

Of Myths, Conflicts, and Traditions

For thousands of years the valleys, prairies, and plateaus of north central Idaho and adjacent Oregon and Washington have been home to the Nez Perce people. Today 38 separate sites scattered across these states and Montana commemorate the legends and history of the Nez Perce and the interaction with the explorers, fur traders, missionaries, soldiers, settlers, gold miners, loggers, and farmers who moved through or into the area. As you travel from site to site you will gradually sense the rich and diverse cultural history they represent.

The Nez Perce lived in the valleys of the Clearwater and Snake rivers and their tributaries. They fished the streams, hunted in the woodlands, and dug the bulbs of the edible camas lily on the high plateaus. In the early 1700s the Nez Perce acquired the horse, and their increased mobility added new dimensions to their age-old ways and forged new ones.

By the time of the American Revolution, the Nez Perce had begun to feel the impact of a new people from another land. Their first meeting with these people took place in September 1805 when Meriwether Lewis and William Clark led a small group across the Bitterroots into Nez Perce country. The Nez Perce received them graciously, gave them supplies, and told them about the river route to the Pacific. Soon fur trappers and traders, both British and American, followed in their wake. In the 1840s settlers began to make their way westward along the Oregon Trail, and in 1846 the Nez

Perce found themselves part of the United States when the U.S. and Great Britain divided the Oregon Country along the 49th parallel. By this time, the Nez Perce had come under the influence of Christian missionaries, who believed that the Nez Perce should abandon their traditional ways and adopt the white man's religion and culture.

Washington Territory, which included all of Idaho and part of Montana, was formed in 1853, and its governor, Isaac Stevens, called the Nez Perce leaders to a council at Walla Walla in May and June 1855 to create a reservation. An agreement between Stevens and the leaders of each Nez Perce band was finally reached that reserved most of their traditional homeland as their exclusive domain.

The discovery of gold on the Nez Perce Reservation in 1860 raised calls from white people for a smaller reservation that would exclude the gold fields. So in 1863 a new reservation, containing only one-tenth of the land originally set aside, was proposed to the tribe. Lawyer, a pro-American, Christian leader, and his followers accepted the plan and signed the treaty. Other Nez Perce leaders rejected it, giving rise to the "treaty" and "non-treaty" designations of the respective factions.

Four years later the U.S. Government launched a campaign to move all the Nez Perce onto the new, smaller reservation. The Nez

Perce leaders who had not signed the treaty and who lived off the new reservation ignored the orders. Foremost among them was Old Joseph, who led a band that lived in Oregon's Willowa Valley. Young Joseph, who succeeded his father as chief, hoped that a peaceful solution could be found, for he did not wish to go to war or to leave his home. In May 1877, the non-treaty Nez Perce were told that the U.S. Army would forcibly move them onto the reservation. So in early June, Joseph and his people crossed the Snake River into Idaho and camped near Tolo Lake while preparing to move onto the reservation by the June 14 deadline. On the morning of June 13, 3 young men, angered at what was happening and seeking revenge for the murder by a white man of one of their fathers, rode out of camp. By midday June 14 they had killed 4 settlers. Joined by 17 others, the group killed 14 or 15 whites in the next 2 days. Knowing that General Oliver O. Howard would retaliate, the Indians headed for White Bird Canyon. There on June 17, 1877, a small body of warriors imposed a crushing defeat on a superior force of soldiers, killing 34 and losing none. Skirmishes at Cottonwood in early July and a battle on the Clearwater, July 11-12, proved inconclusive. At Weippe the non-treaties decided to cross Lolo Pass into Montana. The bands totaling about 750 men, women, and children, hoped that their buffalo-hunting friends, the Crow people would help them.

More and more soldiers came after them, eventually totaling more than 2,000. Instead of helping, the

Crow harassed them. At Big Hole, August 9-10, the Nez Perce lost between 60 and 90 people in a surprise attack by U.S. troops. Still they managed to elude the U.S. Army until October when they were forced to surrender just 40 miles short of the Canadian boundary and refuge.

The last years of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th were difficult ones for the Nez Perce. White values and culture were forced upon them. The General Allotment Act of 1887 aimed at giving individual Indians title to anywhere between 40 and 160 acres of land in the belief that ownership of land would more swiftly assimilate them into the mainstream of American life. The unallotted land was sold to the general public. Soon more than 70 percent of the reservation lands was in white ownership.

