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***The Confluence of the Wenatchee
and Columbia Rivers***

**Wenatchee Valley
M•U•S•E•U•M
& Cultural Center**

"Inspiring dynamic connections to the unique heritage of the Wenatchee Valley"

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From the Director

Keni Sturgeon

The abundance of natural beauty, combined with my family's love of being outside (biking, hiking, canoeing and kayaking), is one of the reasons my husband and I chose to relocate to the Wenatchee Valley last fall. Since then, we have spent hours exploring the Horan Natural Area and the confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia Rivers and we have become familiar with the ecology and natural history of the area. But there is so much more to be learned and shared.



The Washington Trails Association's online description of the Horan Natural Area says "The history of the area began in 1811 when explorers and trappers for the Northwest Fur Company paddled the Columbia River...." While this did happen, it is not accurate to say history began here in 1811. The history of the area began thousands of years ago when the Salish-speaking peoples who called themselves the P'squosa lived, labored, traded and recreated on these lands. The Wenatchi-P'squosa history with the confluence area, told through the family memories of tribal elder Randy Lewis, is the main focus of this edition of *The Confluence*.

The City of Wenatchee's Confluence Parkway project, captured well in this edition by Steve King, and our work with Randy Lewis provide an amazing opportunity to create deeper understandings of and connections to the Horan Natural Area and the confluence of the two rivers. We have a chance and are taking the steps to do what not many communities can: creating a new story. This is a story that is focused as much on the future as the past – a story that will help our community appreciate who we are and how we got here, and stimulate conversations about where we'd like to go.

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Cover: The confluence of the Wenatchee (left) and Columbia rivers in 1958. The flat, undeveloped area at the delta was inhabited for thousands of years by the Wenatchi-P'squosa.

Wenatchee-Columbia Confluence Has Long History

by Chris Rader

For thousands of years, a permanent village sat on the banks of the Columbia River just above the mouth of the Wenatchee River. Its Salish-speaking occupants called themselves the P'squosa, though they (and their tributary river) came to be known as the Wenatchi by the Sahaptan-speaking tribes to the south.

"We think this site was continuously occupied for about six thousand years, before the time of the Egyptian pyramids," Randy Lewis recently told staff members from the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center. Lewis, or *K'ayaxan*, is descended from the Wenatchi-P'squosa and moved back to the area in 2018. (See his story, beginning on page 8.)

Lewis pointed to fire-broken rock, "hammer stones" that had been formed by knapping, flakes chipped from rock and bone during tool making, and other forms of "lithic scatter" revealing cultural modification of natural materials. "Rocks tell a story," he pointed out. His eagle eye has spotted hearthstones, mortars, pestles, arrowheads, fossilized bone and petrified wood that evoke a civilization that passed from our region more than a century ago with the coming of European-descended settlers.

The topography of the area, now the 197-acre Confluence State Park, has changed over the years – especially with the construction of Rock Island Dam, which raised the level of the Columbia River in 1933. Lewis said the confluence/estuary was shaped like a hand with its fingers extended, or an otter's paw with beaches or sand bars as webbing. Families had priority rights to put up dwellings at certain beaches there, but all shared the land.

The Wenatchi-P'squosa were a semi-nomadic people who moved around the Wenatchee watershed,



This 1930 image by pioneer aerial photographer Bill Brubaker shows the Wenatchee River (top) flowing into the Columbia, before the Rock Island Dam raised the river level. The sandy area at the confluence was braided with streams during high water and resembled an otter's paw.

hunting and gathering food in season. They had several "permanent" villages with pit and mat houses: at Cashmere, Monitor, the Wenatchee-Columbia confluence, Swakane and Squilchuck, as well as temporary dwelling sites at Leavenworth and elsewhere.¹

Lewis said the harvest cycle began formally, each spring, with a "first foods" ceremony and dinner at the confluence that honored the Creator for his bounty. Large numbers would gather: Okanogans, Methows, Chelans, Entiat, Columbia/Sinkius and other Salish-speaking people from as far away as Idaho and Puget Sound. "There were many dialects going on, but a common understanding," he said. "People would come from upstream and downstream in canoes. Some would come over Snoqualmie Pass and meet up with relatives."

During these early spring gatherings, and at other get-togethers at the confluence throughout the year, treaties or agreements were forged among bands; goods were traded; intermarriages were arranged and performed; and horse racing and gambling games provided entertainment. At "first foods," people would dig swamp lily (*sowrii*) roots to be baked in a large, common underground "oven." A pit was dug, lined with skunk cabbage leaves, loaded with roots, then covered lightly with leaves and sand. A fire was built on the sand and stoked until the coals were deemed ready. After the coals had cooled and been removed, the roots were dug up. "They would be of a cheesy or tofu-type consistency," Lewis said. "They would be cut and



Native American women prepare for a first foods or first roots ceremony near Goldendale, Washington. Note the T-shaped digging sticks by their knees.



City, PUD and museum staff and volunteers pose by the sculpture "Coyote Leading the Salmon" in Walla Walla Park in June 2019. From left: Bill Layman, Randy Lewis, Steve King, Chris Rader (seated), Keni Sturgeon, Bruce McCammon, Kasey Koski, Matt Shales, Melanie Wachholder, David Morgan, Kristin Lodge, Carol Hoffmann, Jim Hoffman, Anna Spencer, Susan Evans.

divided among all present. After eating, this was the signal that everybody could spread out and dig roots."

Roots were a staple of the Wenatchi-P'squosa diet, the first food to be harvested each spring. Lewis said his people had a saying: "When the snow melts, the dinner table is set." They were well practiced at recognizing the early green shoots of each plant. Bitterroot (*Lewisia rediviva*, or *spitlem* to the indigenous people), arrowleaf balsam "sunflower" roots, wild carrots, wild onions, biscuit root and chocolate tips (*lomatum*), and Indian potato (*wapato*) were nutritious and filling.

