

# Chinooks don't want to share L&C spotlight

SOUTH BEND, Wash. (AP) — Representatives of the Indian tribe that welcomed a soggy and tired Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific in 1805 after a 4,000-mile trek says it may take a hike of its own when bicentennial festivities here begin.

The Chinook tribe says it will pull out of the celebrations at the western end of the Lewis and Clark Trail if another, smaller, group, the Clatsop-Nehalem tribe, is allowed to participate on an equal footing.

At issue is the identity of the "homeland tribe" that helped the explorers.

"It is a huge issue for us," said Gary Johnson, chairman of the larger group organized as the Chinook Indian Nation.

"In our belief they (the Clatsop-Nehalems) are not a historic or traditional tribal group," said Johnson, who lives in this town about 50 miles north of where Lewis and Clark ended their westward trek to the Pacific.

The journals of Lewis and Clark mention several tribes at Fort Clatsop, where they spent the 1805-06 winter, but named Fort Clatsop after the one nearest them. Fort Clatsop was near present-day Astoria, Ore., where the Columbia River empties into the Pacific.

The Clatsops were dominant in the area. The Nehalems, the Tillamooks and other tribes pri-

marily lived to the south.

Today the Chinooks claim to be the "Homeland Tribe" that represents the Lower Chinook, Clatsop, Willapa, Wahiakum and Cathlamet tribes, who make up the lion's share of the lower Columbia groups.

The Clatsop-Nehalems, the Chinooks contend, are comelately interlopers who actually fall under their jurisdiction.

Joe Scovell, chairman of the Clatsop-Nehalems, disagrees.

"We have had (separate status) historically and the treaties say we have it. They just don't want to accept us as equal participants," said Scovell, 81, who lives in Turner, Ore. in the Willamette Valley.

The controversy might mystify the explorers, who seemed to find more similarities than differences among the tribes.

"The Clatsops, Chinooks and Killamucks (Tillamooks) are very loquacious and inquisitive..." Meriwether Lewis wrote in January 1806. "They appear to be a mild inoffensive people and have been very friendly to us."

"The Killamucks, Clatsops, Chinooks, Cathlamas and Wacqui-cums resemble each other as well in their persons and dress as in their habits and manners..." Lewis wrote in March 1806, a few days before the expedition left Fort Clatsop for home.

The river tribes helped get

the explorers through the miserable winter of 1805-1806 at Fort Clatsop.

Five days of bicentennial activities are planned for the Oregon and Washington sides of the Columbia River beginning Nov. 11, 2005, the same time of year the explorers reached the Pacific.

Other celebrations will mark the bicentennial of other events, ending with one in March 2006 to commemorate the departure of the explorers as they began their long journey home.

Several tribes in the region have been invited to take part.

Although tribal lineage has been blurred over time, the Chinooks insist on representing all American Indian groups that

welcomed Lewis and Clark on the Pacific Coast, and want a lesser role for the Clatsop-Nehalems.

Since neither group has federally recognized tribal status, the issue has become one of history and ethnic ties, not of law.

"We will take each activity one at a time," Johnson said. "But we have stated our position. We will not participate as equal partners with the Clatsop-Nehalem."

The Clatsop-Nehalems would like to demonstrate canoe-making and other tribal skills at the celebration, Scovell said.

The disputing sides have met, but to no avail.

A retired educator, Scovell said the Clatsop-Nehalems were

treated separately when tribal rolls were drawn up in 1906, and in 1851 treaties. The Clatsops and Nehalems lived near each other, got along and shared a language, he said.

While some Clatsops may be Chinooks, Scovell says, not all of them choose to be, and some have opted to be Clatsop-Nehalems.

His "Brief History of the Clatsop-Nehalem People" says today's Clatsop-Nehalem people are the combined product of Clatsop and Nehalem-Tillamook ancestry and descendants of the tribes Lewis and Clark found on the lower Columbia.

In the late 1980s Clatsop-Nehalems, led by Scovell, began

enrolling members.

The nationwide Council of Tribal Advisers has identified 58 tribes, including the Clatsop-Nehalems, as among those who helped Lewis and Clark.

Jan Mitchell, president of the local Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Association, said it has issued broad invitations among tribes and wants to stay out of tribal politics.

"They have been invited to come back and participate if they are willing to do so," she said.

