



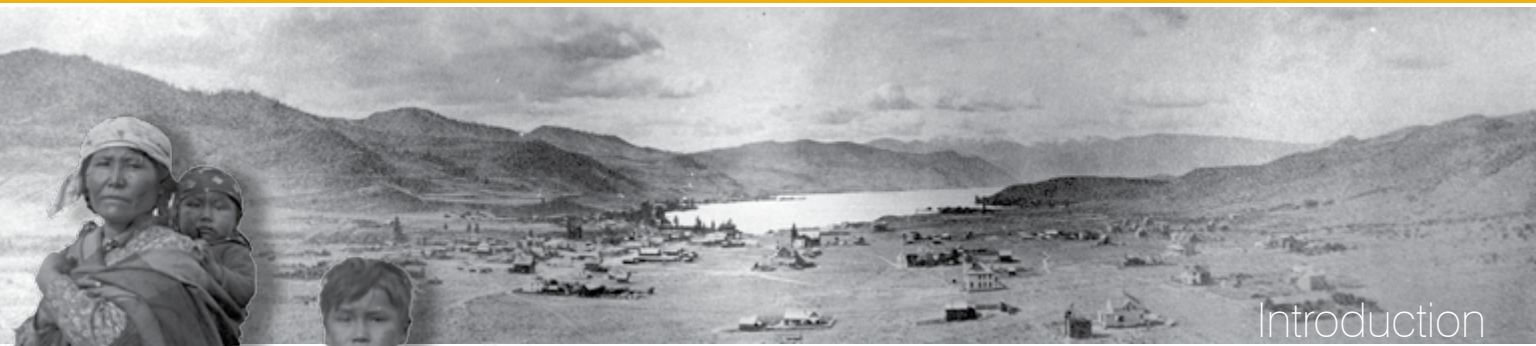
Deep Waters

An auto or boat tour of the people and places of Lake Chelan

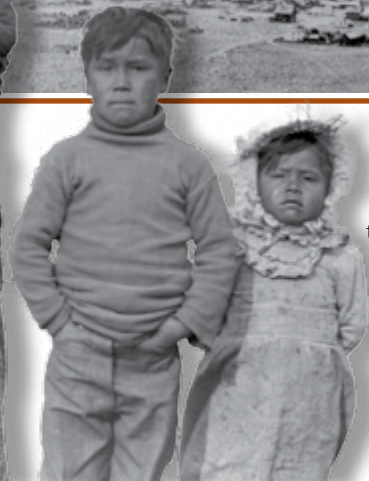
Deep Waters...



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Introduction



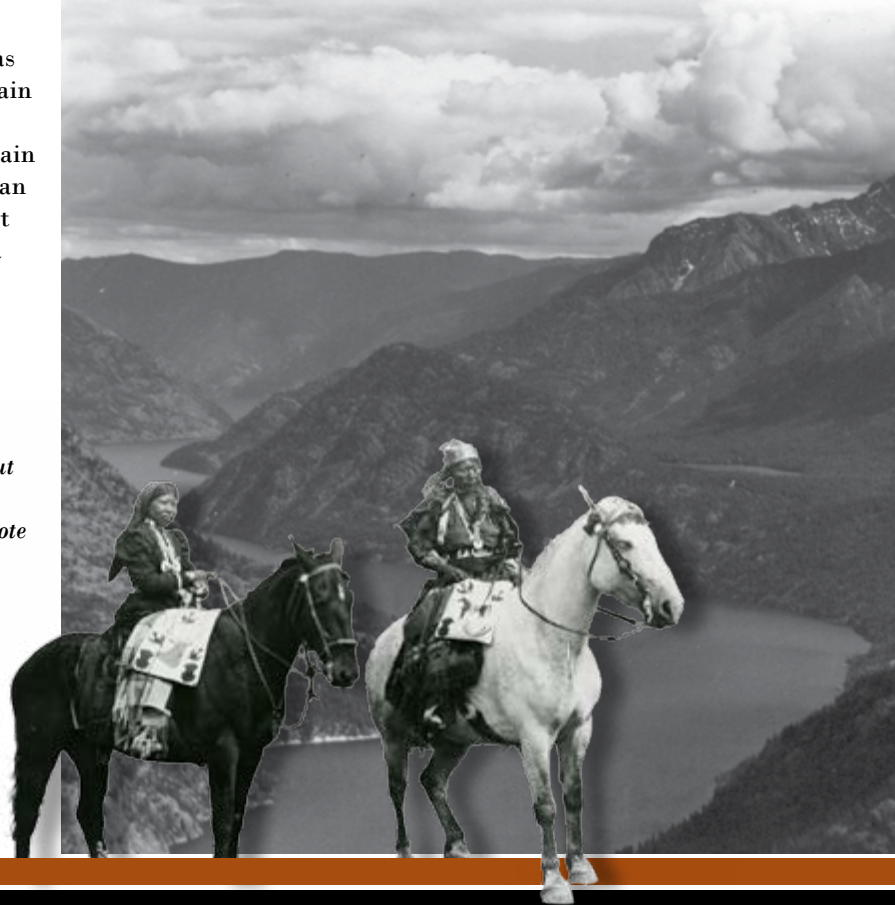
Welcome to a brief history of the Native Americans and early settlers of Lake Chelan. In this booklet, you will take a journey from Chelan Falls, at the southern end, to Stehekin in the north. Along this journey you will discover sites important to the Native American people and early settlers of Chelan.

