

Sixty-two years ago the loss of Celilo Falls

In early 1957—sixty-two years ago this March 10—the steel and concrete floodgates of The Dalles Dam closed on the Columbia River, the N'Chi Wana, the Big River.

Within just a few hours—13 miles upstream from the newly-built dam—the great tribal fishery Celilo Falls disappeared.

The silence was haunting—still felt by some elders to this day. An idea of the sound the Indian people had heard from the falls for thousands of years:

The name 'Celilo' itself may be a reference to the roar of the water upon the rock formations.

From time immemorial Celilo had been the great fishing and trading center of the entire Northwest, and beyond.

On this anniversary of the great tragedy we look back at the circumstances.

Recalling the Falls

The morning of March 10, 1957, ten-thousand people—including many tribal members—arrived at The Dalles dam. They witnessed the destruction of the oldest continually inhabited place in the region—one of the oldest communities in North America.

The falls formed a rough horseshoe shape across the river, and nearby were two ancient Indian villages—Wyam, on the Oregon side of the



Historic photos of tribal fishing at the mighty Celilo Falls.

Courtesy photos

river, and S'kin on the other shore—which also disappeared into the reservoir behind the dam.

The name 'Celilo Falls' was adopted from the Indian name some time after Lewis and Clark and their Corps of Discovery reached the area, first in October 1805 and again the following April.

They referred to the cataract as simply 'the Great Falls.' They gave non-Native names to other nearby sites: A very short distance below the falls, for example, came a funnel where the river was less than 50 yards wide—essentially turning the river on its side. They called this place the 'Short Narrows.'

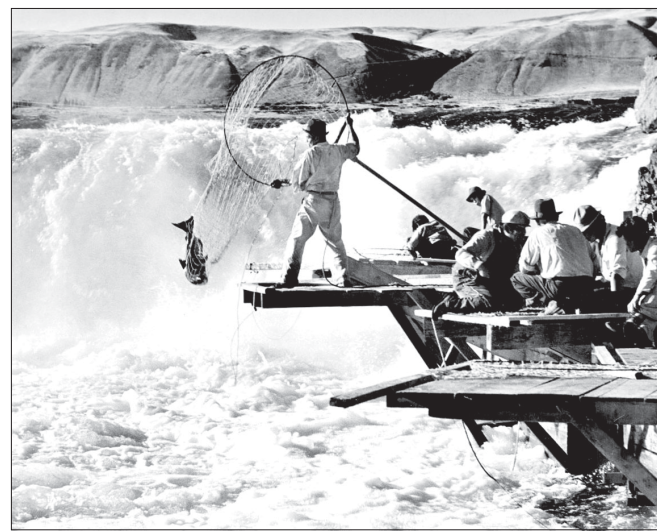
This was followed by a stretch of rock-strewn rap-

ids that ended at the 'Long Narrows,' a three-mile narrowing along which the river's width did not exceed 100 yards.

Indians fished along the entire stretch of the river from the falls to The Dalles, but were most active near the base of the falls and at the Long Narrows.

In the narrows areas, basalt outcroppings provided places to stand along and in the river's rocks, and the protruding rocks swirled the river into opaque turbulence that concealed the Indians' nets from the sharp-eyed salmon.

Farther upstream, others fished with spear, hook, and net from perches on timber scaffolds built over the boiling water at the very base



of the falls.

The Indians called the Columbia river 'Nch'i Wana,' and from it they gathered huge numbers of fattened fish returning upstream to spawn.

When the spring thaw bloated the river, the Natives would concentrate their efforts at the Long Narrows, a few miles downriver from

the tumultuous and dangerous falls. In the summer months, when the river had calmed down, they would move back upstream to Celilo Falls and the Short Narrows to continue fishing there.

The fishery was unbelievably rich. It has been estimated that before commercial fishing began, between

six million and ten million fish returned to spawn in the Columbia and its tributaries each year.

Archaeological findings have established that Indians had been catching salmon between The Dalles and Celilo Falls for as long as 11,000 years, and Wyam was one of the oldest continuously inhabited sites in the region.

The largest tribes living near the falls year around were the Upper Chinookan Wasco, who lived on the south bank near the Dalles; the Sk'in-a-ma, who lived on the north side of Celilo Falls near the present town of Wishram; the Klickitat, who ranged throughout a large area of the Columbia Basin; and the Sahaptins, who lived and fished on the Oregon side of the falls and whose village, Silailo (also called Wyam), is believed to be the origin of the name Celilo.

