May 1st, 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Damming The Columbia River and its Impact on Celilo Falls

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DAMMING THE COLUMBIA RIVER AND ITS IMPACT ON CELILO FALLS

The story of Celilo Falls began thousands of years of ago. Celilo Falls had been a center of trade and social contact between various different peoples since the beginning of its occupation by Native American tribes around 11,000 years ago. Celilo Falls, also called Horseshoe Falls, was a place along the Columbia River where the river came to a bottleneck, and the river was only around 40 feet across. This forced the river to move very quickly over the rocks of Celilo Falls, making it a very dangerous place for shipping and navigation of the river. Fortunately, the bottleneck of the river made Celilo Falls one of the best places for fishing anywhere on the river. These factors meant that Celilo Falls was once a place of incredible importance to the Umatilla, Walla Walla, Cayuse, and Nez Perce tribes, as well as the Yakama Nation and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. Unfortunately, on March 10, 1957, the waterways of the Dalles Dam closed, backing up the Columbia River, stripping these River Tribes of the Falls, which held incredible value.

The earliest data that we have surrounding the nature of the congregations around Celilo Falls comes from the early 1800's, with the expedition of Lewis and Clark. The explorers placed

the population of the area between the start of the falls and The Dalles to be around 7-10,000 people.[1] Celilo Falls began with characteristics of the Chinook people, but eventually morphed into a place where cultures collided and mixed. The Native American population of the area surrounding Celilo Falls shifted and changed depending on the season. Despite starting out as simply a spot along the river where fishing was good, it morphed into an economic and cultural center for the tribes of the Columbia River Basin.

Celilo Falls was an integral piece in tribal culture for all of its history. The fishing that took place there was of great cultural importance, not just practical. Fishing was regulated by a chief, who controlled when people fished, which ensured the sustainability of the practice. Families each got certain spots along the river where they fished. These specific plots were passed down through families, and they erected their own platforms here. Children too young to fish performed simpler tasks, like assisting their mothers with preparation of fish, or catch other animals such as eel-like lamprey in the calmer parts of the river. Once the boys were old enough to understand the dangers and follow the rules of the men, they too began fishing. Fishing on the falls was a rite of passage for Native American boys, and very important to the families.[2] While the men and boys fished, the women did things like prepare the fish, as well as dry it in order to preserve the fish that was not needed at the time. This pounded salmon was salmon that was dried and mixed with other food products that women gathered, and then pounded into a powder. This powder lasts for years, and was viewed as a delicacy. Processing these large amounts of fish

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[1] "Celilo Falls Columbia River | Celilo Falls History." 2018. *Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.*

[2] *Celilo Falls and the Remaking of the Columbia River*. Produced by Joseph Cone. 2007. May 11, 2017.

meant that fishing and the production that followed took many steps, and involved many people. This resulted in the fishing at Celilo Falls to become a family affair.

Celilo Falls and the gatherings there allowed Native Americans to practice their religious beliefs, such as giving thanks to nature for what it provided them, as Celilo Falls was in the center of many types of landscapes that provided the Native Americans with various sources of food, from deer in the mountains to salmon in the rivers. Tribal culture meant that they did not view the salmon they caught as lesser beings than them, they viewed their death as a sacrifice deserving of great honor so that they could continue living. This allowed them to express their beliefs in how the world was created, illustrating the times when fish and other animals communicated with Native Americans (as told by tribal stories),[3] illustrating their equality in the eyes of nature. The fishing at Celilo Falls allowed them to maintain an "intimacy" with the natural world that could not be found elsewhere.[4]

In addition to the spiritual and cultural importance, fishing also maintained a practical importance for the people of the River Tribes. These salmon were the only way to survive for many of them. It is estimated that almost half of the calories consumed by the Native Americans came from salmon. The salmon also could serve as a commodity for trade. Tribes could take the salmon that they no longer needed and they could trade it in nearby towns (once white settlers moved in) for other things that they may need, such as additional food, or tools. It has been said that Celilo Falls was "possibly the most productive inland fishery in Native North America." [5]

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[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

[5]Cain Allen, "'Boils Swell & Whorl Pools': The Historical Landscape of the Dalles—Celilo Reach of the Columbia River," *Oregon Historical Quarterly,* Vol: 8, No. 4, 547.