Once the "first foods" or "release dinner" had been held at the confluence, the people spread to favorite digging grounds. Blue or meadow camas, *itxwa*, was a favorite – harvested on Badger Mountain in April and May, and in the Leavenworth and Blewett Pass areas in early June. The roots were peeled and baked underground to release the sugars. Those baked roots that weren't eaten right away were dried for later rehydration and consumption. Peeled camas roots were also combined with pounded huckleberries and bear fat to make pemmican, a food that kept well and nourished people through the cold winter.

The Salish tribes did not keep written records but handed down verbal memories of their past through many generations. This included practical instructions as to uses of plants, animals and minerals; inspirational and humorous accounts of individuals and families; and stories of place. All Wenatchi-P'squosa children looked at Two Bears (Saddle Rock) and learned how two jealous wives, Black Bear and Grizzly, were turned to stone for their ceaseless bickering.

The story of the frightening water monster Spexman is evidenced in rock formations on the Columbia from Rock Island (Spexman's head) past the Owl Sisters and the monster's horns to above Entiat (his trail of blood), and at the Peshastin Pinnacles (the fish people) and up Stemilt Creek (Spexman's spine). The story begins at

the Wenatchee-Columbia confluence, birthplace of hero twins Red Star and Blue Star who ultimately brought Spexman down. Randy Lewis and Bill Layman recount this story in their illustrated paperback book *Red Star and Blue Star Defeat Spexman* (2018), available in the Wenatchee Valley Museum's gift shop.

Caucasian explorers record early impressions

The native presence at the Wenatchee-Columbia confluence was noted by several exploration parties in the 19th century. Canadian fur trader and map maker David Thompson, the first Caucasian to navigate the entire 1,243-mile Columbia River, paddled past the mouth of the Wenatchee on July 7, 1811. His journal noted that the party had camped below the Entiat Rapids the night before, after killing two rattlesnakes for food. In the morning they viewed the high, rocky foothills with the snow-covered Cascades in the distance and spotted a few Wenatchi-P'squosa men on horseback. The explorers did not stop, however. It is likely that the rest of the band was upriver at their Wenatshapam Fishery (near Leavenworth), catching and drying salmon with thousands of other Indian friends and relatives.

The Thompson party continued on to the Rock Island Rapids, site of a very large Columbia-Sinkius native village, where they spent several hours. (See *The Confluence*, Summer 2011, for that story.)

Alexander Ross, a competitor of Thompson's in the fur trade, stopped at the mouth of the Wenatchee River in August 1811 while making his way from Astoria, Oregon, up the Columbia to establish the Fort Okanogan trading post. His party was greeted in a friendly manner by the inhabitants of the village at the confluence. Wenatchee historian Bill Layman describes the scene in *Native River: The Columbia Remembered* (2002).

(Ross) and David Stuart met the village chief, Sopa, who presented them with a gift of two horses. Stuart purchased four additional horses for a yard of printed fabric and two

yards of gartering. The trade caused great commotion in the village, with natives quickly bringing more horses to sell. Stuart declined their offer, citing that six horses were all he needed.

At Sopa's invitation, the travelers spent the rest of the day at the village and watched several hunters successfully shoot deer from their steeds. Ceremonial dancing and singing lasted through the night, making sleep difficult, particularly when the dancers erupted in loud and deep shouts following periods of pause. The next morning the tired Astorians continued the journey upriver.

Other historians have written about the Wenatchi-P'squosa village at the Wenatchee-Columbia confluence, and the many intertribal gatherings held there. The report of a U.S. Navy exploration of the Pacific Northwest in 1841 describes the arrival of a small party, led by Lt. Robert E. Johnson, at what is now Wenatchee. His men had been guided from Puget Sound over Naches Pass by local Native Americans on horseback, the first Caucasian crossing of the Cascades. Reaching the Columbia and heading north, they stopped at the Wenatchi-P'squosa village and admired the residents' farming methods.

They passed along the banks of the Columbia to the junction of the Pischous (the Wenatchee). The course of the latter is to the southeast; it takes its rise in the distant range of snowy mountains, which are seen in a northwest direction.... They encamped on the southwest side of the river, in a beautiful patch of meadow-land, of about one hundred acres in extent, which the Indians had enclosed in small squares by turf walls; and in them they cultivated the potato in a very systematic manner.²

Twelve years later, another exploring expedition passed through the Wenatchee-Columbia confluence area. Washington Territory had just been carved from Oregon Territory, and new governor Isaac Stevens commissioned Army Captain George McClellan to find a route across the Cascades that could be someday developed for a railroad. McClellan did a haphazard job, never penetrating the mountains very far and concluding that no route could be found. (He later served as a Union general in the Civil War, accomplishing little and being relieved of duty after one year.)

During the McClellan survey exploration in 1853, his

party spent three days at the confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia rivers in council with Wenatchi-P'squosa chief Tecolekun and other tribal leaders. McClellan's men reported watching an exciting horse race.

At this place we were offered the entertainment of a horse race, and on promising a yard of red cloth as the prize of victory, a general enthusiasm seized upon the whole tribe. Horses were sought in every direction, that would stand a chance of winning, and in a short time a dozen of the best came up to the starting point. A goal was fixed on the plain, at some distance, which they were to turn around and return; and at a signal from the chief they stripped – not the horses but the riders; doffing their blankets and other inconvenient articles, and appearing in costumes of primitive simplicity. One rider wore a pair of moccasins, and another sported a shirt....

There was some very pretty running, and still better jockeying; but as the distance was unmeasured, and nobody took note of the time, an official report cannot be given. The winner, who rode a handsome gray gelding, carried off a prize that a few years before was worth as much as his horse.³

Randy Lewis says the horse racing grounds were on the north side of the Wenatchee River, on land now owned by Chelan County Public Utility District. Over the centuries, racetracks in other nearby locations were used as well. The races were significant; each band supported its own riders, most of whom were men but who occasionally were female. "The 'squaw races' had no rules!" he laughed. "Women would ride bareback, could hit another one in the face with a quirt (short leather whip) or grab her by the hair to pull her off her



The modern "Champions of Champions" Indian relay in Billings, MT relives the thrill of historic horse races of Plains and Columbia Plateau tribes throughout the ages.

horse. Everyone would gang up on a woman who had won too many times – even cripple her. It was serious business!”

