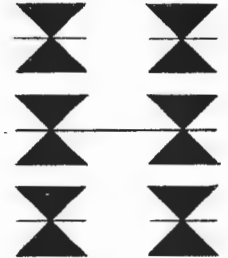
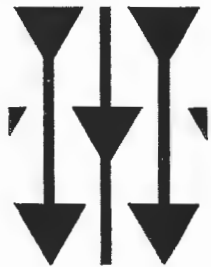


Nez Perce SONGS

OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, AS SUNG BY "SOL" WEBB



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NEZ PERCE SONGS OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, as sung by "Sol" Webb

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Washington State University Music Department

"SOL" WEBB

Most of the Nez Perce music dating from before the 20th Century is now forgotten, but occasionally we find a musician who still carries in his mind and voice a few of the true Nez Perce songs of the past. Such a person is Charles ("Sol") Webb, who, at age ninety, remembers the melodies he once heard from his grandfather and the other old people, and sings them with vigor.

Mr. Webb was born October 11, 1881, near Sweetwater, Idaho. He grew up on the farm of his grandfather, Weptestema'na' (James O'Neill Webb), after whom the village of Webb was named. Sol was baptized and confirmed in the Catholic faith, and attended school under Father Cataldo at De Smet Mission until 1893. He took active part in various Indian celebrations as a drummer and singer in Spokane, Grangeville, Moscow and the Lapwai area from 1906 to 1928. Then he moved to Oregon, and continued participation as a drummer at the Pendleton Roundup and other festivities. Included among the drummers with whom Sol used to sing are John Hayes, Bill Moody, Carter, Red Thunder, and Jackson Sundown—all deceased.

Sol's father, Edward (Ned) Webb, appears on the pages of history as a youth of 15 who brought to Fort Lapwai news of the outbreak of the 1877 conflict.¹ Sol's maternal grandfather, Hyúmpakatemna (Bear With Five Hearts, also called "Old Man" Halfmoon), was among the non-combatants with Chief Redheart's band; they voluntarily surrendered to Gen. Howard near Weippe July 16, 1877, were marched to Fort Lapwai, and sent to Vancouver Barracks as prisoners of war until April 22, 1878.²

WEPTESTEMA'NA'

One of the richest Nez Percés in horses and cattle, Weptestema'na' (Eagle Feathers in a Row) belonged to the *Kamá-inem* band located on the Snake River, south of present Asotin. He and his people traveled freely in the Grande Ronde, Wallowa, Salmon River and Clearwater River areas. Considered by some as "chief of said Wallowa country,"³ he was well acquainted with Old Joseph, in fact grew up with him for a time when the latter's mother returned to her native Snake River country from the Cayuse Tribe.⁴ Weptestema'na' attended some of Missionary Spalding's classes, but later became a Catholic.

His name appears 55th among the Nez Perce signers of the 1855 Treaty and 26th among those signing the 1863 Treaty (though some question remains as to whether he actually meant to sign it and relinquish his rights to Snake River land). He is mentioned as "Wep-ta-ta-mand" among chiefs located on the reservation in 1866.⁵ He was baptized by Father Cataldo as James O'Neill Waptestamene in 1872 at Slickpoo Mission, and from that time led vigorously in all phases of the Mission program.⁶

His speeches, indicating neutrality, appear in the 1876 *Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners*. Weptestema'na' took no part in the War of 1877, refusing to join the non-treaty Nez Percés and also refusing to scout for Gen. Howard. He was allotted land in 1891, being considerably older than the estimate of 65 years given in the Allotment Book. Weptestema'na' died Jan. 11, 1905, a man of peace, whose life reflected understanding, patience, and tolerance. This booklet is dedicated to his memory—to the pride he held in his heritage—because we have him to thank for the opportunity of hearing this unique music today.



Ned Webb



McWhorter Collection, W.S.U. Library



Weptestema'na'

Courtesy of Richard Halfmoon, Lapwai, Idaho

1. SONG OF TAWIS WAIKT (side 1, band 1)

"My Spirit tells me that this earth is going to be turned over, and the *koq'álx* * (buffalo or cattle) is going to be all over this land. People are going to live all over this country, and there will be no more vacant land as there is today"—thus prophesied Tawis Waikt (Horns Tilted) in the 1820's, approximately. Sol says that Weptestema'na' was "just a kid then"; he heard Tawis Waikt sing this song at a great worship ceremony near *Yáumines* or "Thunder Hill" north of Lapwai (see location marked with arrow, p. 8). The Nez Percés came from far and wide to view the dancing of young girls around a great white pole, and to take part in the veneration of the earth and the Creator.

