

Indians at Celilo

(Continued from page 14)

pelled two white men from the rocks and destroyed their wooden platform, mauling the alleged trespassers in the process. Indians declared that the rocks of Celilo were theirs — and theirs only — because of traditional usage through uncounted centuries.

Older Indians are worried they may lose their fishing rights, which for many are their main source of subsistence and revenue. Some Indians live in the village at Celilo throughout the year. The cabins are located on rocky soil which makes gardens impractical. Plans are underway to locate the villagers in a new federal housing project.

Permanent residents term the redmen who come from a distance as "comers," who catch their fish, prepare them and leave. "Comers" hang their fish to dry from the eaves of crude shelters in which they camp. Permanent families have their own drying houses.

Nothing is wasted except the entrails. Even the tails are dried and heads are split and peeled out "until they look like huge bat wings." Backbones and ribs are dried for later use in soups. Meat is cut into large strips from a half-inch to an inch thick. These are hung from racks or spread out to absorb the sun's drying rays.

Squaws are responsible for most of the fish drying and preparation, including the making of chelae (Indian sugar). This is made by drying fish flakes on tule mats. After many days when dehydration is complete, flakes are pounded between rocks into a fine powder, which is then pressed into a storage bucket for future use. A quart of chelae is derived from flakes an inch deep spread on a three-foot square drying rack. Indians say the powder serves as a delightful seasoning.

How well the redmen know that the river is not always friendly. Occasionally a luckless one in the past has lost his footing to slip into churning waters which now and then have claimed a fisherman for her own. When this happened a yellow flag flew over the long-house. Fishing was suspended until funeral services were over and the luckless one was on his mysterious way to happy hunting grounds in never-never land.

In more recent years Indians have become more practical. They carry ropes tied around their waists and anchored to fishing platforms. In the old days, Indians never used ropes.

Legend says they thought by challenging dangers of the rocks, meant they were battling salmon on equal footing. Thus it was a test of bravery and daring to exercise caution. However, even with ropes today, fishing with nets continues to have its elements of danger. Understanding white folk declare the Indians earn all the fish they can get.

Redmen of long ago supplemented their fish fare with venison, huckleberries and camas roots, but today



Eugene Hotel

Eugene, Oregon

Headquarters
For All Occasions

C. E. McLean, Mgr.

Telephone 12 · 121 Lyon Street

NISSEN MOTOR CO.

Ford

Authorized Dealer

ALBANY, OREGON