

NEZ PERCES, AT RELIGIOUS MEETING, WORSHIP AND LIVE AS DO WHITES

Idaho Christianized Indians Pass Ten Days in Seclusion to Do Homage to Their Faith and Show Progress in Direction of Civilization.

General Assembly Text

LEWISTON, Idaho, July 12.—(Special.)—A remarkable spirit of sincerity was evident in the 16th annual camp meeting at Nez Perce



tion of the Nez Perce tribe, aided Government representatives as well as leaders of the tribe to gain land ownership, established homes, rear families and till the soil.

There is nowhere in the entire United States a meeting in which Indians are the sole participants with the features of religion combined with industry.

Indians at their camp grounds near Mason Butte, better known among them as Talmaka, "the lair of the deer." The Six Perces, numbering 700 and representing the wife of the tribe which has accepted Christianity, last week packed their Summer outing apparel and embarked with their families to their camp allotment in the Craig Mountains, where they are away from all other life. This spot set aside by the Government covers an area of three and three-quarters acres, and is situated on a high plateau overlooking

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The phrase "Lo, the poor Indian!" was not applicable to the Nez Percés, as evidenced by the visitor to their camp meeting which closed late this week. The tribe only 36 years ago was a nomadic and nomadic tribe, and a renegade tribe, still following a chief, living upon the mountain slopes, and tilling little land, having scarcely any property, nomadic and subsisting on the coarsest of foods and in the rudest of dwellings.

Modern Ways Adopted.

Ministers, merchants and farmers, big stalwart iron-fists and men who have experienced adversity in the early days of the Pacific Northwest, were there with their families. They were there with confidence and intent upon bringing about what they spoke of in slow and sincere tones—"the union of the minds of the Indian and the white man's understanding of us, so we can live together as one people under the American flag. It was that which we desired to which they referred again and again in their

Equipment Is Substantial.

The general status of the Nez Percé tribe was shown by inspecting their outfits. They have substantial teams and well equipped and modern outfits to emulate the neighboring white farmer. Silverware was in evidence in their tables and chinaware was universal. Indeed, the absence of a total absence of the tribal costume, their meetings were entirely American in character, in the use of both Indian and English language and

If the general impression is that the Indians of the Northwest are retrograde, narrow, and unprogressive, it is because they are not receptive of the modern methods of living, and modern methods of business, these impressions should be discarded.

Secluded for a period of 10 days, beginning a few days before the Fourth of July, and ending with the Fourth of July week, the association of churchmen of the tribe hold the annual meeting. The meeting is carefully planned so that the Indians, who have not yet accepted their faith, with their families, take in this pre-harvest festival, and the Christians, with their speeches and sermons.

Time Given to Devotion.

Quite significant was the manner in which the time was spent. The Indian leaders assumed entire control, managed the meeting, selected the speakers and took charge of the singing. It was purely an Indian undertaking, and the well-known chiefs of the Northwest to tell them of things going on in the outside world. Indian ministers, merchants and farmers, with their families, were present for a 10 days' period of devotion and rest before entering upon the arduous harvest season.

In every assembly there was a marked quality and a separation from the dissipation which characterized celebrations a few years ago.

This tribe is strongly organized under the leadership of Chief Joseph. Stuart as the recognized leader and mediator. It has been through his diplomacy and his persistence that the tribe has been able to secure its rights in Congress, and even two Presidents have given their attention to him and his people. It is from the hands of the tribe and gained what he went for and secured passage of many bills of great importance to Indians.

Fashionable Clothing Worn.—The Indian family is now far different than it was even ten years ago. The women are dressed in the blanket and moccasined girls and the "teased" babies upon their mothers' backs are a few of the typical characteristics of the tribe. They have been almost forgotten and are cast-offs. Instead of the men wearing blanket and moccasins at the meeting they were attired in civilian clothes, neatly polished shoes and immaculate linen, and their hair was combed to accord with the latest fashions.

The women of the tribe, for the most

part, dressed in the latest styles of dress and hats. One Indian man sang, that he does not appreciate the better life conditions, is a wrong impression to encourage. The Indians this year purchased a large lot of sewing machine capacity of nearly 500, and at every meeting this tent was filled to its capacity. The women of the tribe at this camp meeting was the singing. In this little Indian girls and boys and grown men and women entered into the spirit of the song. The song was "Joseph" cantata "Joseph" and it was one of the biggest features of the meeting.

Devoted Woman Attends.—With 33 years of service as a missionary among the Nez Perce, Miss Kate McBeth, of the Christian Mission, mother to the Christian Indians, for the 16th consecutive time, at the age of 65, attended the meeting.