Noting that the arrival of the explorers was the beginning of the end of traditional Indian lifestyles, she said "not all (Indians) are excited about the bicentennial."

## Research team uncovers history

FORT JACKSON, S.C. (AP) — Deep in the loblolly pine forest of this Army training base, small teams of archaeologists are digging up dirt and sifting buckets of soil to glean information about America's early peoples.

"The research potential here is great because it is such a large tract of land," said Deborah Keene, a University of South Carolina archaeologist overseeing digs at sites across Fort Jackson's 52,300 acres on the eastern edge of Columbia.

"We can look at populations over time - from the earliest humans in the area right up to the historical period," she said.

Under contract with the U.S. Army, researchers from the university's Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology are investigating some 660 sites that could be significant enough for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The groups are working from initial surveys done in the 1980s and '90s that identified potential sites. Now, researchers use

global positioning devices to determine the location and size of each site to help them gather information about the land's early inhabitants.

At one site miles away from the fort's noisy rifle and tank ranges, a half-dozen young diggers carefully lift shovels full of soil. A co-worker slowly sifts the dirt in a screened box and shakes it. It is hot, sweaty, tedious labor.

Elizabeth May, 24, smiles as she holds up her find of the day: a rough, pockmarked shard of reddish pottery.

"It's a check-stamp made by a carved wooden paddle pressed into wet clay then fired," said Keene, explaining the lined decoration on the tiny fragment.

The researcher unfolds exacting survey charts of each of the sites.

The whereabouts of every item is kept in researchers' logbooks and repeated on tiny envelopes that hold the artifacts.

"That way, we have several records of everything that we have done," Keene said.

May's discovery probably dated from inhabitants of the Woodland Period, which ranges from 2000 B.C. to 1000 A.D., Keene said.

"These people would have been living there, as it was on high ground and within easy walking distance to water," she said. Several creeks run through the present-day military installation.

"They may or may not have been living there full time. ... Maize agriculture really wasn't in full swing yet, so they were generally hunter-gatherers supplementing their diet with some domesticated plants," Keene explained.

Anything found on federal land belongs to the U.S. government.

To discourage potential illegal collecting, the archaeologists prefer not to make public the exact location of their work or the extent of their finds.

Mark Dutton, the Army's natural resource specialist at Fort Jackson, said researchers have found artifacts that could

date back 10,000 years.

"We confer constantly with Native American tribes to make sure we don't have something that they consider to be of a religious or ceremonial nature," he said.

While no such discoveries have been made here, researchers at Fort Stewart have found burial mounds. The Army installation west of Savannah, Ga., also has about 60 cemeteries and a pre-Revolutionary War British fort, said spokesman Rich Olsen.

"We have an archaeologist on staff. We have a pretty active program," he said.

Dutton said he confers regularly with representatives of 10 different American Indian nations whose ancestors may have hunted or traveled around present-day Fort Jackson.

The land within the base's borders attracted settlers from various historical eras, he said.

"If it was a good hunting site for early Indians, it probably was a good site for early American settlers, too," Dutton said.

## Living conditions match Third World

PHOENIX (AP) — Some lawmakers vow to seek more federal funding for American Indians after touring the Navajo reservation and seeing widespread poverty.

"I've been to 48 or 50 different countries and that housing is comparable to the Third World," said Rep. Robert Ney, R-Ohio, chairman of the House Financial Services subcommittee on housing and community opportunity. "Those are the toughest living conditions I've seen."

Ney and members of his subcommittee were on a recent tour of housing on the reservation before attending the first housing subcommittee hearing ever held on Native American land.

The tour was arranged by Rep. Rick Renzi, R-Ariz., who was appalled at housing he saw in his 1st Congressional District after being elected about 18 months ago.

"I visited Kaibito and saw three children living in a mud

hut with their grandmother. Their stomachs were distended with dysentery. When I came home, I cried," Renzi added. "I thought, 'How can I call myself a congressman and not do something about this?'"

Experts say housing on reservations is substandard because of poverty and the lack of infrastructure like water, sewer and electrical service.

Because much of the land is held in trust for the tribe by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, individuals don't own it and cannot use it for collateral to secure loans or mortgages.

Because of the lack of employment, many tribal members cannot qualify for credit.

Committee members said they will return to Washington and work for improved funding and other solutions.