Another account of witnessing an intertribal gathering at the Wenatchee-Columbia confluence that included a horse race was written by Army Lieutenant C.E.S. Wood in 1879.

Hour after hour the Indians arrived, singly, by families, bands, and almost by tribes, trooping in with herds and loaded pack animals, men, women and children – for they brought their homes with them. The tepees of buffalo skin were put up, the smoke of many camp-fires arose and the hillsides became dotted with grazing ponies.... Last in the train came the grave, anxious-looking men in fur mantles or loose buckskin shirts, their hair loose or braided, and their faces painted black, red, yellow, white or whatever color pleased best....

There were on this ground the best horses of the whole Northwest.... The course was a straight stretch of about a mile along the half grass-grown plain between the camps and the foot of the mountain. The starting point was marked on the ground; the finishing point was determined by a horse-hair lariat stretched along the ground and held by two Indians, one from each of the competing tribes.

... Presently, the owner of the white horse stepped out and threw to the ground a new saddle and a bundle of beaver and other pelts. Someone from the opposing side threw in a separate place a bundle of blankets.... Soon the bets were showering down and the pile “swelling visibly”....

When all the bets were laid, the riders vaulted to their places, and bending their knees, thrust them between the



Photo by Chris Rader

Randy Lewis demonstrates the flexibility of Indian hemp, or *speetsum*. He cut the branch from the bush at right, at the confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia rivers.

lariat and the horses’ sides, thus drawing the lariat very tight and binding themselves like centaurs to their slippery steeds.... The racers now walked with long, supple strides down the course to the starting-point, accompanied by the starters, friends, admirers, jealous watchers, etc., some on foot and some on horseback. The whole mile of track soon became a lane hedged by groups and lines of Indians....

A faint cry at the other end of the line, a whirl of the horses, a tumult down there, a waving of whips, a wild yelling growing nearer, louder, and here they come – flying. Side by side, the naked warriors plying the lash with every terrific bound.... Here they come! Heads out, eyes strained, nostrils stretched, forehoofs seemingly always in the air, the whip-thongs falling with quickening vigor. A horse, wild shouting, a deafening burst of yells, a swish in the air, an apparition before the eyes, a bound over the finish line, and the race is over, the white just half a length ahead, and there they go down toward the river, the boys pulling them in for dear life.⁴

Indigenous use of native plants

A walk through Confluence State Park today does not resemble the scenes of previous centuries, either the large gatherings (including important council meetings presided over by leaders such as Chief Moses) or the everyday village life. But in the Horan Natural Area on the south side of the park, below the mouth of the Wenatchee, many of the traditional plants used by the native people still grow.

Lewis led a tour of about 15 people through this area in early June 2019 to point out some important plants. One was dogbane, or *speetsum*. The bush, *Apocynum cannabinum*, is also known as Indian hemp. “This was a vital ingredient in our culture,” he told us. “We would gather the branches for our grandparents in the fall. Grandpa would soak it for a few days, then strip it into long strings of fibers. Grandma and the aunts would twist the fiber on their legs to make cordage. This was used for everything: bow string, baskets, stitching for tule mats, flat bags.” The dogbane leaves, poisonous to eat, were crushed and placed under bedding to keep away mites.

Another important plant was the western cottonwood tree. The trunks were hollowed out for dugouts and the sticky buds were gathered to make glue. Lewis said they would heat the crystallized sap with water in a crucible, then skim the gluey substance off the top. This glue was used for many things. “Grandpa had a little forge; he would make spears, wrap them with Indian hemp and seal them with cottonwood stickum. Grandma would save skins from silver salmon and dry them. Later she would soak them till they became slimy, then add that to the cottonwood sap. This would make a good, waterproof sealant for bows and threads.”



Photo by Chris Rader

Lewis holds a sinew-wrapped bow made of Pacific yew with a “Spexman” design that was hand-made for him by his friend Shelton Fitzgerald.

Pacific yew or maple was used for bow wood. Lewis said men would mount the inside with mountain sheep horn. Hunters prized sheep whose horns had at least a full curl. They would soak the horn for a few days, then boil the water so it could be stretched out. They would cut strips from the inside and sand them down to 1/8” thick. When dried, these strips would be laminated to the inside of the bow with cottonwood glue. Then the bow was wrapped in sinew.

Another plant gathered at the Wenatchee-Columbia confluence was yarrow, which was crushed and infused as a tea to relieve headache or toothache pain. White willow bark was also a pain reliever. The bark of red willow was mixed with tobacco for smoking, and willow branches

were woven into baskets or fish weirs. Sagebrush leaves and stems were crushed and made into tea to treat colds, grippe and indigestion.⁵

Cattails provided roots for food and fluff for baby mattresses. The seeds of jump grass, or wild rye, were gathered and ground into flour. The Wenatchi-P’squosa also broadcast the seeds on snow-covered slopes; in the spring, grass would grow and would anchor the slopes to prevent erosion.

Nettle leaves were tasty when harvested and steamed in early spring. Large, mature nettle plants would be uprooted or cut and then placed in a stream for about three weeks to remove the green leaves. “When we’d come back, they were just fiber!” Lewis said. Nettle fiber was not as strong as Indian hemp but worked for small projects.

Berries were a cherished food source. Serviceberries, which grew in the confluence area and in many locations throughout the Wenatchee drainage, were the most abundant and thus the most used. “They weren’t sweet, but we didn’t care,” Lewis said. In late summer his people began picking lots of huckleberries in the Lake Wenatchee area; some of these were dried and eaten through the winter. Currants, salmonberries, Oregon grapes and blackberries were also gathered and enjoyed.

