

Spirit of the Salmon: Indigenous Spirituality and Sustainability in the Columbia Basin



Five Sacred Foods of the *Wáašat* Religion



chuush (water)



nusux (salmon)



tmanit (berries)



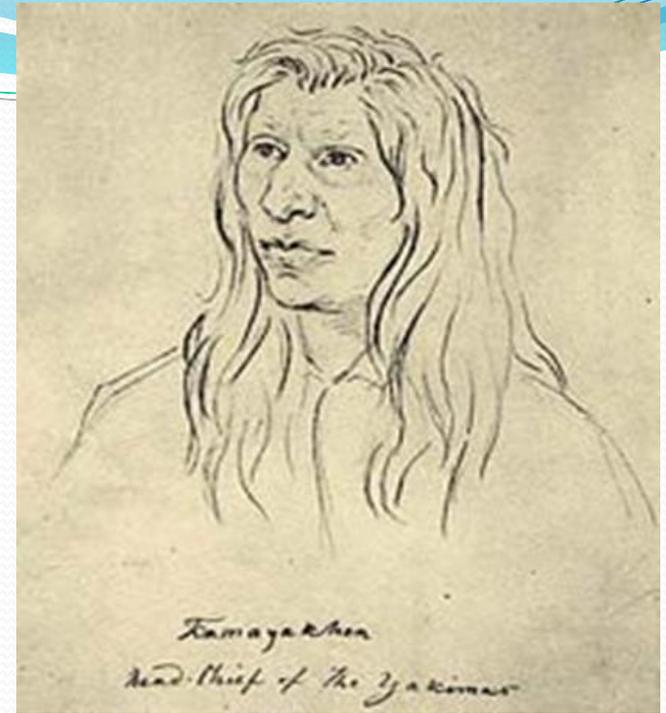
xnit (roots)



winat (deer)



- **“To non-Indians, the longhouse represents religion. To Yakamas, we prefer not to use the word religion but more a way of life—a life that was dictated to us by the natural surroundings of our environment.” – *Lewis Malatare (Yakama), 2004***
- **“Everything to my people [is] interrelated—our religion, Mother Earth, the animals, the trees, the rocks—they all work together.” – *Elsie David (Yakama), 2007***



- **“The exclusive right of taking fish in all the streams, where running through or bordering said reservation, is further secured to said confederated tribes and bands of Indians, as also the right of taking fish at all usual and accustomed places, in common with the citizens of the Territory, and of erecting temporary buildings for curing them; together with the privileges of hunting, gathering roots and berries, and pasturing their horses and cattle upon open and unclaimed land.” – *Treaty with the Yakima, Article 3***



COLUMBIA RIVER SALMON

EXTRA QUALITY.

FRESH COLUMBIA RIVER SALMON.

SEA-SIDE PACKING CO.

SOLE AGENTS,
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

PACKED AT ASTORIA, CLATSOP CO. OREGON.