This amount of fish passing through the narrow passageways of Celilo Falls made it incredibly easy to catch substantial amounts of fish, and this resulted in Celilo Falls being incredibly valuable to the tribes of the Columbia River.

Trading of salmon was not the only economic benefit that Celilo Falls provided the River Tribes. Celilo Falls provided a central point for the River Tribes to come together, which resulted in various social activities, such as gambling. Gambling played a major role in the economics of the area as well. When tribes would meet up at Celilo Falls, many played a "stick game" that was a guessing game between two teams. The winner took home the pot, meaning the game could be high stakes. Many times it was used as an icebreaker between tribes. This was just one of the many economic traditions that took place at Celilo Falls. People also came to trade things like obsidian, meat, slaves, and other commodities useful to people at the time. Celilo Falls was an integral part in trade system that spread as for north as Alaska and as far south as California.

Native Americans first real contact with the white people of America was with the caravan of Lewis and Clark in the fall of 1805. The encounters between the tribes and the explorers is well documented in their journals, and they allow us to learn a lot about how the fisheries at Celilo Falls were run before settlers from the east moved there. From these journals we can see that most of the Native Americans that Lewis and Clark encountered were amicable towards them. They were open to trading with the expeditioners, and this allowed them to

"purchased a Dog for Supper."[6] They hired Indians to move things for them if necessary, and engaged in other forms of economic relations throughout their stay. Even with the whites, Celilo Falls was a hub for trade and other necessary transactions.

The explorers also described the fishing practices that took place at Celilo Falls. Here they referred to the Native Americans drying, powdering, and packaging their fish in their logs, saying "great numbers of baskets of Pounded fish on the rocks Islands & near their Lodges thos[*sic*] are neetly[*sic*] pounded & put in verry[*sic*] new baskets of about 90 or 100 pounds wight[*sic*]."[7] In another entry, the extremely high value the fish was revealed. When Clark was discussing how they traded with the Native Americans for dinner, he made a comment on the natives selling them fish: "the Indians not verry[*sic*] fond of Selling their good fish."[8] Despite the fact the Indians were reluctant to trade with the Corp of Discovery for the salmon, it was not simply due to an unwillingness to trade with the explorers, as they gladly sold them dogs to eat, the tribes around Celilo Falls simply had such a high value for salmon that they did not feel it was worth it to trade them away, and decided to keep their stores. This illustrated just how much value that the tribes placed on the Salmon they caught at Celilo Falls.

The journals of Lewis and Clark provided insight on how the Natives lived their lives around Celilo Falls before the influence of the white Americans could take hold and change their lifestyle. After Lewis and Clark left, life for the residents at Celilo Falls was mostly undisturbed

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[6]William Clark, *Journals of Lewis and Clark* [book on-line] (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, accessed 6 March 2019);available from https://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/item/lc.jrn.1805-10-22#lc.jrn.1805-10-22.01; Internet, October 22, 1805

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] *Ibid* (October 23, 1805),.

until a mission was founded in The Dalles in 1838 by Henry Perkins, a Methodist Minister. Perkins, like Lewis and Clark, was amazed by the magnificence of Celilo Falls. He described the potential for fishing at the Falls as one of the best in the country.[9] Perkins recognized the importance that the Falls had for the economy of the area, and summed up one reason why Celilo Falls was so valuable for the River Tribes. After Perkins, several missions followed, and The Dalles became an important decision point for many of those taking the Oregon Trail. They were forced to choose between attempting to cross the violent rapids and risk losing everything, or cross to the coast over Mt. Hood, which was still a dangerous and lengthy option.

