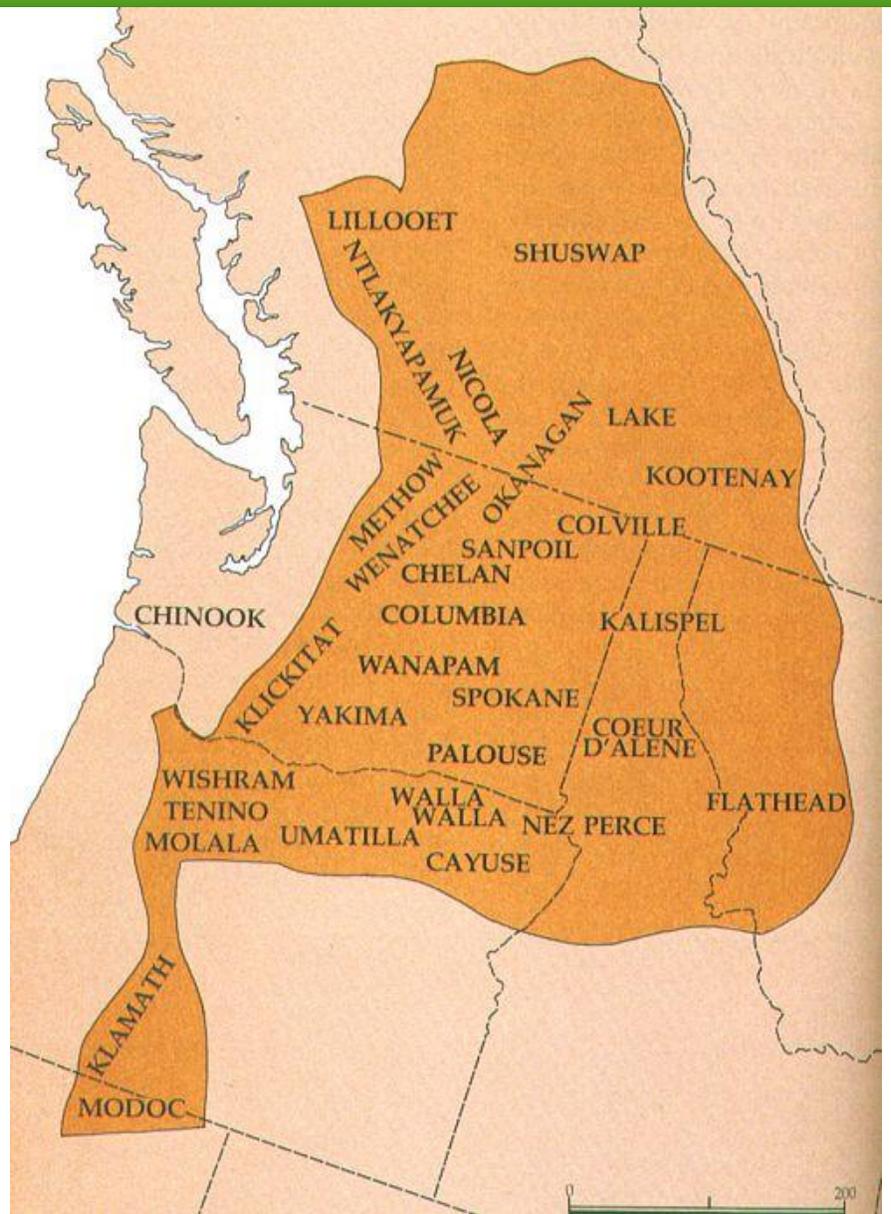


The Indigenous Plateau: Past and Present

Laurie Arnold, PhD
Director, Native American Studies
Associate Professor of History

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Context

- ▶ The Columbia Plateau: Stretches from southeastern British Columbia to southeastern Washington/northeastern Oregon.
- ▶ Tribe: Indigenous communities did not generally refer to themselves this way, and on the Plateau, that term only became widely used after American settlement.
- ▶ Band/village: Many communities on the Plateau operated from a band or village form of organization. This type of organization could be very fluid.
- ▶ Seasonal round: ancestral subsistence practices of food collection (fishing, gathering, hunting) which also informed spiritual practices.
- ▶ Homeland informed identity and spiritual practices, which is why Native peoples are so tied to land bases and landscapes.