Lewis has happy childhood memories of spending

time at what is now Confluence State Park, helping his family gather plants and catch fish. “We would build fish traps of woven willow branches and anchor them in the channels with posts. Fish won’t swim backwards, so we would guide them downstream into the traps.” Salmon, steelhead and bull trout were the preferred catch – but sturgeon, suckers, pike minnow (squawfish) and lampreys (which they called eels) were also valued.

Dace minnows swam in schools by the thousands. Lewis said people would catch them and make fish soup. “Grandma would use her white underskirt like a seine net,” he laughed. Native children would dig in the mud for small white clams, too. “Grandma would steam them and we would eat the insides. Then she’d make hee-shee beads (small disks) from the shells.”

The sculpin, or bullhead (below), was considered a metaphysical fish. It was too powerful to be eaten, Lewis said. “Grandma would talk to them. When someone drowned, they’d tell her where the body was. They were like out of mythology, or a horror movie.”



Drawing by Joseph R. Tomelleri from William D. Layman Collection

For more information on the Wenatchi-P’squosa people, see Richard Scheurman’s excellent book *The Wenatchee Valley and Its First Peoples*. Native American uses of local plants and animals have also been described in previous issues of this magazine: “Life Among North Central Washington First Families” (Winter 2002), “Medicine of the Pisuose/Wenatchi and Sinkiuse/Columbia Indians” (Fall 2010) and “Indian Women Provided for Families” (Summer 2018). We are grateful to our friend Randy Lewis for making the subjects come to life, when he leads people through the confluence area! Read on for more of his life story.

ENDNOTES

1. Richard Scheurman, *The Wenatchee Valley and Its First Peoples*, 2005.
2. *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition, Volume IV*, Charles Wilkes, U.S.N., 1838-42.
3. *Pacific Railroad Reports, Vol. 1*, 1855.
4. C.E.S. Wood, “An Indian Horse Race,” *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, vol. 33, November 1886, quoted in William Layman, *Native River*, 2002.
5. Grace Christianson Gardner, “Medicine of the Pisuose/Wenatchi and Sinkiuse/Columbia Indians,” *The Confluence*, Fall 2010.

Randy Lewis Enjoys Strong Family Ties

by Chris Rader

In 1872 Sam Miller and his partners, brothers David and Franklin Freer, opened a trading post at the mouth of the Wenatchee River. The region's first formal business was well situated. Housed in a log cabin on the south bank of the Wenatchee just before it entered the Columbia, the trading post was close to the permanent Wenatchi-P'squosa village that had occupied the confluence area for thousands of years. Village residents traded with Miller and the Freers, as did travelers and the Chinese gold prospectors who lived along the Columbia.

Miller was a kindly man who respected all of his customers and treated them fairly. He married a young widow from the Methow band, *Tschulchl Tchoostchuthl* or *Chos Chostq* (Nancy Paul), who had three small children. She tried to adapt to living inside a building and speaking an unfamiliar language, but became homesick for her people. After two years she took her children and returned to the Methow Valley. Here she gave birth to Sam's son, Samuel C. Miller, Jr., or *nYahwaskeent*.

Sam Junior married *Luush Mari*, a Methow also known as Lucy. They had nine children, including Jerome (*Kashlaxen*), and raised them on the Iswald Allotment on the Columbia River. This and nearby allotments were, ironically, assigned in the late 1800s by Caucasian lawmakers to Native Americans who had lived on the land for millennia before white settlement crowded them out.

Jerome Miller married Agnes Peter (*Yen Yowet*) and they had two children, Lewis and *Mari Akut* (Mary). Mary said her people were from the Wenatchi, Entiat, Chelan, Methow and San Poil bands (now part of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation). Sam Miller Jr., and then Jerome, Mary and Lewis cultivated an orchard on the family's 640-acre property near

today's Azwell.

In the late 1940s Mary fell for a handsome rodeo rider, Emery Lewis, who came to work at the Miller orchard. They married and had a son, Randy, before divorcing. Mary was also married to Ernest Williams, Robert Whippel and Frank (Olie) Marchand. She became a tribal historian

and served on the Colville Business Council, earning many awards and honors including the Washington State Peace and Friendship Medal. At the time of her death, in March 2013, Mary Miller Marchand had 15 children (including foster children), 144 grandchildren, 47 great-grandchildren and 15 great great-grandchildren.¹

Young days at Celilo Falls

Randy Lewis was born in Nespelem and spent his earliest years on the family allotment south of Pateros. When he was four he went to live with his grandparents, Jerome and Agnes, in the large tribal fishing village at Celilo Falls (*Wy-am*), further south on the Columbia. This rich salmon fishery had been a major trading center for thousands of years.

Randy's grandparents gave him a lot of love. "Grandpa doted on me," he said. "I'd sit on his lap and

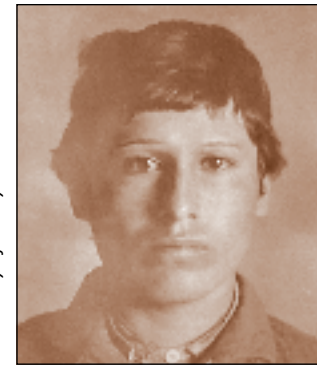


Sam Miller adopted the children of his partners, David and Frank Freer, after both fathers died.

Wenatchee Valley Museum #78-214-97



The Miller-Freer Trading Post at the Wenatchee-Columbia confluence was an important community center.



Sam Miller, Jr.

Courtesy of Randy Lewis

he would stroke my hair." They also taught him about living with nature, particularly fishing and gathering plants.

Even at a young age, Randy was a hard worker: gathering eggs, cleaning the chicken house, pulling cedar roots, cutting bear grass and stripping Indian hemp (dogbane). He says he loved to work, because his grandparents showed such appreciation for his contributions.

Lewis remembers a large fire burning through the Celilo village when he was very young. Everybody left their homes, returning only to find only ashes and devastation. When Jerome and Agnes located the place where their large four-sided tent had been, Randy started looking through the ashes.