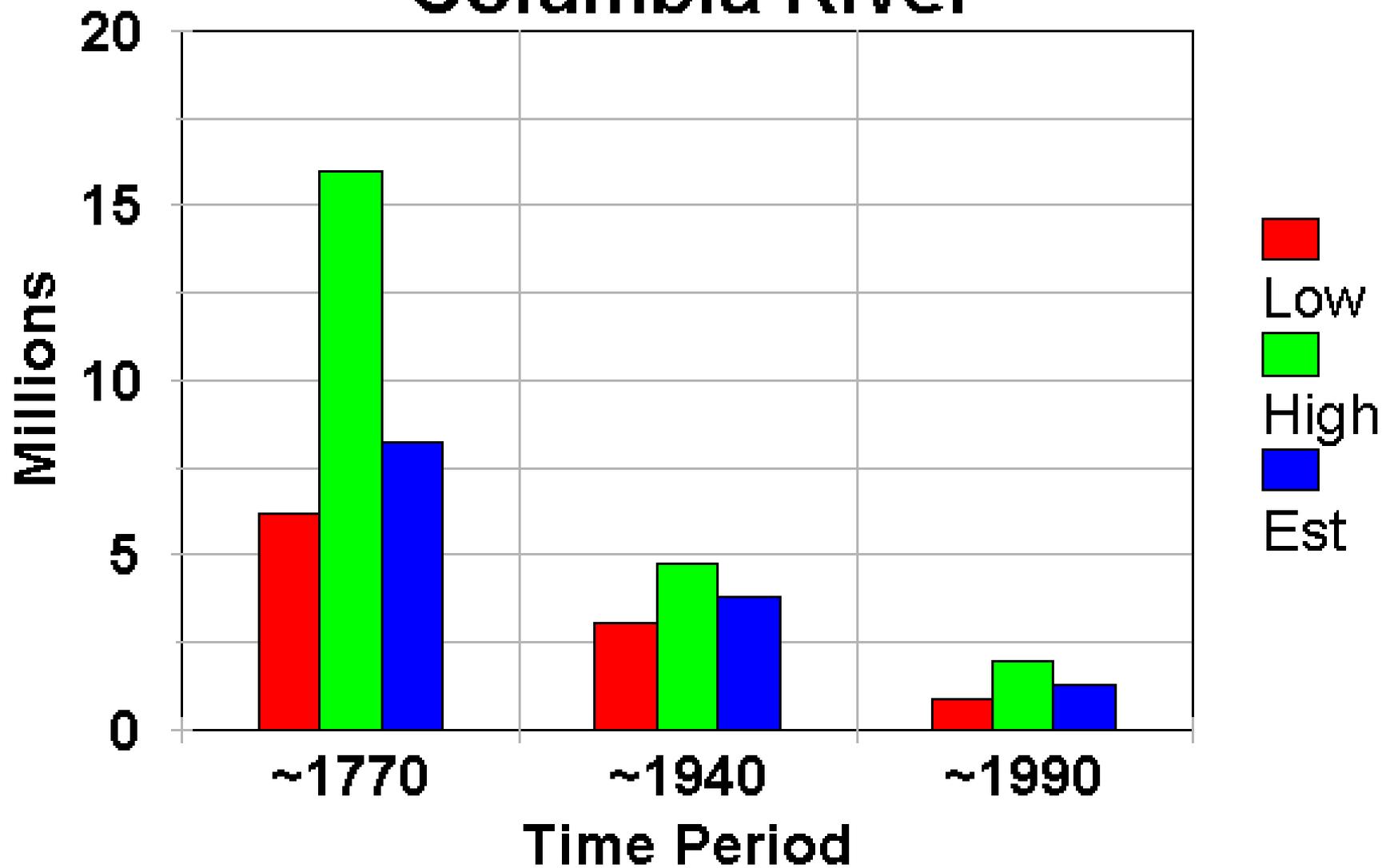
TRADE MARK

PLEASE GIVE OUR BEST VALUE QUALITY AS WE GUARANTEE. PUT THE SURE RECORD BEHIND OURS. BOTTLED WITHIN TEN MINUTES.

© 1914 W. T. COLEMAN & CO.

An advertisement for Columbia River Salmon. It features a central illustration of a fisherman in a boat on the water, with a large salmon in the foreground. The text is arranged in a decorative, Art Deco style frame. The top banner reads "COLUMBIA RIVER SALMON" and the bottom banner reads "SEA-SIDE PACKING CO.". To the right, a red box contains the text "EXTRA QUALITY." and "FRESH COLUMBIA RIVER SALMON.". Below that, a green box contains "SOLE AGENTS, SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.". At the very bottom, a white box says "PACKED AT ASTORIA, CLATSOP CO. OREGON.". On the far left, there is a vertical line of small text: "TRADE MARK", "PLEASE GIVE OUR BEST VALUE QUALITY AS WE GUARANTEE. PUT THE SURE RECORD BEHIND OURS. BOTTLED WITHIN TEN MINUTES.", and "© 1914 W. T. COLEMAN & CO.".

Salmon Entering Columbia River





- **“We had the fish...before the white man came. We were put here by the Creator and these were our rights as far as my memory to my great-grandfather. This was the food on which we lived....My strength is from the fish; my blood is from the fish, from the roots and the berries. The fish and the game are the essence of my life. I was not brought from a foreign country and did not come here. I was put here by the Creator. We had no cattle, no hogs, no grain, only berries and roots and game and fish. We never thought we would be troubled about these things, and I tell my people, and I believe it, it is not wrong for us to get this food.— Chief George Meninock (Yakama), 1915**





- **“This is what we believe; this is what is important: Cooperation, Sharing, Hospitality, Reciprocity, and Conservation, never take more than you need.” – *Longhouse leader Robert Jim (Yakama), c. 1968***



- **“I believe we’ve practiced lifelong [conservation]. We’re born to it, we’re raised with it, we die with it. Our people who were our forefathers have practiced this tradition. They know what to do, and they hand it down to us, and we’re going to hand it down to the younger [generation].” – *Johnson Meninick (Yakama), 1974***

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC)

B O N N E V I L L E
POWER ADMINISTRATION



CRITFC Mission:

“The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission's mission is to ensure a unified voice in the overall management of the fishery resources, and as managers, to protect reserved treaty rights through the exercise of the inherent sovereign powers of the tribes.”