From these historical accounts, it becomes obvious that Celilo Falls was a place which was of incredible importance to the River Tribes of the Columbia River. It had the best Salmon runs in the west. It served as a cultural meeting place for various tribes. It was a place for the families of the River Tribes to come together. It also served as an economic hub for things like tourism, gambling, and trading. These traditions went back thousands of years, and were eventually legally established rights by treaties. However, these abilities were unjustly stripped away from the River Tribes by the damming of the Columbia River. These injustices began once whites began to move west into the Columbia River Basin.

In 1850, the United States government created Fort Dalles in order to help defend the people moving west. The Fort's main use was found in wars involving Native Americans, such as the Yakama War in the mid-19th century. This war was caused by the discovery of gold, however the land on which the gold was discovered was land that had been previously allotted to the Yakama Tribe. Prospectors seeking gold then flooded into the territory that was supposed to

[9]Allen, 548.

be exclusively for the Yakama tribe. The United States government wanted to acquire the land for prospectors and other settlers, but the Yakama refused. Tensions escalated between the Yakama and the United States, and eventually the two nations went to war. The war eventually ended with the Yakama tribe being confined to a reservation in present-day Washington State, due to a treaty in 1855 with the 14 tribes[10] united as the Yakama Confederation.[11]

The government also signed treaties with multiple other tribes, such as the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs,[12] as well as the Walla Walla Treaty Council (which included the Umatilla, Cayuse, and Walla Walla tribes).[13] These treaties all maintained more or less the same ideas. The River Tribes gave up significant portions of their land, as well as many of their resources on these lands, and in return, hopefully avoid destruction. The Walla Walla tribes were told if they did not agree to the treaty and move on to a reservation, the white men in the area were going to eventually take all of their cattle and their horses.[14] Additionally, in these treaties, the River Tribes demanded that they be able to maintain fishing in their "accustomed places." For these tribes, the stretch of river containing Celilo Falls was one of the most important.

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[10] The 14 tribes were the Klickitat, Klinquit, Kow-was-say-ee, Li-ay-was, Oche-chotes, Palouse, Pisquose, Se-ap-cat, Shyiks, Skinpah, Wenatshapam, Wishram, and Yakama.

[11] "The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation". 2018. *Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.*

[12] Indian Affairs, *Treaty with the Tribes of Middle Oregon* , Charles Kappler ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties vol. 2 (treaties)* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), 714

[13] "Walla Walla Treaty Council 1855". *Oregon Encyclopedia*. (Oregon Historical Society, 2018.) [on-line].

[14] *Ibid*

Additionally, the early settlers began to take advantage of the rich resources of the Columbia River itself, just like the River Tribes. Those who migrated west set up salmon fisheries of their own, which competed with the River Tribes fishing operations. Inventions such as the fish wheel meant that fish could be caught at unsustainable rates. The amount of fish that travelled through Celilo Falls began to decrease because the overfishing of the settlers. They set up canneries in order to increase the efficiency of their production, and to preserve the fish without having to use the lengthy drying methods of the native tribes. The Native Americans simply could not keep up with the production of the new settlers, and were outfished. Of course, their goal was not to outfish the new settlers, as they understood the necessity of conservation of the fish populations. Native fishing was heavily regulated by the elders and the chiefs, with fishing only allowed in between certain whistles during the day. They also were only allowed to fish during certain times of the year, after a special Salmon ceremony.[15] These practices maintained the population of the salmon at a manageable level that could be maintained for a long time.[16] Under the Native Americans, the fish population was kept at a manageable level, but with the introduction of industrial methods, the salmon population was devastated.

The treaties that the United States government made with the various tribes pushed them away from their fishing grounds and cultural sites, bulldozing native cultural traditions and way of life to make room for expanding white populations along the Columbia River. They created reservations such as Warm Springs in order to make it appear they were giving some form of concession to the tribes. The land they moved on to was nowhere near as bountiful and efficient

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[15]"Celilo Falls". 2018. *Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.*

[16] *Celilo Falls and the Remaking of the Columbia River*. Produced by Joseph Cone. 2007. May 11, 2017.

as the land they came from, and the white people were left to destroy the ecosystem of the rivers that the natives spent thousands of years and generations of effort carefully maintaining.