In 1948 the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho became a self-governing body under an approved constitution and bylaws that were revised in 1961. The Nez Perce people have not lost sight of their proud past or their hopes for the future. This park, established in 1965 and enlarged in 1992, has helped increase appreciation and understanding of Nez Perce history and culture among all people.



Traveling photographers arrived in Nez Perce Country at a time of transition for the tribe. In the last years of the 19th century the reser-

vation system was triumphant and young Nez Perce were learning white ways in boarding schools run by

Chief Joseph

churches and the government. Yet the camera shows that the pull of tradition was still strong. These pictures, almost all of them

posed, show Nez Perce people in their traditional finery looking straight at the photographer and proud of their culture

even though their way of life had been changed forever by miners, loggers, farmers, and townspeople from other cultures. Sitting for the

camera then was not as casual as it is now. For some of these people, this perhaps was the only time that they were

photographed and they wanted to be seen at their best. The four women, Chief Joseph (far left), and the war chiefs appear in tradi-

tional Nez Perce clothing. In the photograph at far right can be seen the seeds of change: the woman stands in the

doorway to her traditional dwelling wearing clothing made of manufactured cloth and a machine-made broom leaning against the wall.

Facilities and Services

The 38 sites of Nez Perce National Historical Park are located in north-central Washington, northeast Oregon, north-central Idaho, and western Montana. This area has a great diversity of topography, rainfall, vegetation, and scenery, ranging from the semi-arid regions of Washington, to the lush high mountain meadows of Idaho and Oregon, to the prairies of Montana.

Touring this park is unlike traveling in most parks, for this one is as much an idea as it is actual physical property. In some cases the idea is the stronger force, for the physical remains of the past have either disappeared or the original appearance has been greatly altered. Through the diversity of the sites and the gradual accumulation of information as you tour them, you can come to appreciate the human history of

this region. A driving tour of 22 of the sites is shown on a map on the reverse side of this folder. A map showing the other 16 sites, most of which were added to the park in 1992, is below.

Park headquarters is located at Spalding, 11 miles east of Lewiston. Stop at the visitor center to orient yourself to the park and its story. The uniformed staff can answer your questions, whether they pertain to the history of the region and the Nez Perce or how to get around and find the services you need. The visitor center contains a museum of Nez Perce exhibits and artifacts and an auditorium where films are shown and interpretive talks given.

Interpretive shelters at East Kamiah and White Bird Battlefield tell the story of events at each location. The shelter at

White Bird presents a panoramic view of the battlefield. From this point you can get an idea of how the battle occurred and how skillfully the Nez Perce used the terrain to defeat the U.S. Army. At East Kamiah the exhibits explain the Heart of the Monster—the Place of Beginning where the Nez Perce people sprang from the drops of

blood squeezed from the monster's heart. An audio station recounts the legend. Picnic tables and restrooms are located here.

Nez Perce National Historical Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. For more information, write to the superintendent, whose address is P.O. Box 93, Spalding, ID 83551.

Major highways lead into the area. U.S. 2 and U.S. 12 are the major east-west routes, and U.S. 89, U.S. 93, U.S. 95, and U.S. 195 are the major north-south routes. Airlines provide daily service to Bozeman, Mont.; Spokane, Wash.; and Lewiston, Idaho. Greyhound Bus Lines also serves the region. The nearest rail passenger connections are at Spokane, Wash.; Pendleton, Ore.; and Boise, Idaho.