David Sohappy, Sr., on trial



- “No man should be required to obtain a permit from another man to practice his religion.” – *David Sohappy, Sr. (Wanapam), 1978*
- “I didn’t want to see my people going to jail, or pay[ing] for something that they didn’t have to, something that we’ve always had here. Something that the Creator had given us, put here on this earth for us to take care of and use....So when they come and ask me to stop fishing or stop hunting, that’s violating my law. The Creator didn’t tell me that I had to go and listen to a white man, just because he went and [made] mistakes and depleted the fish.” – *Chief Johnny Jackson (Cascades), 2000*

**Johnny Jackson
fishing at Lyle Point**





Ted Strong



- **“Science is in a larger context— you look at the earth as a kindly mother, generous, bountiful, never forsakes her children. And it is said that her children are the water and the foods...We follow behind them. You can’t [just] bring in science because there’s no explanation for the spirit of this land. And I didn’t bring in science as a replacement. I didn’t bring in science to supplant our stories.” – *Ted Strong (Yakama), CRITFC Executive Director, 1999***

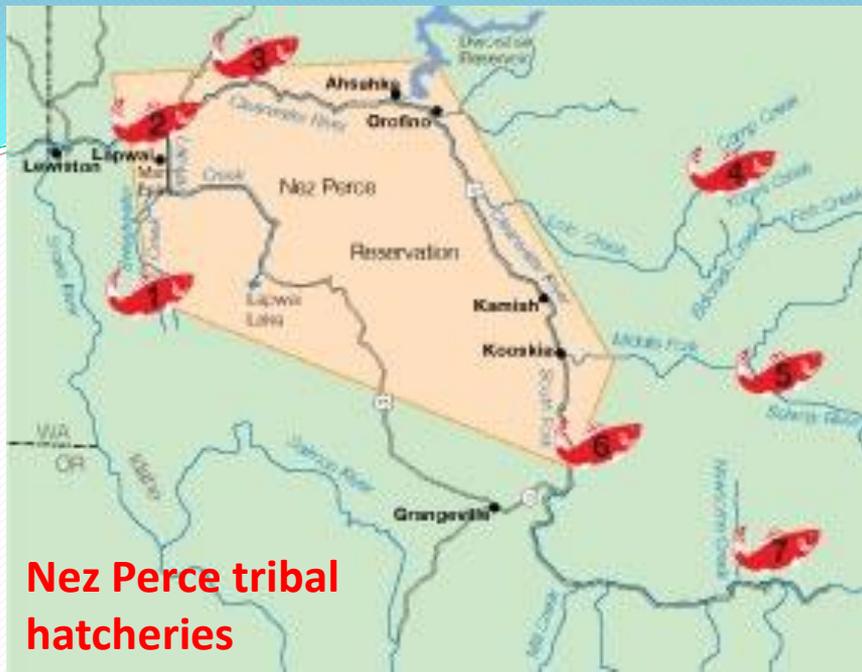
Wy-Kan-Ush-Mi Wa-Kish-Wit

The Tribal Salmon Restoration Plan

putting fish back in the rivers

- “Our salmon plan is the only vehicle we can use to bring our spiritual and cultural values into the region’s restoration efforts.” – *Wendell Hannigan (Yakama), 1995*
- “What it’s saying is this is your relationship to the landscape and these foods, and you have to take care of them for them to be sustainable.” – *Eric Quaempts (Umatilla), 2009*





Nez Perce tribal hatcheries



Habitat restoration project



Hatchery fish acclimatization



Spillways at Bonneville



Sea lions feeding at Bonneville Dam



- **“There is no nobility in one species squatting in a fish ladder and eating another into extinction. Our Creator gave us the responsibility to protect the balance among all creatures in the ecosystem. Traditionally, we accept responsibility for the survival and prosperity of the resources that surround us.” – *CRITFC Chair Fidelia Andy (Yakama), 2008***