



# word nerd

By RYAN HUME  
FOR COAST WEEKEND

## CHENAMUS

[Tʃɪ • NƏ • MƏS]

noun

1. Successor to Chief Comcomly, Chenamus reigned over a band of roughly 160 Chinook between the time of Comcomly's death in 1830 until his own demise in 1845. He lived with his many wives in a large house built of fir in Qwatsamuts village at the mouth of Wallacut River on Baker Bay near present-day Ilwaco.

Like Comcomly before him, Chenamus welcomed trade with British and American ships and settlers. In 1840, he arrived with 20 warriors at Fort George to help guard the post from a Clatsop uprising. His fondness for rum and fine garments helped establish the Chinook Jargon trade language.

2. Chenamus Street: Former name of the historic main drag through downtown Astoria until around the turn of the 20th century. Chenamus Street, which had boarding houses and saloons and ran through Chinatown, known then for its opium dens and prostitutes, ran the straight length of what is currently Marine Drive into Bond Street.

3. Brig Chenamus: a two-masted sailing ship run by Captain John H. Couch. On his second trip to the Oregon Territory, Couch rounded Cape Horn, stopped by the Hawaiian Islands before slipping down the Columbia River and into the Willamette River and into the Willamette Valley, near what is now Oregon City, in 1842.

4. Chenamus Lake: a



Chenamus Lake

small, freshwater lake in the Indian Heaven Wilderness of Gifford Pinchot National Forest near Mt. Adams in central Washington.

### Origin:

From the Chinook, meaning unknown. Chenamus took the name upon his ascension to chiefdom, and there is some debate about who exactly he was before he became ruler.

Some years after his death, another lesser-known chief took the name Chenamus and presided over a smaller band of Chinook. He was murdered by a white settler in 1865. There are conflicting reports on whether the chief was stabbed in the heart or shot, but it is agreed that his tribe dispatched of his killer quickly.

"White traffic, especially American, at that place was heavier now than ever before. One of the few concessions these whites made to its Indians for their takeover was the naming of the ship after Chenamus."

—Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown, "The Chinook Indians: Traders of the


Lower Columbia River, University of Oklahoma Press," 1976, P. 211

"The Weekly Astorian noted in 1879 that one Chinese woman 'stood in the doorway of a den on Chenamus street soliciting patronage.'"

—Chris Friday, *Organizing Asian-American Labor: The Pacific Coast Canned-Salmon Industry, 1870-1942*, Temple University Press, 2010, P. 60

"Now that the business of Astoria has assumed the proportions of a city and many places of business are so located as to make Squemocqha, Concomly and Chenamus streets a business center, the annoyance of speaking the names of those

streets correctly, to say nothing as to the pronunciation (particularly of Squemocqha), compel business men to petition for a change of nomenclature. This petition asks that the name of Concomly be changed to First street; that Chenamus be changed to Second street, and so on until Court street is reached passing south from the river front, when after passing Court street the name of the next is Seventh, and so on to the summit. There may be valid objections to the alteration of the names of Jefferson and Astor streets, as those are proper and popular names, but as to the three streets bearing the unpronounceable indian names that these do, none can object to alteration."

—D.C. Ireland, "The Names of Astoria Streets," *The Daily Astorian*, Wednesday, Nov. 14, 1877, P. 1 

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## Sankta Lucia Festival of Lights held Nov. 24

ASTORIA — The Sankta Lucia Festival of Lights will take place Friday, Nov. 24, at the Astoria High School auditorium. This year's Lucia Bride is 2017 Miss Sweden Kara Dowaliby. The cost is \$1, or \$5 for a family.

A sing-a-long with ChrisLynn Taylor begins at 6:30 p.m., the program at 7 p.m.

After the introduction to the 2018 Court, the entertainment includes: the North Coast Chorale, the Dowaliby sisters, Nordic/Viking Dancers, Squeezer and the Geezer, Coreen Bergholm and Ken Pres-thus for dance and entertainment. Refreshments will be provided by the Sons of Norway.

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