There were other consequences for the fish population other than settlers overfishing that was prevalent along the Columbia River by the new settlers. Additional factors that hurt the salmon population of the Columbia River were various government projects that took place along the Columbia River Basin in order to change the flow of the river, which began in the late 19th century. The government began damming various portions of the tributary system of the Columbia River, and a report put out by U.S Fish and Wildlife stated that this was a large cause of the decline of sockeye salmon during the 20th century. The report stated: "The early post-1900 decline in sockeye salmon abundance can be largely ascribed to losses in habitat due to blockage by dams on tributary streams."[17] It was not just the water management dams on the tributary system of the Columbia River that blocked the salmon runs however. The hydroelectric dams put in place along the main stem of the river in the mid-20th century also harmed the salmon populations of the Columbia. The same report stated: "Hydroelectric dams constructed on the main stem of the Columbia River from the 1950's to 1967 accounted for the most recent general decline in abundance."[18] Instead of impacting the habitat of the salmon as before, the decline came as a result of the hydroelectric nature of these dams. The young salmon that were traveling out to sea got trapped in the turbines and were killed, as these dams did not have sufficient methods for the smolt to get around the dam into the ocean. These dams did additional

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[17]James W. Mullan U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, *Determinants of Sockeye Salmon Abundance in the Columbia River 1880's-1982: A Review and Synthesis* (Washington, 1986), iv.

[18]*Ibid,* 59.

harm to the salmon populations as well. The dams had a huge impact on the amount of nursery lakes throughout the Columbia River Basin, decreasing them by as much as 94%.[19] These nursery lakes are essential to the reproduction of these salmon, and the decrease in surface area of the nursery lakes has a harmful impact on the growth of the salmon. The report summed up the impact of the damming projects best, stating "Hydroelectric dams constructed on the Columbia and Snake rivers have proved devastating to salmon".[20] The actions of the government throughout the early 20th century took an incredible toll on the salmon population of the Columbia River. The very same salmon that the River Tribes of the Columbia River relied on as a basis of their economy and sustenance.

These damming projects had a few motivations that made them worth it in the eyes of the public. The oldest of these reasons is the need for navigation of the Columbia River. It was realized very early that the Columbia River certainly had the potential to be a fantastic transportation system for shipping into the cities inland along the river. The issue was that places like Celilo Falls made it difficult, in some cases impossible, for ships to pass through them. In the late 1800's, the United States began attempting to fix this issue by digging canals along side the river at choke points, in order for the ships to pass through unimpeded by rapids or falls. [21] Eventually, these became obsolete, as the ships became too big for the narrow canals. This is where the dam was believed to have a benefit, as the dams purpose was to help raise the water level of the rivers at various points, flooding the dangerous portions of the river. The ships then

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[19] *Ibid.*

[20] *Ibid,.*

[21] William Dietrich, *Northwest Passage: The Great Columbia River* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 406.

were able to use tools like locks to go through the dams, making shipping along the Columbia River possible with larger and larger ships.

An additional way the dam projects along the river benefitted business interests was in regard to irrigation. The western portion of the land surrounding the Columbia River does not receive a lot of rainfall, and as such irrigation is a paramount interests to the businesses in the Columbia River Basin that depend on irrigation. Without tapping into the Columbia River's resources, the land surrounding the river is completely desolate. Agriculture is simply fair too difficult to be practiced on a practical scale.[22] These damming projects allowed for a way for the farmers in the Columbia River to gain access to the water needed to create large, productive farms. As a result these dams would help increase the amount of middle-class farmers in the area, and draw more people to live there.

The third benefit the dams brought to the American people was the benefit of hydroelectric power. The Northwest was growing at a large rate throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and needed the infrastructure to keep up with the growing demand. This influx of people meant that increasing the available power supply was a necessity. The people of the northwest then realized the great power that the Columbia River had, and all of it was left untapped. The dams utilized large turbines in order to harness the potential energy that lay in the roaring waters of the Columbia. These turbines helped produce the power necessary to support the rising population of the Northwest, and help supported the development of the portion of the country.