Status of Women Changed.—Probably one of the most noticeable things in the Indian family life, as shown at this meeting, was the status of the woman. The woman is the housekeeper and the household manager, while the masculine side of the family is the warrior. When she was she was compelled to assume when conditions of living were different when the men were killed in the woods or hunted all day in the woods, while the wife was the worker.

In this tribe there is an insistent plea for education. The women have a desire for higher education for their children and a plea to get away from tribal selfishness. They want to see their children get a better education and to escape the white plague among their children, to bring them up to a plane of civilization.

part, have adopted the modern apparel in dress and behavior, at there are some who still retain the variegated blanket. While the Indian woman does not quite measure up to the white woman in dress, as shown in this meeting, she is a good mother. The Indian family is, for the most part, small, but at this meeting there were families of seven members, all of them wearing modern attire, and the babies were not strapped and encased in the "cocoon" device, an ancient custom—they were wheeled in modern go-carts. The representatives of the tribe among the men displayed that they are "good providers" for children who appeared to be well cared for, well dressed, and well fed.

Stars and Stripes Displayed.

The grand old sentence of a typical Indian POWWOW, or *Ma-Nay*, gathering

was the retaining of the tepee. Quite different, indeed, were these tepees from those of the Joseph wars, or the renegade brothers who were carrying on their accustomed gala week festivities in the hot creek valleys with their Indian dragoon friends.

The temporary quarters of the Christianized Indians in this meeting

There was no cooking over an open fire. The stoves were clean and securely erected, and before every one of them was flown the American flag, and upon the flap of every tent was draped the Stars and Stripes instead of a scalp or a war outfit. Neat linen and modern mattresses covered springs of iron beds. They brought with them the comforts of a home.

campfire; there was a menu of choice meat cuts, potatoes, vegetables and dessert, and all of it was cooked by Indian housewives in either standard stoves or over camp-stove fires. The meals were served on blankets laid on the ground. They were served upon long tables in a large tent constructed on moderate elevated open ground at the meeting.

Under these conditions the Christians' National Conference of 1917, 1918, 1919, and 1920 were held.

age of the years.

Was Sam's House No Bar.

"Sam went on the road when he was 18 and he is 56 now," said "Aunt Jane." "I've been meeting trains ever since. Every time either the boys or girls were coming through. Sam hasn't been on the road for three years, but Elhanan went with him. He was the first conductor now on the Roseburg local. I saw him this morning when he went to the Roseburg Round House."

Photo by Armstrong.

"Aunt Jane" Veach, of Cottage Grove, who has been on the road for 38 years.

Met Every Train Carrying Her Railroad "Babe".

ten days with their tents pitched in a circle in a wide, open space, sheltered here and there by a few trees.

Many Old Indians Precede

There were families present representing four generations and families of three generations were common. In the band of 750, now represented by about three-fifths of the old, there were old gray-haired men who have passed the three score and ten mark, and an old woman who fought against the Sioux, the Cheyennes and the Spokanes, with their leader, Chief Joseph. There were present those men who were the first to be driven from the tribe ever since the white man invaded their lands. There was Kip

morrow and then I'll see him again Monday on his way back to Roseburg," said the man, and in his anticipation of seeing her "baby" again no soon.

Imagine if you can, what it means to me to be trained in all sorts of wind and weather, at all times of night or day, 7866 times at the lowest estimate! That is "Aunt Jane's" record at a miserly guess.

For many years Sam was conductor on the midnight overland, but he was "kicked out" of that position to become "grievance man" for the railway employes. Never, however, in all the time that he conducted the night train did he ever get to bed before 2 o'clock in the morning and go to the

morning, but "Aunt Jane" and her daughters were game for anything and they could only see "the boys."

"I don't like to get out of the freight," said she, "because sometimes we would get to talk to the boys for as much as an hour when they were loading or unloading and even some of the men would come in and talk to me. The weather never was any object to me in those days, but of late years I have been a little more particular about the depot. Elbannan has a day train too, which makes it lots more convenient. I expect to keep on going till I die, though no more night train is on, and I guess that will

Kip Pa Lin Kih, whose father was one of the first to come west, spent most of his life as a cowboy. He rode out, sometimes having to contend with the weather, the blizzards and the snowstorms, and the long distances. He would stallwork, form a herd or two, and then go to St. Louis early in the '80s to search for the white man's Bible; Moses Monteth, a half-breed Indian of the same time, also came west. He stands as one of the greatest warriors of the tribe and one of the famous old gamblers of the pioneer days; Felix Coteau and the Shoshone Indians of the Perce tribe during the tribal organization.

Cottage Grove has literally grown up with "Aunt Jane," for she rode horses back across the plains to become the second of Cottage Grove's brides in 1852. Last year she rode in the Fourth of July parade on the very horse on which she came across the plains.