The event occurred after the Lewis and Clark expedition, but predated the arrival of the Christian missionaries; it probably exemplified worship among the *wálm* cult as discussed by Walker.⁷ Elder Billy Williams recounted similar incidents regarding "Ta-wish-wa-hickt," as quoted in McBeth.⁸ The pictures on the back page of this booklet indicate the changes predicted by Tawis Waikt.

1. *Song of Tawis Waikt* Nez Perce (end.)

J=138

Inemku wese ne— hi ta sapalu i tatom ta mu lu inm.
 hey—ya heya—o hey—ya heya—o hey—ya heya heya

Inen'ka wétesna
 Hitasapaluátatom tamálwinn. *

"Me also," the Earth says—
 "Continually you force me, by your laws."

LAWS

In 1831 four Flathead and Nez Perce Indians journeyed to St. Louis in search of the "Book of Heaven" and religious teachers. (Note reference to *úmas* or book in songs 6 and 7.) A few years later missionaries arrived among the Nez Perce people, followed by settlers and fortune hunters.

"In 1842, Dr. Elijah White, commissioned as sub-Indian-agent west of the Rocky Mountains, visited this tribe. He found it without a recognized chief, and virtually appointed to that position an Indian named Ellis. He assembled the tribe in council, and gave a code of laws for its government. Ellis had been placed in school at the Selkirk settlement, about five years, and could read and write the English language, and for this reason he was selected by Dr. White. The tribe was not pleased with this innovation; still, as late as the Spring of 1846, Ellis was regarded as Chief of the Nation, but passed much of his time beyond the Rocky Mountains in the buffalo country, and died there in 1847."⁹

With Missionary Spalding's help, and with no actual jurisdiction over the Nez Perce people, White caused his laws to be adopted. These pages are taken from the first Spalding Press printing of the laws in 1842, and the translation is as follows:

"The Law
 First:

When any person shall steal a thing, he shall replace twice the amount of the same thing; and to punish him for the offense he shall receive twenty and five *lashes*. That is, if he shall steal a thing as large or

* (In this transcription:
 ' indicates glottalization ' indicates stress or length
 e is pronounced as in "bet"
 x is pronounced as "ch" in the German "Bach")



valuable as a beaver skin or of that kind. And if he shall steal a thing exceeding the value of a beaver pelt then he shall receive fifty lashes.

Eleventh:

When any of the Nez Percés shall break these laws, then the chiefs shall punish him. And on the other hand when any white man or Frenchman shall disregard these laws against these people, they are to report it to Dr. White and he shall punish him for it.
 Nez Perce Chief Ellis.¹⁰

2. LASHING PROPHECY SONG (side 1, band 1)

Punishment by lashing had been predicted long before in a prophecy song which also implied that the earth would suffer:

2. *Lashing Prophecy Song* Nez Perce

J=126

Waq' mine kek' himenta ta sa waq' peewauyan u waqoet kik se Kine wétespa.
 heya— ya he ya heya— ya he ya he ya— ya he ya

Waq' mínekek' hiwautatása waq' péewauyanin
 Waqo hit'íkxa kina wétespa'. *

How will it miss me—this lashing?
 It even descends upon this earth.



Gonzaga University Archives

3. SONG OF WAR LEADERS (side 1, band 2)

Ten chiefs, mounted, wearing war bonnets, paraded among the people and sang this song at an important gathering in Kamiah. Weptestema'na' was present and later passed the song and story along to his grandson. Several Nez Percés were preparing to travel eastward, to visit the graves of their people buried in Montana. En route, they were exposed to disease and many died, including Ellis. According to this account, Chief Lawyer was already an important Nez Perce leader. Others mentioned are Yutsinmáligkin, Isk'útim, Tipyala'na' Tímanee, Allalimya'táq'hanin, Timothy, Jason, Tuhulhultsút, and one other whose name is forgotten. Sol Webb says this occurred "not long before the treaty in Walla Walla"; historical sources date it as 1847. Although taken much later, the picture above gives an idea of the pageantry of this event as it may have appeared.