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[22] *Ibid*, 225-227.

Of course, all of these things benefitted all sorts of Americans, the rich businessman, the honest farmer, and the average consumer. The dam seemed like something that was obviously in the best interests of everyone. However, these views did not take into account those people who actually owned the rights to the land that would be impacted by these damming projects. Yes, the dams were going to have a very beneficial impact on the Northwest, as well as those who lived there, but it was not their decision. The rights to the land impacted by these dams belonged to the River Tribes, if not by sheer tradition and the simple fact the Native Americans had lived their longer than anyone else, then by the treaties of 1855 between various different tribes of the Columbia River and the United States government.

The dams caused many issues for the Native Americans. The erection of the Bonneville Dam in the 1930's flooded "thirty-seven Columbia River fishing and home sites used by Native Americans."[23] Although there were options available for the Native Americans to move, as well as rebuild their houses, the options were not really viable. The houses offered on the reservations were not of sufficient quality to live in, and the reservations were plagued with issues like alcoholism. Additionally, in regards to the rebuilding of the houses, the land for the relocation of the houses was not completely bought until 26 years after the flooding of sites. Additionally, the agreements with the tribes were so vague, that the government never even began building the replacement housing for the flooded sites. The Corp of Engineers told the people that they had no requirement to replace the houses that they flooded with the erection of the Bonneville Dam.[24]

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[23] *Ibid,* 26.

[24] *Ibid,* 376.

Eventually, the disrespect of the native people culminated to its most disastrous impact on the River Tribes. What had began with the federal treaties that pushed the natives out of their land, and then continued with the devastation and overfishing of the salmon fisheries and inventions like the fish wheel, had culminated with the erection of the Dalles Dam in the mid-1950's. The construction of the dam began in 1953 to allow for the free navigation of ships up and down the Columbia River, purposefully flooding the waters of Celilo Falls so they no longer were the fierce and violent rapids they once were, and allowed shipping and commerce to flow freely through the Columbia.

The Dalles Dam was first proposed shortly after World War II, and from the start the River Tribes of the Columbia resisted its creation. The Yakama tribe fought the Dam the entire way through the approval process by the federal government. They started fighting the planning of it by the Corp of Engineers in 1946 and 1947. They expressed their disapproval during congressional hearings in 1950 and 1951. Even up until the very end, during the process of allocating money for the dam, the Yakama tribe fought the creation of the Dam.[25] During a meeting on February 26, 1952, three members of the Yakama tribe came before the House of Representatives Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs (Subcommittee on Indian Affairs) in order to continue fighting against the production of The Dalles Dam. In it, a representative of the Yakama tribe, Thomas Yallup, put forward multiple reasons why building The Dalles Dam was not beneficial to the United States. Yallup interestingly dedicated most of his time speaking to arguments against the Dam that did not have anything to do with the Yakama tribe directly. He

[25] Joseph Dupris and others, *The Si'lailo Way: Indians, Salmon and Law on the Columbia River* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press,v2006), 365.

argued against the Dam due to a report from the Atomic Energy Commission that stated that Nuclear Power renders the Hydroelectric Power of The Dalles Dam obsolete in 50 years. He also argued that the materials necessary for the dam drew materials away from the soldiers.[26] This argument was interesting, illustrating how he was attempting to appeal to the patriotism of the committee members. He even referred to the soldiers as "our boys on or being sent to the firing lines."[27] His language in referring to the men fighting the Korean War illustrates how he was trying to appeal to the strong pro-American attitudes that were present during the 1950's. This kind of patriotic phrasing showed how he was attempting to use anything possible to convince the committee that The Dalles Dam was damaging.

