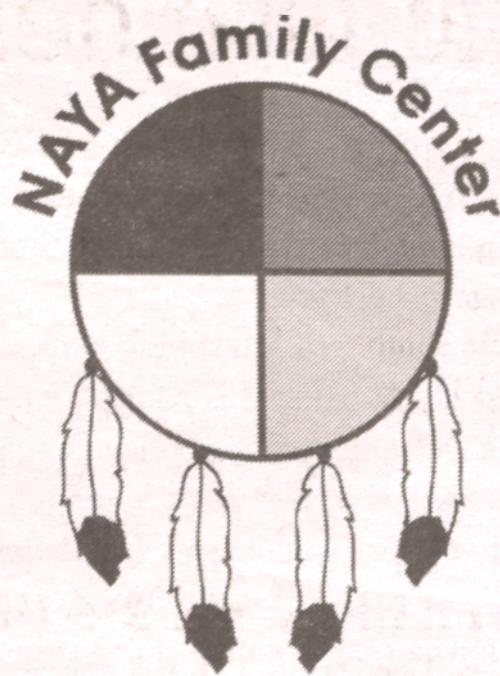




The NAYA Native American Literature class has been studying the history of Celilo Falls, shown at right, and the impact of the building of the dam on Native communities. Students wrote two-voice poems, capturing two perspectives on the building of the dam and the loss of the falls. The voices are distinguished between straight text and italics.



Dam and Culture

By Maria Olsen

I have been passed down
from generation to generation

*I come to stay,
not leave*

I am a spiritual place,
for I bring food and tradition to my people

*I have been built
To stop this parade*

The pain my people suffer,
I suffer

*I destroyed the homes of many
Why is there still hope?*

Falls and Profit

By Tosha Jones

I am at peace with nature
There are no jobs on my land

My water falls so peacefully
See my streams flow down

*Pay us the price we need to provide
For our families and their families*

The fish that flow within me
Go less and less from me

Save me!
Save me! Bring to me our share of pay

The waterfall was swallowed by water.

I Am

By Destiny Robideau

I am a woman, a mother and a wife
I am a woman, a mother and a wife

I love my family of five
I love my tribe of five hundred

I'm dressing for a family day out
I'm dressing for a long day at work

High heels, flower print dress and a blazer
Moccasins and an Elk skin dress

I keep my hair short and brush
Products through it
*I keep my hair long, braided down my back with
only bear grease*

I tell the children to go to the car
*I tell the children to go and
get the fishing nets and spears*
It's a long drive to the site of the new dam
It's a short walk to the beautiful falls

There are so many people here,
Crowded, waiting
*There are more people here than usual,
So many white people*

We hear the machines fire up, it's time!
*What is that sound?
Why are people getting closer?*

The children scream with excitement
There are tears in my children's eyes

I take their hands
And we watch as this magnificent dam goes up
*I take their hands
And try to explain why we can't fish today*

We watched the whole day
We left as quickly as we arrived

Bear and Fish

By Rae Roulac

I am a bear who looks for food often
I am a fish who tries to stay out of harm's way

I try to show my cubs how to get their food
*I swim all day to get to the waters where I lay my
offspring*

I claw at the cold, harsh waters
I try to get away in the cold, harsh waters

I go to a place of power
I go to a place of power

Celilo Falls
Celilo Falls

I am not that important to the waters
I am important to the waters

I fall into the cold river as I bite at the water
*People come from all over to get me because I am
a way of life*

The coming of the dam made it harder to get
fish
*The coming of the dams made it harder for me to
spawn*

I was sad as my cubs went hungry
We all started to die; we couldn't spawn

We were saved
We were saved

I had food
I was able to spawn

I am a bear
I am a fish

At the Water's End

By Damien Stankewitsch

I energize the people
I provide energy for the people

I swim and eat daily
I sit and eat fish gravy

I penetrate the ecosystem naturally
While I imagine the world dividing

My home is in a spiritual place
Built upon walls tearing down river's destiny

Dam life is not permanent
Automatic life is crucial

Sediment and litter clutter up my eyes
A building meant to stop, block and divert the water to my sides

Everything tries to stop me, but I survive
I erode away until humans decide I'm more valuable than to just die.

Celilo

By Nene Johnson

The creator made the falls
He wants them back.

Why does he want them?
To bring peace to our tribes.

Why the rivers, the dams and the falls?
Because they give power and hope to our culture.

Why is it a spiritual place?
It's a place of majestic power, a place we grew up and grew to love.

How will the legend live on?
Where we stand is where we were made to make a legend.

What about your home the dam flooded?
*We have our tribes. We rebuild them and love our culture
Even though it takes time, our people love the falls and the river.*

The creator made the falls; he wants them back
So we will do everything we can to bring them back.