



Watchlist: 'The tragic story of this famous meteorite'

(Editor's note: It is estimated that there are approximately 149 billion videos on YouTube, and the number continues to grow. Grand Ronde Tribal member and Social Media/Digital Journalist Kamiah Koch sifts through those videos twice a month to recommend a worthwhile Indigenous video to watch. Follow her bimonthly recommendations and enjoy!)

By Kamiah Koch

Social media/digital journalist

The culturally significant Tomanowos meteorite from the Willamette Valley is currently held on display in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Every year, a few Grand Ronde Tribal members coordinate with the museum to pay a visit to Tomanowos to smudge it, clean it with cedar branches and spend time with it.

In 2023, a welcome brunch was hosted for the delegates from Grand Ronde in the Gems and Minerals Hall of the museum. Connected to the Gems and Mineral Hall is the Meteorites Hall, where a different meteorite is held.

Like Tomanowos, the Ahnighito meteorite landed in Greenland and was culturally important to the Indigenous Inughuit people.

Vox published a video in January 2024, sharing the history of this meteorite, how it came to rest in the American Museum of Natural History and the Inughuit people brought with it.

The video explains an American explorer named Robert Peary came to Greenland in the 1800s.

"Peary was part of an era of European and American exploration in the late 19th century obsessed with the parts of the map not yet reached by white people," the video narrator said.

By the time Peary contacted the Inughuit, a trade system had been established and the Inughuit showed Peary how to survive in the artic.

According to Vox, Peary knew he had to come home with something to keep his backers interested, and he had heard the Inughuit had access to a rare iron meteorite.

"In exchange for a gun to an Inughuit man who said he knew the location of the 'iron mountain,' Peary was led right to it," the narrator said. "A lot of this history has been lost to time, but what historians do know that Peary did not ask for permission for what he did next."

He sailed Ahnighito to New York, along with six Inughuit people whom he promised would return to Greenland once the meteorite was delivered.

Unbeknownst to them, Peary had promised to bring an Inughuit person back to the American Museum of Natural History to be studied.

When they arrived in New York, 20,000 people paid to come aboard the ship to see the meteorite and the indigenous Inughuit people.

And to no one's surprise, the promises made by Peary were quickly broken. The six Inughuit included a hunter named Nuktaq, his wife, Atangana and their 12-year-old daughter Aviaq; a hunter name Uisaakassak; another hunter named Qisak and his 7-year-old son named Minik.

All but Minik and Uisaakassak died shortly after arriving in New York.

"The museum told Minik they had buried Qisak, but that wasn't true," the narrator said. "Qisak's body was dissected and his remains were stored inside the museum for further study."

As Minik got older he discovered the truth and publicly pleaded for the museum to return his father's remains for a burial, but was ignored. They kept the bodies of all four Inughuit until 1993, and today still have the Ahnighito meteorite on display.

The Ahnighito display has no mention of Minik or the five other Inughuit who were given empty promises.

You can watch the rest of the video for yourself at www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvdtWfHpCR4. ■

Tribal nonemergency text line

The Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department has a nonemergency text line at 541-921-2927.

"If you have a nonemergency situation or question, feel free to contact my officer via text through this line," said Grand Ronde Tribal Police Chief Jake McKnight. "When one of my officers receives the text, they will call you back when they have time."

McKnight said that emergency situations still require calling 911. For more information, contact McKnight at 503-879-1474. ■

Grand Ronde Tribal Library

Join us at our upcoming Tribal Library events

| APRIL EVENTS! | JULY EVENTS! |
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| APRIL 3RD-30TH LIBRARY Native Innovations Exhibit presents a celebration and recognition of many science and engineering innovations developed and used by Oregon's Indigenous peoples. | JULY 9TH 11AM GYM Paradise of Samoa Original Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Maori, Hawaiian, and Tahitian dance |
| APRIL 22ND 5:30PM GYM Steph Littlebird Discuss her soon to be released book Coyote & Meadowlark Make Willamette Falls | JULY 11TH (TIME TBD) GYM Pueblo Aspen Song Kids Cultural sharing, come learn about Taos Pueblo language, culture, heritage and tradition |
| JUNE EVENTS! | AUGUST EVENTS! |
| JUNE 13TH 11AM GYM Oregon Coast Aquarium Come learn about tidepools! | JULY 16TH 11AM GYM Jeff Evans Magic Show Magic, comedy, and fun for all ages! |
| JUNE 16TH-AUGUST 9TH Summer Reading Program Track your reading minutes, complete reading logs, earn prizes, and weekly take home packet | AUGUST 6TH 11AM GYM Red Yarn Music & puppetry! |

FREE FINANCIAL FOUNDATIONS WORKSHOPS

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is collaborating with DevNW to offer free Financial Foundations workshops.

Financial Foundations explores the following topics:

DevNW

Budget & cash flow planning, Money goal setting, Tackling debt, Channeling savings for big goals, Financial planning for retirement, Protecting your assets, Strengthening credit.

Financial Foundations May classes:

May Zoom:

Zoom, 5:30-7:30pm, Tuesdays, May 7, 14, 21, 28

Zoom, 9am-5pm, Saturday, May 18

Register online:

www.devnw.org/go/ctgr/

Questions? Email caitlin.zimbrick@grandronde.org

To learn more about IDA's visit <https://oregonidainitiative.org/>

Financial Foundations is required to sign up for an IDA (Individual Development Account) matched savings. Limited space available, must meet eligibility requirements.