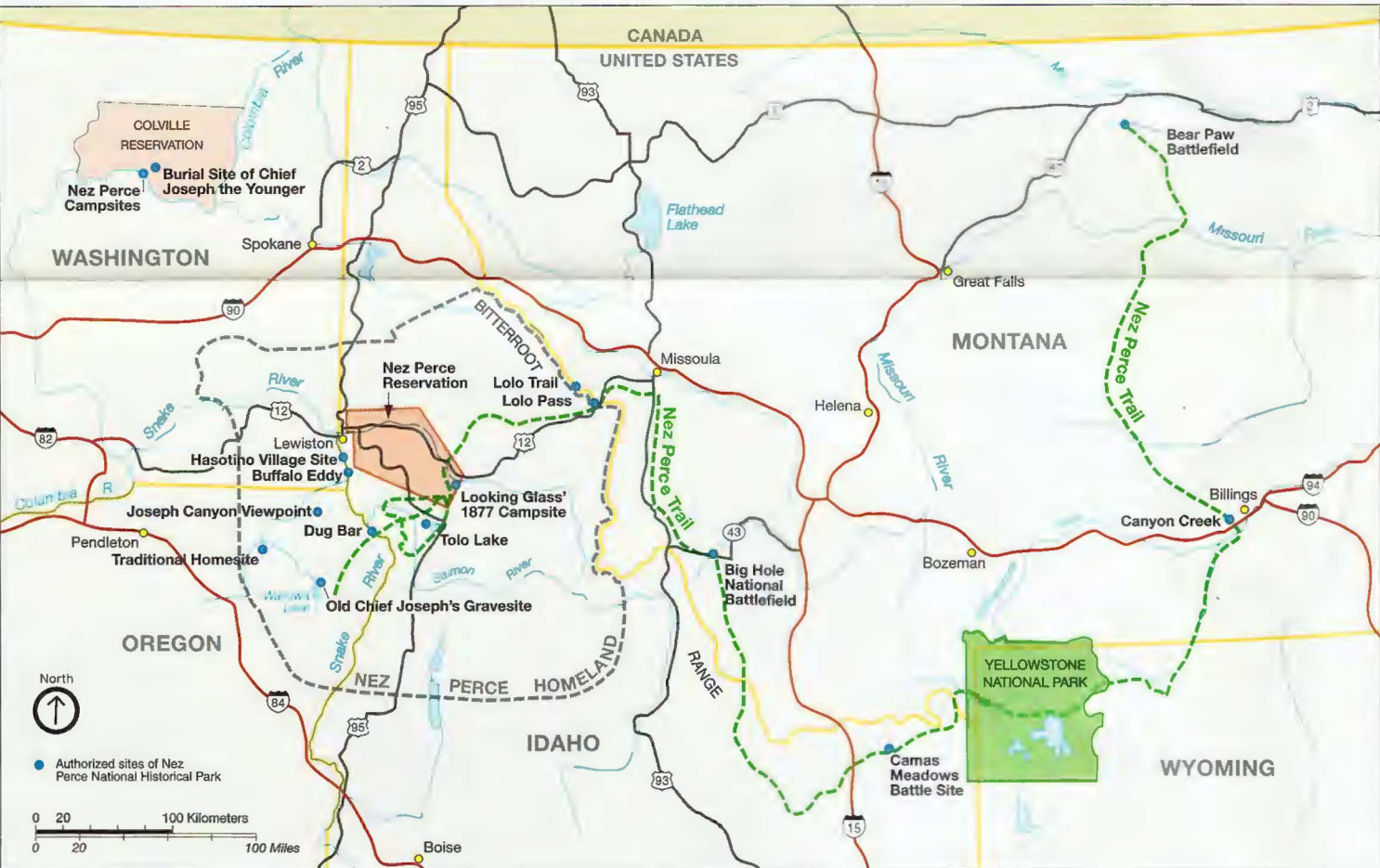
Accommodations and Services

Towns where you can find motels are widely scattered, so think about your night's lodging ahead of time. Tourist accommodations, restaurants, grocery stores, and service stations are located throughout the region. Many towns have outfitter stores for those planning to travel in the backcountry. Local information centers can help you find services and facilities.

Opportunities for backpacking and camping are almost unlimited. The National Forests in the four states have many trails and campgrounds. The Army Corps of Engineers has some day-use parks along the Snake and Clearwater rivers in Lewiston and Clarkston and a camp ground at Dworshak Reservoir on the North Fork of the Clearwater River.

Hiking and Camping

Many of the Dworshak campsites can be reached only by boat. The Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington state parks in the area also have campgrounds. For those who wish a trip deep into the forest, Nez Perce Country offers several wilderness and primitive areas that are among the largest and most stunning in the 48 contiguous states. They are administered by the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. For more information, write to: Nez Perce National Forest, Route 2, Box 475, Grangeville, ID 83530. Private campgrounds also can be found throughout the area. Some provide utility hookups and dump stations.



Nez Perce Country

When Nez Perce National Historical Park was created in 1965 it consisted of 24 sites scattered across north central Idaho. Four of the sites were administered by the National Park Service and remaining 20 were a mixture of other federal, local, and private sites. In 1992 an additional 14 sites were added in the adjoining states of Oregon, Washington, and Montana. Currently agreements with the property owners are being worked out to provide for public access to each area. Before you visit these sites, check with the park staff to make sure that you do not unwittingly trespass on private property.

The original 24 sites are described on the back side of this folder and shown on the map, except for sites 23 and 24 which are located on the map at left. Sites newly authorized are described here by state and located on the map at left.

