluence of the Palouse and Snake rivers near Lyons Ferry.
15. Cleveland Kamiakin to Walt Horan, n.d., Walt Horan Papers, Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University Libraries, Pullman.
16. Horan to Kamiakin, Dec. 15, 1943, *ibid.*
17. Colville Agency Meeting Minutes, Jan. 10, 1944, Cull A. White Papers, MASC, WSU Libraries.
18. F. Gross to G. Thomas, June 15, 1944, Colville Agency letterbook file, Records of the Washington Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Records of Bureau of Indian Affairs, RG 75, National Archives—Pacific Northwest Region.
19. The Palouse tribe's 1907 acquisition of the 2,650-acre tract along the lower Palouse River is described in Clifford E. Trafzer and Richard D. Scheurman, *Renegade Tribe: The Palouse Indians and the Invasion of the Inland Pacific Northwest* (Pullman, Wash., 1986), 136-38.
20. Interview with Albert Redstar Andrews, Dec. 10, 2005, Coulee Dam, Wash.
21. For more information on the Northern Half, see Maria Ilma Raufer, *Black Robes and Indians of the Last Frontier: A Story of Heroism* (Milwaukee, Wisc., 1966), 146-48.
22. *Wenatchee Daily World*, Nov. 21, 1947, July 12, 1948.
23. Cleveland quoted in "Meeting of the Affiliated Tribes Convened at the Colville Indian Agency," 1947, n.p., Horan Papers.
24. Andrews quoted in *ibid.*
25. Colville Business Council et al., "To the President of the United States" [Truman Scroll], 1950, and W. Horan to C. I. Graves, May 29, 1950, both in Horan Papers.
26. *Spokane Chronicle*, Aug. 30, 1955 (qtn.); interview with Thomas Connolly, July 19, 2007, DeSmet, Idaho.
27. *Spokane Chronicle*, Aug. 30, 1955; J. Garry, NCAI 1955 Convention Minutes, Ruby Collection.
28. CCT recording.
29. *Ibid.* (qtns.); Ruby transcription.
30. EPL recording. Sahaptin speakers sometimes render the term *ahtow'* as "sacred" in English but point out that the word also implies a covenant relationship established by the Creator to provide sustenance to humankind, plants, and animals. Knowledge in general is *wapsu' khwid*. Interview with Carrie Jim Schuster, Nov. 30, 2008, Parker, Wash.
31. EPL recording.
32. Interview with Gordon Fisher, July 24, 2008, Lapwai.
33. *Ibid.*
34. For a discussion of termination politics on the Colville Reservation and elsewhere in the country, see Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960* (Albuquerque, N.M., 1986), and Kenneth R. Phillip, "Dillon S. Meyer and the Advent of Termination," *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1988), 37-59. A sympathetic portrayal of Colville termination advocates is found in Ruth Scofield, *Behind the Buckskin Curtain* (Seattle, 1977).