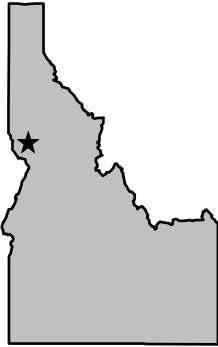


## CHAPTER 3 — Nez Perce Reservation, Nez Perce Tribe



East of  
Lewiston, Idaho  
(Area: 770,000 acres)

**C**hief Joseph (1840-1904) led the Wallowa band of the Nez Perce. Joseph, whose Nez Perce name was *In-mut-too-yah-lat-lat* (thunder coming up from the water over the land), was a leader of Native American resistance to white encroachment in the western United States. In 1855, under the guidance of Chief Lawyer, the Nez Perce ceded most of their territory to the U.S. government. In 1863, the government tried to convince any Nez Perce who was not living on that greatly reduced territory to move onto it. Chief Joseph and his band would not.

After becoming chief in 1873, Joseph continued to refuse to comply with the 1863 treaty. The settlers and gold miners continued to pressure the tribe. In 1877, when settlers stole Nez Perce cattle, young tribesmen killed the settlers. The Nez Perce knew they had to escape to avoid retribution from the government. Chief Joseph led the Nez Perce on a nearly 1,500-mile escape route to Canada.

The Nez Perce had nearly reached Canada when the U.S. Army forced them to surrender just south of the border. After the Nez Perce had traveled through Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, General Nelson Miles surprised them at Bear Paw Mountain. After he surrendered, Chief Joseph was assured that the Nez Perce would be able to return to Wallowa Valley in Oregon, but they were sent to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma. Many of the Nez Perce died there; in fact, more died on this reservation than had died during the flight. In 1885, some moved to the Lapwai Reservation in Idaho, and others moved to the Colville Reservation in Washington.

Federal authorities refused to let Joseph and others return to Oregon. Joseph died on the Colville reservation. A monument was erected in his honor at Nespelem.



### History

The Nez Perce made their home in the northwestern part of the United States where the Lewis and Clark expedition met them. Chief Twisted Hair and his son, Lawyer, welcomed the Americans and encouraged adoption of their ways. Under the Treaty of 1855, the tribe, guided by Chief Lawyer, ceded most of its territory and settled in Idaho and Oregon.

Chief Lawyer (1796-1876) of the Nez Perce was known to his people as *Hal-hal-tlos-stotr* (bat flying in daytime). Government officials considered Lawyer to be the head chief of the Nez Perce, although he was leader only of the Stites-Kamiah area, Lawyer always sided with the Americans—against the British, the Blackfoot, the Spokane, Coeur d’Alene, Palouse, and Yakima—and signed treaties giving away land that belonged to other Nez Perce.

In the early 1860s, prospectors lured by gold and settlers, encroached on what was left of Nez Perce territory. When the Nez Perce asked the government to enforce the terms of the 1855 treaty, which prohibited encroachment on reservation land, the government tried to force the Nez Perce to further reduce their territory. The tribe divided into factions who supported a reduced area in return for payment and who opposed the so-called "Thief Treaty" and remained on their homelands.

Governor Isaac I. Stevens (Oregon Territory) confirmed Lawyer's leadership, although other chiefs, such as *Apus Weyheyqt* (Old Looking Glass) challenged Lawyer. Because of his accommodating and accepting behavior toward the Americans, they saw him as a progressive leader. In 1863, Lawyer signed a treaty offered by Governor Stevens that dispossessed the Nez Perce of nearly all their land. Other chiefs, such as Joseph's father, were not present at the negotiations or signing. Joseph's father said that the man who sold their land without their consent was "A chief called Lawyer, because he was a great talker."

The government continued to pressure the Nez Perce onto the reservation. This pressure resulted in the Nez Perce War of 1877, when Chief Joseph tried to lead the Nez Perce into Canada. Although they skirmished with the U.S. Army, the Nez Perce believed they could travel peacefully through American territory, settle in Canada, and eventually return to Oregon. After they surrendered, the Nez Perce, however, were sent to Indian Territory in Oklahoma and eventually moved to Idaho and Washington.