♩ = 100 3. Song of War Leaders Nez Perce

Aya he ya he ya e ya he ya he ya e ya a he ya he a he ya
e ya he ya he ya hya a he ya he ya he ya he ya he ya he ya

♩ = 116 4. War Dance Nez Perce

drum ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

(ya) ya e ya he ya hya a he ye he ya
ya he ya ey he ya ya he ya a he ya ey
ya he ya hya e he ye he ya
ya he ya ey he ya ya he ya a he ya ey

4. WAR DANCE (side 1, band 2)

The old Nez Perce war dance, as mentioned in historical accounts from the 1800's, is a rarity today. This example is the only one which Sol Webb remembers as a truly authentic Nez Perce War Dance Song. He learned it from Jackson Sundown's father. The plains Indian war dance, as practiced presently, gained prominence in the 1890's after war refugees from Canada and captives held in Indian Territory in Oklahoma returned to the reservation. This picture, taken in 1897, shows Nez Perce war dancers.



Gonzaga University Archives



NEZ PERCE RELIGION SONGS

The old Nez Perce religion utilized prophetic dreams or visions and recognized *kanyawát* (the Creator), *halspáwít* (the sabbath day), and *talapósa* (worship). The songs with text in this booklet are exemplary of the music used in such worship, but only a few still exist. Note the texts as they apply to occasions mentioned in this booklet, and particularly to the one pictured below.



7. Book Prophecy Song Nez Perce

J=132

Mi se te kawaq' im me wé ye tsu ku we tsa ti mas e pe y ná. he
 ya i ya heya he ya i yo hey he ya i ya heya
 he ya e i yo heya he ya e i ya heya he ya he ya he ya

7. BOOK PROPHECY SONG (side 2, band 2)

Miset kawaq' imméwyetsukwetsa
Tímaspa'.

You do not know what is written for you
In the Book.



8. Song of the Great Chief Nez Perce

J=138

Ho tsawayat hiw ya tse ma Mí o há tum He ya hiw ya ka tse ma Mí o há tum.
 A i - ya - he ya - he ya he ya a i ya he ya
 a i - ya - he ya a he ya he ya a i - ya he ya a he ya he ya
 a i ya he ya he ya he ya a i ya he ya a he ya he ya

8. SONG OF THE GREAT CHIEF (side 2, band 2)

K'otswayat hiwyátsem Míohat
Kíya hiwyáktsem Míohatum.

From far away the Great Chief is coming;
The King is watching us.



9. Elders Prophecy Song Nez Perce

J=120

Waq' ti te gesne - waq'pe su xa li hi ni ke. hey ya hey ya he ya
 he ya hey ya he ya (etc.)

9. ELDERS PROPHECY SONG (side 2, band 2)

Waq' titágesne pesuxálfhinike.

The elders are being pushed around.

In this photograph the tribal leaders appear with governmental representatives at the time of an agreement (concluded May 1, 1893) for the subsequent sale of "surplus" lands, following allotment. Wepstema'na' stands at the far left.



Courtesy of Ira Dole, Lewiston, Idaho

FOOTNOTES

1. McWhorter, Lucullus V., *Hear Me, My Chiefs!* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1952), 231.
2. McWhorter, Lucullus V., *Yellow Wolf* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1948), 311.
3. Wood, H. Clay, *Status of Young Joseph and His Band of Nez-Perce Indians* (Assistant Adjutant General's Office, Portland, Oregon, 1876), 35., McWhorter Collection, #208, W.S.U. Library, Pullman, Wash.
4. Josephy, Alvin M., Jr., *The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest* (New Haven, Conn., 1965), 668.
5. O'Neill, James, in *Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1866-67*, p. 194.
6. *St. Joseph's Mission Register* and records, Gonzaga University Archives.
7. Walker, Deward, Jr., *Conflict and Schism in Nez Perce Acculturation* (Pullman, Wash., 1968), 34.
8. McBeth, Kate C., *The Nez Percés Since Lewis and Clark* (New York, N.Y., 1908), 156.
9. Wood, op. cit., 22.
10. *Nez Perce Book of Laws* (Lapwai, Idaho, 1842), 4, 8, and translation, Whitman College Library Archives, #2338, S2NL.
11. Wood, op. cit., 42.
12. Newell, Robert, *Diary of 1868*, courtesy of Chester Wiggin, Lewiston, Idaho.

Front cover design by Steve Allured, W.S.U., from authentic Nez Perce symbols given by Spinden, H. J., "The Nez Perce Indians," *American Anthropological Association Memoirs*, 2, 1908, 234.

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Gonzaga University Archives

Lapwai, July 4, 1897

Lapwai, October 13, 1971



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Additional copies may be obtained by writing to:

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(Include total of \$3.32 to cover mailing costs.)