"It's unbelievable seeing this kind of poverty in America. It's like South Africa," said Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., another member of the subcommittee.

## Tribe's second casino opens on a high note

SALAMANCA, N.Y. (AP) — The Seneca Indian Nation's second casino has opened for business in a scene that included traditional American Indian dancers, music and fireworks.

The Senecas already operate the profitable Niagara Falls casino, which opened New Year's Eve 2002.

The \$71 million Seneca Allegany Casino, which made its debut on a recent Saturday night, is the first full-fledged casino in the Southern Tier, and is expected to attract gamblers from western New York and Pennsylvania.

The new gambling hall features 1,700 slot machines and 22 gambling tables including blackjack, craps and roulette.

There's also a bingo hall, buffet room, diner and snack bar.

In Maine, voters last fall re-

jected two Maine Indian tribes' referendum proposal to build a \$650 million casino in the Sanford area.

Since then, the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy tribes have asked for the Legislature's backing to run a slot-machine operation at Bangor's harness racing track, which is being bought by Penn National Gaming Inc. Lawmakers turned them down.

On opening night at the Seneca Allegany Casino, Victor Morley, 38, of Dayton, won \$214,000 after shoving 75 cents into a slot machine called Wheel of Fortune. He said the experience was "numbifying" and plans to donate some of his winnings to charity.

Seneca leaders hailed the casino's opening as a major step toward the revival of the local economy and the nation's quest for financial independence.

## Rivals meet during tribal election

WHITE EARTH, Minn. (AP) — A man is trying to reclaim his job as chairman of the White Earth Indian Reservation, the largest Chippewa reservation in the state, against a woman whose testimony helped send him to federal prison for nearly three years.

He says she's "evil." She says he's a "crook."

Darrell (Chip) Wadena, 65, was the most prominent American Indian leader in Minnesota for more than two decades. That is, until his 1996 conviction in federal court for bid-rigging and other crimes related to his tribe's casino gambling business.

Wadena faces his bitter rival, Erma Vizenor, in the June 8 election.

"Chip Wadena was put in a position of trust and responsibility, he stole from our people, he was convicted of more than a dozen felonies and sent to federal prison ... And he thinks that I'm evil?" Vizenor said.

Vizenor, 59, the Harvard graduate and former White Earth secretary-treasurer, says she feels she has been "politically blacklisted" by Wadena and his allies.

A longtime educator, Vizenor was one of 150 tribal members to occupy the Minneapolis office of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs at a protest in 1991. The group demanded an overhaul of the BIA and an accounting of the \$12 million that they said the BIA gave to then-tribal Chairman Wadena.

Wadena, who dabbles as a used-car salesman, is personable and always ready with an answer.

"They say I took all this money, but I don't know where it's at." He's maintained a popularity on the reservation that defies the nearly three years he spent in federal prison.

David Lillehaug, the former U.S. attorney whose office prosecuted Wadena, was so incensed by Wadena's candidacy that he sent letters to six local newspapers.

Lillehaug noted in his letter that Wadena took \$428,000 from a subcontractor in connection with the construction of the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen, took tribal funds in addition to his \$144,000 salary.

Moss Tibbetts, 48, who works for White Earth's vocational program, has another take

on the election. "Sure, Erma has these fancy degrees from some college out East, but who needs a college degree to handle some of the jobs we have here on the reservation?"

Tibbetts, a distant cousin of Wadena, added: "The newspapers and Erma like to call Chip 'a convicted felon.' Well, get over it. Why convict one man when everyone has his finger in the pot?"

But not everyone has been accused, or convicted, of stealing from his own people, said John Buckanaga, former White Earth tribal chairman and former director of the Indian Health Service office in Bemidji that oversees reservations in three states.

"This is a very corrupt individual, and if he gets elected, all the federal contracts and grants we have will come under scrutiny," said Buckanaga, a staunch Vizenor supporter.

"Would the U.S. government hire John Dillinger or Al Capone to take over the treasury?" he asked rhetorically. "Why can't the people of White Earth see Chip Wadena for the con man he is?"

The tribal council voted 3-2 to allow Wadena on the primary election ballot in late March.

Wadena, one of 13 candidates, proved to be the most popular, with 691 votes, or nearly one-third. Vizenor, with 554 votes, won the other spot on the general election ballot.

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