THE PLATEAU SEASONAL ROUND



Timeline

- ▶ 9500 years ago the Ancient One (Kennewick Man) was living somewhere along the Columbia River on the Columbia Plateau
- ▶ 1807 David Thompson, British trading company North West Company, arrives in the region to establish trade and survey the Columbia Basin and Columbia River
- ▶ 1825 Creation of Fort Colvile (British Hudson's Bay Company)
- ▶ 1830s Jesuit missionaries arrive on the northern Columbia Plateau, Protestant missionaries arrive on the southern Plateau
- ▶ 1846 Creation of U.S./Canadian border
- ▶ 1853 Washington Territory established
- ▶ 1855 Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens negotiated treaties with Yakama and Nez Perce Tribes, ceding more than seven million acres; treaties were not ratified until 1859 and later but immigration to the region continued, causing increased tensions.

- ▶ 1855-1858 Regional Indian wars, ending with battle of Spokane Plains in 1858.
- ▶ 1870s First American settlers in what is now Spokane.
- ▶ 1872-1914 creation of Colville, Spokane, Coeur d'Alene, and Kalispel Reservations by Executive Order. These tribes were not offered treaties.
- ▶ 1881 city of Spokan Falls established (officially became "Spokane" in 1891); also, Jesuits bought the land on which Gonzaga University is constructed. Father Cataldo wanted to build a school where Native boys educated at regional mission schools could continue their education.
- ▶ 1887 Gonzaga University opened. The first president, Father Rebman, refused to admit Native students.
- ▶ 2021 After decades of activism from tribal leaders and Native community leaders and partners, Fort George Wright Drive was renamed Whistalks Way, for Whist-alks, a warrior married to Qualchan, a Yakama subchief whom Wright hanged during the 1858 Plateau War.

Present

- ▶ Spokane's Native population is between 10,000-20,000 people, from more than 300 tribes
- ▶ Plateau People and Plateau nations are visible throughout the city and region
 - ▶ Gathering at the Falls powwow
 - ▶ One Heart Native Art & Film Festival
 - ▶ Native art Riverfront Park (Spokane Tribal Gathering Place, Salmon Chief)
- ▶ Native led and Native funded organizations are dedicated to the health of Native People and this place, including languages and cultures (Salish School of Spokane), health and wellness (Native Project), community services (American Indian Community Center), ecosystems and environmental justice (Upper Columbia United Tribes, River Warrior Society).
- ▶ Plateau People also practice food sovereignty, ancestral and contemporary arts, cultural interpretation, and are revitalizing practices interrupted by colonization including an annual canoe journey to Kettle Falls.



Key takeaways

- ▶ The Plateau was and remains an Indigenous place.
- ▶ You are on Indigenous lands, our university resides on ancestral homelands of the Spokane Tribe of Indians. The tribe is also known as “Children of the Sun,” a name reflected on Gonzaga’s shield.
- ▶ Immigration to the region began late, and all colonial processes were much more accelerated on the Plateau than in eastern and southern regions of the U.S.
- ▶ This place was the Indigenous Plateau for more than 9,200 uninterrupted years. It remains the Indigenous Plateau, co-occupied now for 200 years.

Be respectful, be informed, be proactive in learning more

If you want to invite a Native knowledge holder into your classroom or meeting room, be ready to learn from them. Inform yourself (do your research) before their arrival in order to demonstrate your respect for their time and knowledge.

Be prepared to offer payment. Too often, Native people are expected to share their knowledge for free, for the benefit of others. Don't do that.

Discover concrete ways to develop meaningful allyship. Offer your skill set and expertise, and determine if there are tangible ways you can support Native/Indigenous priorities.

Listen. Be humble. Listen.

<https://illuminatives.org/take-action/>