Idaho
Buffalo Eddy The unique petroglyphs of this area are evidence of the longevity of the Nez Perce and are important to preserve for the education of future generations. Defacing archeological property is a federal offense.

Camas Meadows Battle Site After the tragedy at Big Hole, the Nez Perce gained time by stopping the advance of the troops, stealing more than 200 of their pack mules and horses, and bringing the army's forward momentum to a halt.

Hasotino Village Site Hasotino was inhabited until the end of the 19th century and was located near an important local fishery.

Looking Glass' 1877 Campsite The Looking Glass Band tried to remain neutral in the conflict between the Army and the non-treaty Nez Perce. The Army did not trust them and attacked

the village, destroying it and stealing hundreds of horses. Looking Glass regarded this as treachery and joined the others against the Army.

Tolo Lake The non-treaty bands congregated at this ancient council site before moving onto the newly reduced reservation.

Montana
Big Hole National Battlefield On the morning of August 9, 1877, U.S. troops surprised the Nez Perce who had crossed the Bitterroots trying to evade capture. Between 60 and 90 Nez Perce men, women, and children were killed. The Army lost 29 soldiers and 40 wounded. The visitor center is open every day of the year except January 1, Thanksgiving, and December 25.

Canyon Creek After emerging from Yellowstone National Park, the Nez Perce were pursued by cavalry. In a rear guard action the Nez Perce

were able to gain time by successfully stopping the pursuing troops.

Bear Paw Battlefield Just 40 miles short of the Canadian border, the Nez Perce were besieged by the Army and forced to surrender on October 5, 1877. They had traveled 1,500 miles in the 3 months since the first skirmishes.

Oregon
Dug Bar At this traditional crossing of the Snake, Joseph and his band crossed the river in 1877 as they left their homes in Oregon for the reservation in Idaho.

Joseph Canyon Viewpoint This was one of the winter homes of the Nez Perce. Tradition holds that Chief Joseph was born in a cave along the east bank of the creek.

Old Chief Joseph's Gravesite The remains of the elder Chief Joseph were reburied here in 1926. Nearby are the graves of other Nez Perce and some settlers. The site is in the Wallowa Valley, homeland of this particular Nez Perce band.

Traditional Homesite In 1871 Old Chief Joseph died at this summer campsite for the Wallowa band. This landscape has changed little from the days before contact with the white people.

Washington
Burial Site of Chief Joseph the Younger In 1885, 8 years after the

surrender at Bear Paw, Chief Joseph and his band were allowed to return to the Northwest from Indian Territory (Oklahoma), but never to the Wallowa. Joseph spent his remaining years on the Colville Reservation and died here in 1904.

Nez Perce Campsites Even in exile on a reservation that was not in their homeland, the Nez Perce continued their traditional way of life, refusing to live in houses built by the U.S. government. These were their winter and summer homes and were the last places where Joseph lived.



Camas Prairie



Visitor Center, Spalding



Heart of the Monster, East Kamiah



St. Joseph's Mission



White Bird Battlefield



Bluffs above Clearwater Battlefield

Touring Nez Perce Country

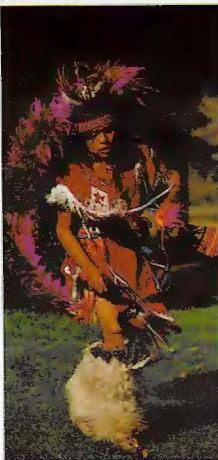
Twenty-four separate sites constitute Nez Perce National Historical Park. Road markers indicate when you are approaching one of them. Two crossed feathers indicate the National Park Service number for the site. A complete tour of all the sites is about a 400-mile trip, so you may want to tour only segments. Most of the sites are along busy highways, so be careful as you pull off and on the road. The locations of sites 23 and 24 are shown on the front side of this folder.

1. Donald MacKenzie's Pacific Fur Company Trading Post
Somewhere on the north shore of the Clearwater—the exact site is unknown—Donald MacKenzie established a trading post in August 1812. The post was part of John Jacob

Astor's plan to counter the work of the North West Company and of Hudson's Bay Company. The effort, however, failed and MacKenzie sold out to the British.

2. Coyote's Fishnet
Nez Perce tradition abounds with tales of the exploits of Coyote. Once he was fishing with a large net in the Clearwater. Black Bear happened to come by and angered Coyote, who stalked out of the water, hurled his fishnet up on the hill to the south side, flung Black Bear far up the hill on the north side, and turned him into stone. Both are still visible.