"What are you looking for?" his grandfather asked. "There's nothing left!" "I'm looking for my sock monkey!" the boy replied. He lifted a large piece of sheet metal, and there was his doll. Miraculously, it had escaped the flames.

Following the fire, Jerome built a two-room shack



Courtesy of Randy Lewis

Randy's mother, Mary Miller Marchand, was a capable businesswoman and an elder with the Colville Tribes.

from wooden planks. He also built a table and bunk beds. Other family members sometimes came to stay with them, including Randy's great-grandparents and his mother and siblings, especially during the height of the salmon run.

The boy was quite the entrepreneur. He would haul salmon up a rock cliff from the fishermen to the women cleaning and drying the fish. "They'd give me a nickel per fish. Ice cream money!" On several occasions, beginning about age six, he would catch suckers and squawfish in a herring net. After cutting and drying them like the adults did with salmon, he packaged them and sold them as "dried fish" to tourists for 50 cents.

Randy would take his earnings, a big bag of coins, to the woman who ran a shop, to convert them to currency. He would give the paper money to his grandmother and keep the change. The shopkeeper must have admired his industriousness, for she often gave him back more than a dollar in coins. "Ice cream money!"

Moves to Wenatchee Heights

In the mid-1950s the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers started clearing land to build The Dalles Dam, some 12 miles downriver from Celilo Falls. The native village had to go. When the dam was completed in 1957 and the falls "drowned," Randy and his grandparents moved to Wenatchee Heights (high above the Columbia off Squilchuck Road, south of Wenatchee).

At first they stayed in a cabin with no electricity or running water. Then John and Dorothy Hampton Grubb built a new home and let the Millers stay in their old one. Randy called it "a nice big house with a wrap-around porch on three sides, overlooking the Stemilt Pinnacles." Grandpa Jerome had met John Grubb in the 1930s at Celilo Falls and showed him how to cook salmon. Later, on Wenatchee Heights, Jerome took John



Jerome Miller stands in front of his horse "tack shack" at Azwell. Randy's grandfather was an accomplished farrier and blacksmith.

Courtesy of Randy Lewis



Randy Lewis, about 11



Ernie Miller, about 7

Courtesy of Randy Lewis

and Dorothy's son Dale under his wing and showed him how to hunt and fish.

Again, Randy's mother Mary and other family members came to live with him and his grandparents. Mary, a talented accountant and businesswoman, became the crew boss for the Grubb orchards. Randy attended the one-room school on the Heights and hung out with his cousins and siblings, especially older half-brother Ernie Williams. The two would play behind the schoolhouse, sometimes gathering cans full of arrowheads. When their grandfather Jerome saw this, he would make them put the artifacts back where they found them.

The boys hunted for groundhogs, using a six-foot willow switch with a sharpened, notched end. They would push the stick into the burrow hole until they felt the groundhog, then snag it by the fur and pull it out. "We



Randy's great-grandfather Sam Miller, Jr. c. 1950. He died in 1960.

really cleared out the groundhogs on Wenatchee Heights!" Randy laughed. The animals are edible.

Randy and Ernie had a badger and porcupine for "pets." They practiced with bows and arrows, sometimes killing cottontail rabbits and other small animals. "We would hunt bobcats with a club," Randy said. "We'd chase it into a cave and bonk it on the head!"

He and his brothers and cousins would sometimes go

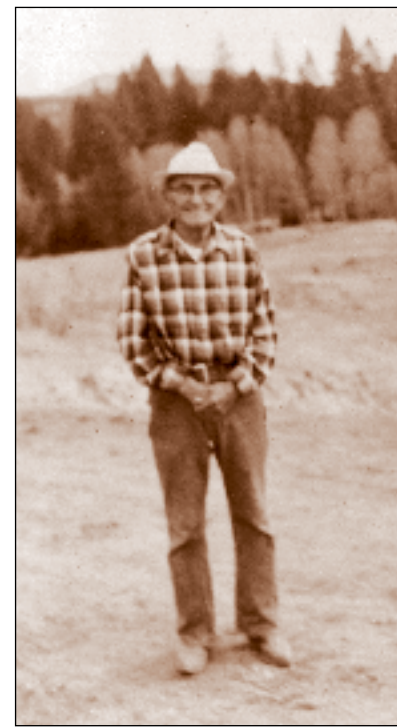
with their relatives to the Moses Coulee country. Here, at Big Goose Lake, great-grandmother Lucy would catch ducks. She would use peeled Indian hemp, or dogbane (*speetsum*), for cordage – stretching it out, then attaching short leaders of cord every two feet. Great-grandpa Sam would whittle points on both ends of matchsticks, which they attached to the leaders and baited with corn. The boys would help unfurl the ball and put it in the lake, weighing it down with rocks. The next morning the family would find ducks hanging upside down, their mouths snagged by the matchsticks.

In 1960, Sam Miller died and Jerome, Agnes and Randy moved to the family orchard at Azwell. A few years later all of the Native Americans living on allotments in the area were displaced by the construction of Wells Dam. Randy says his grandparents were asked to sell their land to Douglas County PUD, but they refused – so "eminent domain" was invoked and the land was confiscated. The family was given "salvage rights" (not much comfort).

A *Methow Valley News* article noted, "The homes and surrounding orchards that had been lovingly tended for three generations were under water. The (Miller) family was only compensated for 'grazing land' instead of the more valuable 'industrial land' that was their orchards. The brothers were forced to move their families."²

Randy's family moved to Desautel, between Omak and Nespelem on the Colville Reservation. He attended middle and high school in Omak, along with time at Pateros High School and in boarding school at the Institute of American Indian Arts in New Mexico. "I graduated from three high schools!" he laughed.

In his late teens Randy joined the "Up With People" youth performing group that had been formed in 1965 to harness the power of music in bringing people together in peace and unity. Singing and dancing, he traveled around the country one summer and ended up in New York City. After a few performances,



Jerome Miller in his later years. He was a loving and popular man.

Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center #78-214-39



Courtesy of Randy Lewis

Randy Lewis has been a keeper of Native American traditions all his life. He enjoys leather and bead work, and is often called upon to cook salmon at large gatherings.

he and several other Native American youth left the group and formed their own troupe.

"We wrote our own material – some comedy, some dark," he said. They got themselves booked at La MaMa, an experimental theater club. "The woman told us she'd give us one week. 'If you don't pack the house, you're out of here.' Five weeks later, we still packed the house. She extended our contract another nine weeks."

While staying in New York, Randy spent time at the famous Studio 54 club in Greenwich Village. He got to hear young artists such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Lawrence Ferlinghetti at open mic sessions. He said the performers would pick a card containing a theme, and have to write a poem on the spot which they would then read to the audience. "I collected some of the napkins they wrote on! Later I framed them and sold them," he said.

Native American activist

During the turbulent days of the late-1960s civil rights movement, Cleveland Warrior and Vine Deloria, Jr. recruited Randy Lewis to join the National Indian Youth Council. This organization, formed in 1961 in Gallup, N.M., conducted summer internship programs through the U.S. to nurture advocates for Native American rights. (Lewis points out that the NIYC is not the same as the more militant American Indian Movement.)

Randy was sent to Washington, D.C. in spring 1968

to represent NIYC in the Poor People's Campaign. Leaders of this campaign included Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy and César Chávez.

Native American activists invited members of the youth council to Alcatraz Island in California to occupy the former prison. On November 20, 1969, under cover of darkness, 89 people sailed through San Francisco Bay and claimed the island for all the tribes of North America.

The Indians' first official proclamation to the public followed shortly thereafter in a manifesto addressed to "The Great White Father and All His People." In it, they stated their intentions to use the island for an Indian school, cultural center and museum. They claimed Alcatraz was theirs "by right of discovery," but they sarcastically offered to buy it for "\$24 in glass beads and red cloth"—the same price that Indians supposedly received for the island of Manhattan. The activists added that they didn't mind that the island was underdeveloped or lacked fresh water, since most of them had already endured similar conditions on government Indian reservations.³

The occupation lasted 18 months and ultimately involved more than 5,000 protestors, including Lewis and his friend Bernie Whitebear, also a member of the Colville Confederated Tribes. It caught the attention of the media and alerted the nation to the plight of urban Indians. Whitebear then organized the 1970 Native American occupation of Fort Lawton, a former Army post in Seattle's Magnolia neighborhood. Lewis and others joined him. According to the Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project website, the demonstration was in response to the decades-old federal government's policy of Relocation and Termination "in order to deal with the 'Indian Problem.'"

This meant that in an attempt to liquidate all tribal assets, the federal government set up relocation programs moving thousands of Indians into cities with promises of better employment and educational opportunities.... Many Natives found that living in the stagnant economy of the reservation had become impossible without the financial aid of the federal government and so moved to cities in order to gain access to burgeoning urban economies. Seattle's Native population rose from 700 in 1950 to more than 4,000 in 1970.

Under its Relocation policy, the federal government encouraged Natives to migrate to cities and then ensured that once Indians left the reservation, or the reservation was terminated, they were no longer under the jurisdiction of the Tribal Governments or under the administrative authority of the BIA. In effect, Relocation nullified the federal government's longstanding treaty obligations and further decreased its commitment to Native populations.

In spring 1977, following the Fort Lawton occupation, Randy Lewis helped lead a cultural awareness workshop for Seattle city employees and educators. His friend Bernie Whitebear, with "a team of seasoned Indians," challenged Lewis (center) and his fellow trainers to a stick game. Lewis' team won the competition.



Courtesy of Randy Lewis and Mark Hoover

In doing so it dramatically reduced the amount of aid the federal government was responsible for administering.⁴

The occupation was successful, in that 20 acres of the Fort Lawton land were deeded for use as a Native American cultural and educational center. It also led to the formation of the still-influential United Indians of All Tribes Foundation, which Randy Lewis co-founded and now is a board member emeritus.

Lewis attended Western Washington University, where he helped found the American Indian Student Union and helped organize a "Right To Be Indian" conference that drew together Indian student activists from across the nation. He lived in Spokane for a while, co-teaching Indian studies at Gonzaga University, and volunteered for the Red Lake Native Treatment Center in British Columbia, which his father founded in 1986.

He has spent much of his adult life in Seattle, where he owned an art gallery and was general manager of several art and frame shops with clients including Microsoft, Boeing and Amazon. He served as community advisory representative for the Seattle Art Museum, and as an overseer on the Seattle Indian Commission. He spent 30 years with the Canadian AIDS Awareness/Prevention Commission and 11 years with the National Native American AIDS Prevention and Awareness Commission.

In 2008 Randy, his mother Mary Marchand and uncle Lewis Miller were the honored dignitaries with the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center's prizewinning Apple Blossom Festival parade entry

"Coyote Leads the Salmon Up the River" (see opposite page). He retired from the Seattle art business in 2018 and moved to Wenatchee

Randy is a gifted speaker who has testified to the U.S. Congress on Native American education and made cultural and historical presentations to numerous other audiences in North America, South America, Africa and Europe. He is a respected elder of the Colville Confederated Tribes and a consultant on native history and archaeology.

He has many, many stories to tell; it is unfortunate that *The Confluence* does not have room to share them all. However, residents of the Wenatchee Valley can sometimes hear him share Wenatchi-P'squosa history and legends during museum programs. He will lead the Native American Heritage Tour through the Wenatchee Valley on Sept. 28; sign up now through the museum at (509) 888-6240.

Randy's illustrated paperback book *Red Star and Blue Star Defeat Spexman*, co-written in 2018 with William Layman, is on sale in the gift shop at the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center.