### Culture

Since time began, the Nez Perce (*Nimíipuu*) lived on 13 million acres of present-day north-central Idaho, southeastern Washington, northeastern Oregon, and far western Montana. This territory included the Snake and Clearwater rivers, the northern Salmon River basin, and Lake Wallowa and the Bitterroot, Clearwater, Blues, Wallowa, and Salmon River mountains. The Nez Perce traveled throughout the Columbia Plateau, including the entire Columbia Basin, from the Cascade Mountains of Washington and British Columbia to the Rocky Mountains of Montana.

The Nez Perce share linguistic and cultural ties with other Columbia Plateau tribes, such as the Palouse, Walla Walla, Yakama, Umatilla, Wanapum of Priest Rapids, and Wayampam of Celilo Falls. All Plateau tribes were traditionally fishers and hunters, who wandered over the land in small, loosely organized bands searching for food. After Spaniards introduced the horse to the Plateau Indians in the early 1700s, tribesmen became highly skilled horsemen. Many owned large herds of the horses known as Appaloosa.

The Nez Perce believed that the Creator molded them from the earth, and they depended on the earth for their survival. The land provided roots, berries, and game, and the rivers provided fish.

### **Game: Star Ball**

*Star Ball* was often played in the sand on the riverbanks and coasts of the Pacific Northwest. An individual would stand in the middle of the outline of a four- or five-pointed star and try to roll round pebbles into small holes in the sand at the endpoints. A modern version of *Star Ball* can be played indoors or outdoors with three to nine players.

To play *Star Ball* you will need

- Several tennis balls
- Four or five paper plates
- Chalk or tape to make a star if you're playing the game inside
- Sidewalk chalk or string to mark a star or a stick to draw a star in the dirt or sand if you're playing the game outside

Set up the playing field:

1. Draw a four- or a five-pointed star. The distance from the center of the star to the endpoint of the star's arm should be no longer than 15 feet.
2. Cut one side of each of the plates to fashion a half ring.
3. Fold the plate.
4. Set a folded plate at the endpoint of each of the star's arms.

Although farming and land ownership were foreign to them, many Nez Perce now live as farmers on the reservation in Idaho and much of what was their land is owned by other Americans.



Government

The tribe operates under a constitution that was approved in 1958. The Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee is the official governing body of the tribe and is composed of nine persons who are elected at large. The reservation is in north central Idaho, close to the Washington state border.

## CHAPTER 3 — Spokane Reservation, Spokane Tribe



Wellpinit, Washington  
(Area: 155,000 acres)

In 1825, Alexander Ross, chief trader at Spokane House (established by the Northwest Fur Company) sent 16-year-old Spokane Garry and Kootenai Pelly to the Episcopalian mission at Red River in Winnipeg, Canada, for schooling.

Garry returned to his people in 1831 and began enthusiastically teaching them about Christianity. Because his people misunderstood his attempts to teach them, Garry abandoned his missionary work and became an interpreter for the Protestant missionaries. Although the missionaries were not especially successful in converting the Indians, after the Whitman Massacre, Spokane warriors escorted the missionaries to Walla Walla. Later, when Catholic missionaries arrived, Garry opposed the building of a Catholic mission on the lands of the Upper Spokane.

When Spokane Garry became chief of his band, he was one of the negotiators who attempted to forge a treaty with the U.S. government for peace and for a reservation.

In the 1870s, white immigrants settled near present-day Spokane, Washington. While Garry was away at a fishing camp, white farmers took Garry's farm, and he and his family moved to Indian Canyon, near Spokane. He lived there for the rest of his life, never compensated by the whites for his property. Spokane Garry died of pneumonia in January 1892.



### History

For centuries before the whites arrived, the Spokane Indians lived on a 3-million-acre territory that covered parts of Washington, Idaho, and Montana, which later were included in the Oregon Territory. The Spokane belong to the Salish group of Native Americans. The Spokane was divided into the Lower, Middle, and Upper Spokane bands according to where they settled along the Spokane River.