The Native Americans of Lake Chelan not only lived as part of the natural ecosystem, but also sought to explain their surroundings. Oral traditions passed down for hundreds of generations help to label, define, and explain the geographic features of the world in which the Chelan Indians lived. From these oral traditions we know that the Chelan Indians have been in the Lake Chelan area since the beginning of time.

One such story, recorded by Ella Clark, explains the creation of Lake Chelan.

When Coyote came to the animal people along the Chelan River, he said to them, “I will send many salmon up your river if you will give me a nice young girl for my wife.” But the Chelan people refused. They thought it was not proper for a young girl to marry anyone as old as Coyote. So Coyote angrily blocked up the Canyon of Chelan River with huge rocks and thus made a waterfall. The water dammed up behind the rock and formed Lake Chelan. The salmon could never get past the waterfall. That is why there are no salmon in Lake Chelan to this day (Clark 1953:97).

Archeological and ethnographic studies show continued use and habitation for at least 9,500 years.



Eureka!

Early settler, H.N. Merritt, arrived in the Chelan area in 1888 after a long and arduous trip along the Columbia River to Lake Chelan. He settled up lake, but left an epitaph of how he felt that first day on Lake Chelan.

“Eureka! The ideal spot of my life’s desires! I believed at that moment that a bright future was in store for this enchanted spot. I was in love with Lake Chelan at first sight.”

“A jewel nestled in the Cascade Mountains, fjord-like Lake Chelan is known today for its recreation opportunities, prominence in the apple industry and wineries” (Gregg, 2009).

Although walled by cliffs for much of its length, early settlers were hard working pioneers looking for new opportunities.



Coming from all parts of the country, they brought with them a variety of skills, both professional and personal. Some chose to settle in the newly established town of Chelan in 1889 while others opted for locations along the south shore of the lake. At the turn of the 20th Century, Long Jim had a racetrack along with grandstands at the present-day location of Chelan City Park.



Street Improvement, Chelan Wash, on Woodin Ave
ca. by Wm. Lion Imus

1

Our journey begins at the present site of the city of Chelan.

The Lake Chelan area was part of the traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering lands of several Native American tribes besides the Chelan Indians. Situated on a plateau 400 feet above the Columbia River and at the outlet of Lake Chelan was one of the largest winter villages. Prior to 1886, all the land north of the Chelan River had been closed to white settlement as the Columbia (Moses) Indian Reservation was in effect. Chief Long Jim and his followers occupied the area roughly from Wapato Point to the Columbia River and 15 miles up the river. With the disbandment of the Moses Reserve in the early 1880s, Long Jim refused to obtain allotments for this land or allow it to be surveyed because he stated that his father, Innomoseecha, who was chief, never surrendered possession of the Chelan's land, and that Chief Moses had granted the land to the government without Native authority. Because of its strategic location, Chelan soon became the hub of trade, culture, and tourism for the entire Chelan basin.



Lake Chelan Historical Society

In 1915, Larue Barkley (then a boy of 5), arrived with his family at Chelan Station on the train, and boarded an open-air stage to climb the gorge road:



“My mother, sister and I were all eyes when we got off the train at Chelan Station and looked at that hill opposite the river. Where we came from, anything over a one half percent grade was called a hill. Illinois is flat. The Chelan Transfer picked us up...It was pulled with a four-horse team. I can still hear the teamster’s commanding voice as the traces came tight with a jerk and we started up. When I say up, I mean up...The horse’s bellies were not far off the ground....on the second switchback I looked back and down and I’ll swear it was a 100’ of nothing. I was the most frightened 5-year-old boy in the state of Washington.”