3. Ant and Yellowjacket
This legend also deals with Coyote, who tried to settle an argument between Ant and Yellowjacket. They paid no attention to Coyote, so



Nez Perce Dancer

he turned them to stone just as their backs were arched with their jaws locked in combat.

4. Spalding
Henry and Eliza Spalding established a mission here, close to today's park headquarters.

5. Spalding Home
Henry and Eliza Spalding first settled in this general area when they arrived in Nez Perce Country in November 1836.

6. Northern Idaho Indian Agency
As part of treaty agreements, the U.S. Government set up an agency to oversee the terms of the treaties. Originally located at Spalding, the agency was relocated in 1904 to the site of Fort Lapwai.

7. Fort Lapwai
In the fall of 1862, a detachment of volunteers arrived in the Lapwai valley, south of Spalding's mission, and chose a location for their fort. This duplex officers' quarters at the southwest end of the parade ground was built in 1863.

8. Craig Donation Land Claim
This is the site of the first claim by a white settler in Idaho. William Craig was a mountain man, an interpreter, and friend of the Nez Perce.

9. St. Joseph's Mission
This was the first Roman Catholic mission among the Nez Perce. It was dedicated on September 8, 1874, by Father Joseph Cataldo, who had built it.

10. Cottonwood Skirmishes
After skirmishes with the

U.S. Army and volunteers here on July 3 and 5, 1877, the main body of the Nez Perce was able to flee to the east into the valley of the Middle Fork of the Clearwater.

11. Weis Rockshelter
More than 8,000 years ago humans first made this home. The locale was continuously inhabited until about 600 years ago, when these ancestors of the Nez Perce probably moved to the mouth of Rocky Canyon, a short distance away. The site is 7 miles from U.S. 95 on a gravel road.

12. Camas Prairie
Here, where wheat fields stretch to the horizon today, camas lilies once grew in great profusion. Camas bulbs were a major food source for the Nez Perce, and they came here in late spring and early summer to dig them.

It was from a camp near Tolo Lake, which can be seen in the distance to the northwest, that three young Nez Perce rode off on a raid that was the prelude to war.

13. White Bird Battlefield
On June 17, 1877, the first battle of the Nez Perce War was fought here. Thirty-four soldiers were killed, while the Nez Perce lost none. At the visitor center in Spalding, you can buy a pamphlet that will direct you on the self-guiding auto tour of the battlefield.

14. Clearwater Battlefield
On July 11 Gen. O. O. Howard crossed the Clearwater and hoped to take the Nez Perce by surprise. His hopes came to naught, and the fighting ended with the Nez Perce withdrawing

15. East Kamiah
This is the location of the Heart of the Monster, the place of creation in Nez Perce mythology. An audio station nearby tells the legend.

16. Asa Smith Mission
In April 1839 Rev. and Mrs. Asa Smith established a mission in the Kamiah area. Unsited to the demands of such work, the Smiths left in 1841.

17. Lewis and Clark Long Camp
Here Lewis and Clark camped in the spring of 1806 while they waited for the snow in the mountain passes to melt.

18. Canoe Camp
At this site Lewis and Clark rested and built canoes of hollowed-out logs for the final leg of their trip to the Pacific



Along the Clearwater River

19. Lenore
For perhaps 10,000 years this site has been inhabited by Nez Perce and their ancestors.

20. Weippe Prairie
This was a root-gathering place for the Nez Perce. It was here on September 20, 1805, that Lewis and Clark first met the Nez Perce. During the 1877 War, the Nez Perce came here after the Battle of the Clearwater and held a council to decide what to do.

21. Pierce
One site here marks the spot, at the north end of town, of the first gold strike by W. F. Bassett in September 1860. The other site of interest is the old Shoshone County courthouse, one block east of Main Street, completed in 1862.

22. Musselshell Meadow
For many generations, Nez Perce have come here in the late spring to dig the bulb of the camas lily, a major food source.

23. and 24. Lolo Trail and Pass
This historic Nez Perce trail (see map on other side), used by Lewis and Clark in 1805 and 1806, extends roughly from near Weippe to Lolo Pass. In many places the exact route is unknown. U.S. 12 closely parallels the route. During the 1877 War the Nez Perce followed the trail to Lolo Pass and on into Montana. The U.S. Forest Service maintains a seasonal visitor center at Lolo Pass and the Lochsa Historical Ranger Station on U.S. 12, east.