What appears to be missing from his statement until the very end, was any sort of argument that pertained to the River Tribes themselves. Yallup's statement took up around 3.5 pages, and out of this, only around half to three-quarters of a page discussed issues that actually affected him and the rest of the Yakama tribe. This short response discussed the issues that provided the best legal argument (as opposed to moral or practical) against building The Dalles Dam. Here Yallup argued against the dam citing reasons such as the existing treaties with the Yakama people that showed their right to resist the creation of the Dam. Yallup said that the elimination of the Dalles Dam "enable the people of the United States to live up to their treaty of 1855 with the Yakima Nation,"[28] showing how he viewed the treaty now. He said halting

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[26]U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Subcommittee on Indian Affairs, *Discussion with Representatives of the Yakima Indian Tribe of Washington Regarding Dalles Dam, Washington.* 82nd Cong., 2nd Sess., (February 26, 1952), 2.

[27]*Ibid.*

[28] *Ibid*, 5.

construction of the dam "enable the people" to uphold the treaty. Yallup knew that the American people had completely given up on actually going through with their end of the deal, and instead of portraying the treaty as a legal requirement that the government *has* to keep, he portrayed it as just a secondary benefit to the cancellation of the Dalles Dam. Yallup's attitude here shows the result of the decades of erasure of Native American rights, and how the Yakama nation had been beaten down so badly that they believed that their legal rights in treaties no longer held any meaning in American courts.

Later in the same meeting, Eagle Selatse, a member of the tribal council, talked to the committee as well. He highlighted more reasons as to why The Dalles Dam should not be built. He discussed the youth of the Yakama tribe, and how at the time, they had a stable future through continuing the tribes traditions in regards to fishing, and being self sustaining that way. He pointed out the fact that substantial amount of these young Yakama men, as well as those from other tribes, rely on the fisheries in order to make a living. With the flooding of the fisheries, he says "Most of them [the youth of the tribe] are not educated. They will be in a category where they are a burden to somebody,"[29] Eagle Selatse understood that without the Falls and the economic opportunity it afforded the tribe, the Yakama youth can not thrive. They will become unemployed, and he knew that opportunities were scarce for them. Through no fault of their own, their futures were going to be stripped from them, and Eagle knew that they were going to be viewed as simply lazy and worthless regardless of the fact that they could have been self-sufficient, if only the Dalles Dam was not going to destroy their way of life.

[29] *Ibid*, 14.

Despite these and other protests by the Yakama, the public in the northwest was in support of the Dam. The newspapers showed that there was some opposition to the Dam, but not as much as there was support. In a message to Roseburg's The News-Review, an article titled "Save Celilo Falls Plea Submitted By Portlander" made a desperate plea to the people of Oregon to fight against the placement of a dam at Celilo Falls. In this article, "the Portlander", Charles Castner, argued that the people of Oregon did not want the dam to be placed at Celilo Falls. He even cited an (unconfirmed) study that 70% of people surveyed said the the dam should be moved as to not damage the beauty of Celilo Falls. Additionally, Castner argued that the payment of "the Indians" at Celilo Falls was not enough, as they lost their last source of food. They said "the money will soon be gone but Celilo Falls will be dead - a lake its tomb."[30] Towards the end of the article, Castner even stated that Celilo Falls needed to be declared a National Park, and that with enough public sway, they can do so. Castner stated that this new National Park was going to be a "monument to the Indian people."[31] Castner took the time to write in a letter to the newspaper very obviously believed in the rights of the Native Americans, as well as the validity of the treaties they had with the United States. Unfortunately for the tribes of the Columbia River, this person's beliefs were not shared universally throughout the Northwest.

A vast number of other newspapers either showed support for the dam, or at the very least an apathy towards the Native Americans cause against it. The newspapers illustrated the

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[30] "Save Celilo Falls Plea Submitted By Portlander," *The News-Review,* Vol 38: No. 53, *(*17 February 1953), 4.