ENDNOTES

1. *Grand Coulee Star*, March 2013.
2. *Methow Valley News*, Jan. 14, 2016.
3. Evan Andrews, "Native American Activists Occupy Alcatraz Island, 45 Years Ago," www.history.com, Nov. 20, 2014.
4. https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_takeover.htm

"Coyote Leads the Salmon" in Apple Blossom Parade 2008



Photo by Chris Rader

From left: Jackie Cook, Randy Lewis, Mary Marchand and Roger Jack enjoyed being part of the winning parade entry.



Wenatchee Valley Museum photo

"Coyote" Randy Lewis led the salmon along the parade route.



Wenatchee Valley Museum photo

"Salmon" crouch and rise behind two sheets of "water" during the parade.

Wenatchee Valley Museum volunteers constructed an elaborate float and set of salmon hats for an entry in the 2008 Apple Blossom Festival parade. Some 20 volunteers led by Bill Layman, Susan Evans, Terry Valdez and Martha Flores spent months building a model of the basalt cliffs along the Columbia River out of foam core, paper maché and fabric.

Three drummers from the Colville Confederated Tribes and tribal elders Mary Miller Marchand and Lewis Miller rode atop the float. They were preceded by dozens of people in blue shirts and salmon hats (designed by Peggy Peterson) who crouched behind



Photo by Rod Daut

Five members of the Colville Tribes rode on the float.

two long sheets of blue mylar signifying river water. "Coyote" Lewis led them along the parade route – occasionally stopping so the salmon could dance in plain sight.

The entry marked the first time Wenatchi descendants had participated in Wenatchee's oldest parade. It drew much attention and received the Grand Sweepstakes Award for 2008. The museum was honored that Randy, his mother and uncle, and other Colville tribal members participated in the parade and a celebratory lunch at the museum.

Envisioning the New Confluence Parkway

by Steve King, City of Wenatchee Economic Development Director

Have you ever been stuck in traffic on North Wenatchee Avenue and asked, "When is the city going to do something about this traffic?" Most of us have – and luckily the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center is happy to report that there are plans and efforts in the works to develop a new gateway into the city called Confluence Parkway.

Given the new proposed roadway will be a bypass skirting the edge of Confluence State Park and the Horan area, WVMCC and the City of Wenatchee are partnering to research and share the cultural history of the confluence area which has been a key meeting place full of cultural history for people of the Northwest for thousands of years. We are excited to bridge cultures and commemorate the heritage of this special place through this project: the development of a new gateway into our community.

This new road has the very practical applications of addressing traffic congestion on North Wenatchee Avenue, improving transit, and providing us with a new evacuation route in the case of wildfire. However, just as important, the new roadway will be a new front door that will welcome people into Wenatchee for years to come – just as many people in the past traveled the trails and the rivers to this place we call home, Wenatchee (Wenatchi).

Confluence Parkway is a two-lane road that will parallel the railroad tracks, cross a new Wenatchee River Bridge, and serve as a parallel bypass route to

North Wenatchee Avenue between the area where Denny's is located and the US 2/ Hwy 97A interchange in Olds Station. The project will include environmental and cultural enhancements to ensure that our treasured Horan Natural Area is improved for visitors, wildlife, and Apple Capital Loop Trail users.

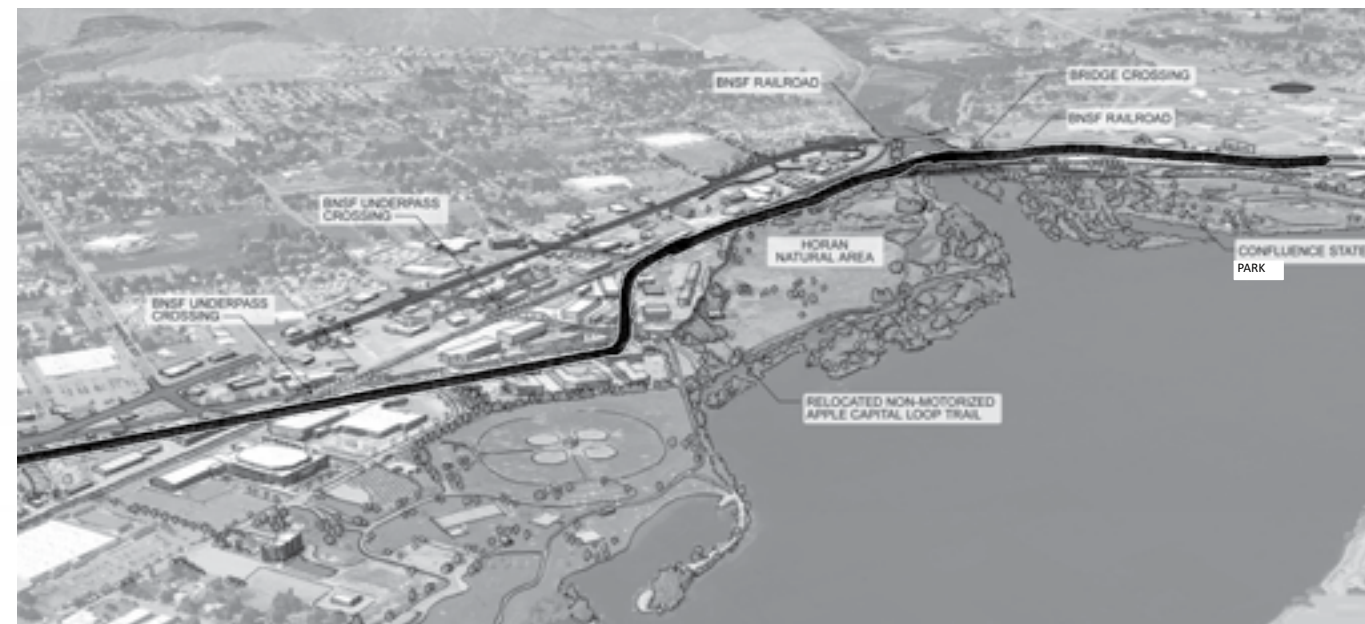
Cultural interpretation of the Wenatchi-P'squosa people also offers the opportunity to open a window into our past. Finally, the Confluence State Park camping and day use area will be shielded from the roadway to ensure that the experiences enjoyed by many are not compromised. We also look forward to trail enhancements and extensions such as beginning the upriver trail. The City is excited to be able to invest in a project that addresses many issues, making our community a better place to live as it continues to grow.