It may also be the Sahaptin who gave Wyam its name, which in their language meant, appropriately, 'the sound of water upon rocks.'

Lewis and Clark also took the first rough census of the population along this portion of the Columbia.

They estimated that in 1805 and 1806, between 7,400 and 10,400 Indians were living permanently or seasonally encamped between the Cascade Rapids and The Dalles.

Washington state could step into dam regulation

Washington could gain regulatory control over federal hydropower dams in the Columbia and Snake rivers, allowing the state to better protect its waters and restore its salmon population.

The dams are a major contributor to the rivers' high temperatures, which are killing the region's salmon populations.

The dam operators have not had to follow state standards since they were built. Now, their operators might have to follow state guidelines for the first time, thanks to a lawsuit filed by an environmental group.

The nine federal dams in the Columbia and Snake rivers within the state of Washington were built before the Clean Water Act, which governs water pollution in the U.S.

Until now, the federal dam operators have not been required to follow the law's standards and also haven't been required to adhere to the state's standards, which include pollution discharge limits and a temperature limit of 68 degrees in the Columbia River.

But Washington state might finally have its chance to regulate the federal dams, thanks to lawsuits filed by Columbia Riverkeeper, an organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the Columbia River.

The organization reached

a settlement in 2014 with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation—which operate the dams—to reduce the dams' toxic oil pollution discharge.

The federal hydropower dam operators must now apply for discharge elimination permits from the Environmental Protection Agency for each federal dam.

This is where Washington state enters the picture: The EPA must consult Washington's Department of Ecology to make sure its permits meet state standards. In a related development:

More dam spill

While federal officials consider breaching one or more dams in Washington to increase salmon survival, state officials are considering increasing spill over the dams to help more smolts survive in the meantime.

If there is too little spill at hydrodams, more young, vulnerable salmon are sent down more dangerous turbines to get past them. If there is too much spill, they can die from the pressure, with gas bubbles suffocating their gills. It's similar to 'the bends.'

At the direction of the governor's orca task force, Washington is trying to strike a balance by increasing spill thresholds so more smolts can make it through.

NEW Classes and Job Search Assistance

Located at the Education Building at 1110 Wasco Street * Warm Springs, OR 97756

DROP IN SERVICES

Offered most Mondays, upstairs in the WIOA office. There is no appointment needed, so stop by and get one-on-one help with a variety of services including:

- iMatchSkills/WorkSource registration
- Signing up for workshops
- Filing for Unemployment
- Career Guidance & Assessments
- Resumes and cover letters
- Help with job applications
- Enrollment in WIOA & services



Session Times & Dates:

March 1	9am-12pm & 1pm-4pm
March 4	9am-12pm & 1pm-4pm
March 11	9am-12pm & 1pm-4pm
March 18	9am-12pm & 1pm-4pm
March 25	9am-12pm & 1pm-4pm

COMPUTER LAB ASSISTANCE

Offered most Fridays, upstairs in the computer lab. There is no appointment needed. Practice using a computer, working on a word or excel project, or job search online. There are tutorials available and someone will be in the lab for assistance



Dates & Times:

March 1	1pm-4pm
March 8	1pm-4pm
March 15	1pm-4pm
March 22	1pm-4pm
March 29	1pm-4pm

FREE WORKSHOPS

Workshops are upstairs in the computer lab, and offered most Fridays on a rotating schedule. *The classes do require a current iMatchSkills account and pre-registration, so come in during any drop-in service time to get assistance signing-up.*

Class Descriptions / Dates & Times

ONLINE JOB SEARCH BASICS - Learn good job search websites, online applications, uploading & emailing, researching companies, and labor market information.
March 8 10am-11:30am

SOFT SKILLS - Learn the difference between Hard and Soft skills, and why soft skills are so valuable to employers.
March 15 10am-11:30am

JOB SUCCESS - This class goes over some of the common issues new employees have when they get a job and what employers value most.
March 22 10am-11:30am

STAYING POSITIVE WHILE JOB SEARCHING - Tips to keep yourself positive while dealing with your job search.
March 29 10am-11:30am

Additional workshops and computer classes will be coming soon.