In 1807, David Thompson, of the Northwest Fur Company, came into contact with the tribe while he was setting up trading posts. Thompson supposedly gave the tribe the name "Spokane," which is believed to mean "Sun People" or "Children of the Sun." The Nez Perce called the Spokane "salmon-eaters" because they were the only Salishan tribe who lived where there was salmon.

After the fur traders were established in the territory, the Indians traded fur pelts for items such as wool blankets that replaced their tanned animal hides and iron pots and pans that replaced their coiled baskets. Eventually, the Canadian Hudson's Bay Company dominated the fur trade, and the Indians traveled to Fort Colville to trade pelts for goods and guns.

In 1850, Congress passed the Donation Act. Non-settled land in the Oregon Territory, including land occupied by Indians, was opened to white settlers and miners. To claim their own land, Indians had to give up their tribal affiliations and become American citizens. Understandably, friction increased between the white settlers and miners and the Indians.

When attempts to construct a treaty failed, the Spokane and other tribes in eastern Washington allied to protect their lands. The U.S. Army raided and attacked these tribes, and weather conditions worked against them. In early 1860, Chief Garry again attempted but failed to obtain a treaty. In 1881, after a council of head men of the Spokane tribe met with Brigadier General R. B. Hayes in 1880, the Spokane Indian Reservation was established.

The Lower Spokane band moved onto the reservation, and eventually the Middle and Upper Spokane bands agreed to move to the Coeur d'Alene, Flathead, and Spokane reservations. They were paid to move and eventually received allotments of land on these reservations.

Despite continuing incursions into Spokane territory as late as 1910, the reservation thrives and is self-sustaining and the Spokane retain their identity.



### Culture

The daily life of the Spokane depended on the seasons of the year. In spring, small groups left the winter camps to gather food; hunt deer, elk, and antelope; and fish. From early summer to early fall, the groups would come together to dig roots like brown and white camas, pick berries, and socialize.

These social gatherings were called pow-wows. In early winter, the Indians regrouped and settled where there was shelter and water. In winter, the tribes held ceremonies, traded items such as salmon, and visited each other.

During the warm months, the Indians lived in tipis, which were easily assembled and disassembled for travel. In winter at the permanent camps, four or five families would live in a rectangular log houses.

The Indians wore buckskin clothing, including shirts or dresses, leggings, and moccasins, made from tanned animal hides. When the weather was cold, the animal hair was left on the hide and worn against the skin. Both men and women wore fur hats. The men also wore feather headdresses. Clothing was decorated with dye or paint or by adding beads or porcupine quills. Each Indian had a guardian spirit, usually an animal that appeared in a vision. These guardian spirits were often a subject of the decoration on clothing.

Before the missionaries arrived and introduced Christianity, the Indians believed in a three-part world. A supreme being ruled the upper world and sent rain and abundant supplies of food. Humans inhabited the middle world. An evil being ruled the lower world and caused food to be scarce.

### **Recipe: Corn and Pepper Stew**

*3 pounds beef, cut into 1-inch cubes*  
*Flour*  
*2 tablespoon cooking oil*  
*1 red chili pepper, crushed*  
*1 tablespoon salt*  
*8 juniper berries, dried and crushed*  
*5 cups canned corn (with liquid)*  
*6 green peppers, cored and sliced*  
*1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper*  
*2 teaspoons oregano*  
*2 onions, chopped*  
*1 quart water*  
*2 garlic cloves, crushed*  
*1/2 cup minced parsley*

*Heat cooking oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat. Coat beef cubes with flour and add to skillet. Brown the beef cubes on all sides. Add chili pepper, salt, and crushed juniper berries and continue cooking for 3 minutes. Remove meat from skillet, place on paper towels, and set aside. Add onions to the skillet and sauté them until they are golden brown. Return meat to skillet. Add remaining ingredients and stir. Cover and simmer for 1-1/2 hours. Stir occasionally.*

**Government**

The tribe operates under a constitution that established the five-person Spokane Business Council. Council members are popularly elected to 1-, 2-, and 3-year terms. Tribal headquarters are in Wellpinit in northeastern Washington. The reservation currently covers 155,000 acres.