[31] *Ibid*.

general sentiment towards the Indians that the people of the Northwest held. In one article in the *Medford Mail Tribune*, an unjust raid on Native American[32] fish at Celilo Falls was described. When the federal agents came onto the native reservation, where their jurisdiction was questionable, and confiscated fish that the Native Americans claimed was well within their rights to hold offseason, in accordance with treaties, the Native Americans attempted to stop the agents from leaving with their hard fought fish. The fish were caught in accordance with their treaty rights, and the Native Americans attempted to stop the unlawful confiscation of these fish. The article described the Native Americans blocking the path of the agents until their fish were returned as a "near-riot."[33] This is just one example of the Native Americans at Celilo Falls being viewed as violent and rowdy. In an article in a Bend newspaper, the compensation given to the River Tribes with land around Celilo Falls was discussed. The article referred to the Native land around Celilo Falls is referred to as a "village eyesore."[34] The people of the Northwest did not care about the Native American culture of all of the River Tribes that were going to be completely wiped out by the implementation of The Dalles Dam. Although the article did raise some concerns about the implementation of the dam, they were not a call against the inhumanity of ruining the fishing grounds of the Native Americans. Instead, the article stated "The village of dirty, unpainted shacks will be no more, after The Dalles Dam has been completed, but the same

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[32] The specific tribe was not reported in the article

[33] "Raid by State Police at Celilo Results in Near-Riot by Indians.," *Medford Mail Tribune,* No Vol:No.149 (September 11, 1953), 1.

[34] "Warm Springs Indians Due For Big Payment from U.S..," *The Bend Bulletin,* No Vol:No.3 (December 9, 1952), 2.

will be true of beautiful Celilo Falls."[35] The people were more concerned with losing the beauty of Celilo Falls than they were about all of the people who were going to become homeless, out of work, and lose the entire history of their culture. Even when people were against the dam, they completely ignored the Native Americans reasoning why the dam should not go up, and instead were worried about pretty views, and hydroelectric power that was going to be obsolete in less than half a century.

An article in *The Oregonian* discussed the idea of relocating the dam to the Deschutes river instead of its planned position at The Dalles location. In it, the article attacked the idea of relocating the dam, negating the River Tribes opinions on why relocating the dam was a bad idea. The article claimed that the building the dam would actually be beneficial to the River Tribes. The article stated that "Industrialization is of greater interest than Indians to The Dalles generally."[36] Despite claiming that The Dalles Dam was in the best interest of the tribes surrounding the Columbia River, no Native American was even mentioned as being contacted in regards to their opinion on the dam. This article was a clear example of how the interests of the River Tribes were ignored in the building of the dam. The government and general public of the Northwest made decisions on behalf of the tribes along the Columbia River, without consulting them. And, as seen in the congressional hearings about the building of the dams, if the tribes attempted to make their opinions heard, they were ignored instead.

The cultural, economic, and practical uses of Celilo Falls were all practically erased by the damming of the Columbia River and the inundation of Celilo Falls. Native Americans were

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[35] *Ibid.*

[36] "Construction of The Dalles Dam Proceeds While Controversy Wages over Relocation.," *The Oregonian*, Vol LXXII: No.19 (May 10, 1953), 25.

removed from their homes, and had practices that were essential to their ways of life and creation stories ripped from them. The Native Americans had everything to lose, and nothing to gain through the damming of the Columbia River. The River Tribes were the most impacted by the damming of the river, yet regardless their pleas for help fell on deaf ears. They tried everything to stop the implementation of the dams. They argued based on morals, since they had been on the land and fishing there for longer than the government had even known about it. They argued based on law, as they had treaties going back a century that very clearly gave them the rights to that land. As we can see from the newspapers, these arguments did not have a great impact on the American people, certainly not enough to halt the production of the dam. The people of the Northwest simply held the sentiment that the River Tribes of the Columbia were a relic of the old world, and that their interests were not valid. As a result of this public sentiment, the things that the River Tribes valued, like the rights to "fish at their usual and accustomed places," and the ability to practice their religion on the same lands that their ancestors had before them, meant nothing. The Dams along the Columbia River went up with fairly little public opposition, and the Columbia River began to rise, quietly drowning Celilo Falls, and with it, thousands of years of Native American life and tradition.

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