For more information, go to www.wenatcheewa.gov/confluenceparkway.



Photo by Chris Rader

Steve King describes the parkway concept at an interpretive map along the Horan Natural Area trail.



The Parkway (heavy line) will include two railroad underpass crossings and a new bridge across the Wenatchee River. There will be several access points to the parkway from Wenatchee Avenue.

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Working to Enhance the Horan Natural Area

by Bruce McCammon, North Central Washington Audubon Society (NCWAS)

Editor's note: This is an excerpt from an article that appeared in *The Wenatchee World* on June 28, 2019.

The Horan Natural Area (HNA) provides valuable bird and wildlife habitat on the Wenatchee River delta. Situated within the City of Wenatchee, the area supports a wide range of recreational uses while connecting parks to the north and south.... Chelan PUD purchased much of the HNA in 1987-88 and developed a series of ponds along with a trail system through the area. The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission manages the HNA through an agreement with the PUD.

The Horan is a haven for outdoor activities. It is a birding hot spot due to the shrubs, black cottonwood and grasses/forbs that provide a variety of habitats for birds, deer and other mammals. The sloughs along the east edge provide a water-based trail system for canoes and kayaks.

Current conditions

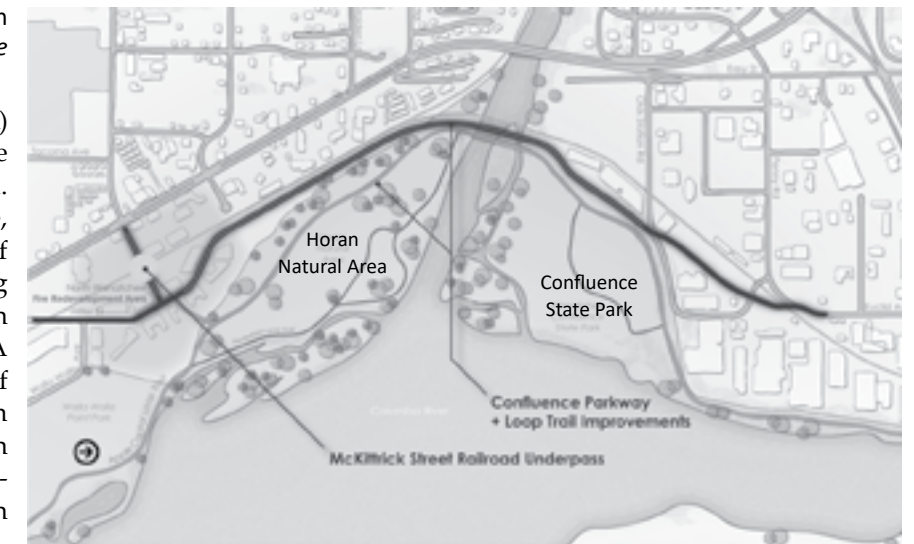
Most of the surface water that historically flowed into the Horan has been curtailed. The ponds are disappearing as they dry. Occasionally, seasonal flooding forces closure of portions of the trail system. Conditions in the HNA can be improved if a dependable water supply is introduced to sustain wetland, pond and riparian habitats.

Weeds are pervasive in the Horan and need to be controlled or eliminated. A vegetation management strategy that encourages culturally important plants (Indian hemp and showy milkweed) would lead to increased vitality in the area....

Looking to the future

The city has started planning the Confluence Parkway project and Chelan County PUD is beginning the process to relicense Rock Island Dam. Both the city and the PUD staff have expressed interest in improving the Horan area during their planning.

The NCWAS would like to see the following enhancements made



Courtesy of City of Wenatchee

in the Horan Natural Area:

- Introduce a reliable flow of water to the area to support a network of ponds connected by a channel lined with native riparian plant species.
- Redesign the existing steep-sided ponds to encourage waterfowl and shorebirds.
- Develop a vegetation management plan to minimize weeds and support native plants....
- Construct a living installation to honor the Native American history of the area.
- Construct an environmental and cultural center to provide a location for educational and civic events.
- Develop a bilingual educational curriculum for K-12 grades to promote environmental and cultural awareness.

Achieving these goals will take time and a shared vision.... Key players in this effort include:

- The city, PUD, Washington State Parks and Recreation, and private landowners.
- The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.
- Our Valley, Our Future.
- Citizens of Wenatchee and East Wenatchee.

... With citizen awareness and input to the City and PUD, planning for the Horan can be a win-win for all of us.



An American goldfinch holds a yellow salsify seed in the Horan Natural Area.

Photo by Bruce McCammon

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Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center
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Or current resident:

Museum members: If you move, please inform the museum of your new address. Call (509) 888-6240 or e-mail info@wvmcc.org.

Coming Up at the Wenatchee Valley Museum



Learn about Great Northern Railway history at WVMCC programs on Sept. 6 and 7.

- First Friday Reception and Railroad Talk:** Friday, September 6
- Railroad History Tour:** Saturday, Sept. 7
- Quincy Basin Geology Tour:** Saturday, Sept. 21
- Bacon, Bourbon, Bluegrass and Blues:** Saturday, Sept. 21
- Murder Mystery Dinner:** Thursday, Sept. 26
- Native Heritage Bus Tour:** Saturday, Sept. 28
- First Friday Reception:** Friday, October 4
- Lake Wenatchee Geology Tour:** Saturday, Oct. 5
- Space Camp!** Friday, Oct. 11
- My Sky Family Day:** Saturday, Oct. 12
- Haunted Museum:** Oct. 18, 19, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31
- “Get Lit” Workshop:** Wednesday, Oct. 23
- First Friday Reception:** Friday, November 1

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2-Confluence WVMCC