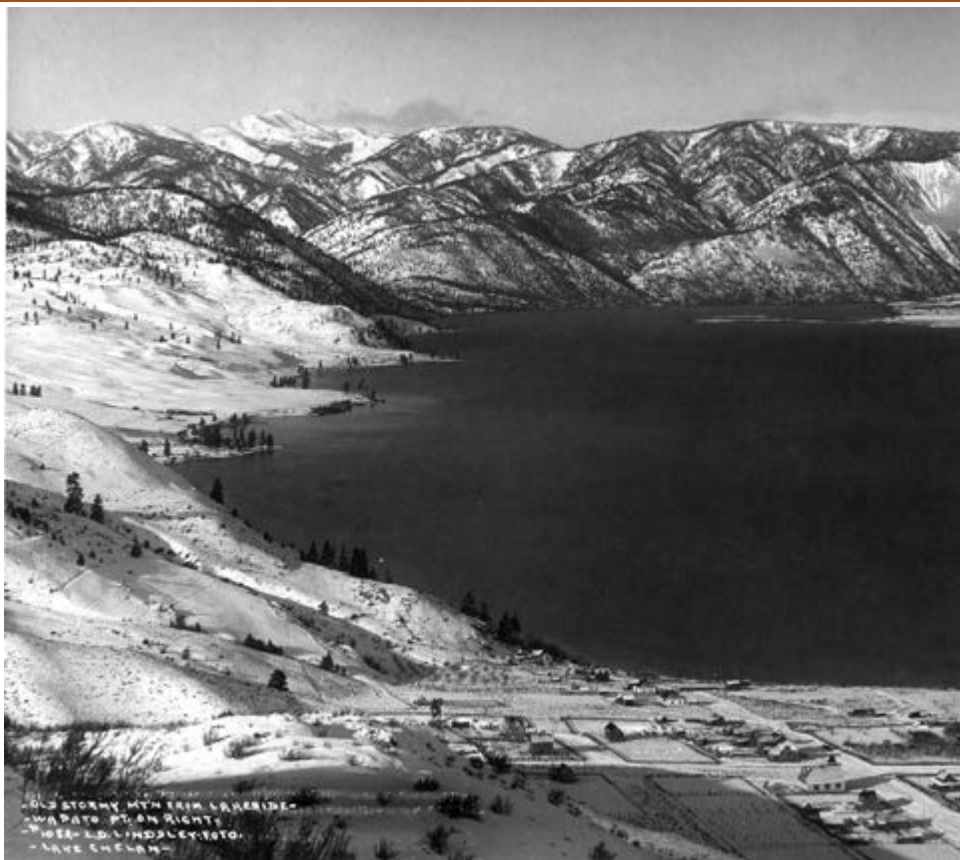
(Barkely 1994:7-13)

2 Yillimin (Chelan Butte)



Next on our journey north is Chelan Butte, located on the south side of Lake Chelan.

Chelan Butte was both a winter and summer camping ground for the Native Americans. In the spring there was grass for the horses and plants like the bitterroot could be gathered from the moist ground. During the summer months this area would be used to continue hunting and gathering of many kinds of animals, fish and plants including berries, camas root, trout and deer. As summer came to an end and autumn approached, hunting would take on a new intensity in order to store enough meat for the long winter months. Chelan Butte is a culturally important landscape feature that overlooks the Columbia River and Lake Chelan.



OLD STORMY MTH TRIM LAKEBINE -
- WADATO PT. AN RIGHT
- 1922 - L.D. LINDSLEY, TOTO.
- LAKE CHELAN -



3 Chelan Tragedy



On Nov. 26, 1945, tragedy struck the residents of Chelan in the form of a school bus accident. Jack Randle was driving his route between Twenty-Five Mile Creek and Chelan in a blinding snowstorm. As he was pulling the bus over to clear the windshield he collided with an outcropping of rock which sent the bus across the road and into the lake. A young girl was able to kick out a rear window which provided an escape from the sinking bus. Five children and one adult made it to safety on the shore; 15 other children and Jack Randle were not able to escape. The bus came to rest on a rock

shelf more than 200 feet below the surface. Navy divers were called in to help retrieve the bus and were able to raise it six days later. During the underwater search, one of the divers reported seeing the shadow of a huge fish. Some Native Chelan people say that this eyewitness account is proof that the lake monster exists. You can read more on the Lake Monster on page 16.

A monument has been placed at the accident site to help remember those who did not escape, and school buses no longer follow that route today.





Lake Chelan Historical Society

4 Wapato John



Ne-quil-e-kin, which means “meandering creek,” was known as Wapato John. One of the earliest Native American businessmen of Lake Chelan, he owned much of Wapato Point. Wapato John was born in 1825 at the mouth of the Entiat River. As a young man, Ne-quil-e-kin was married to Smee-meehulks, who was called Madeline. Wapato John recognized the business opportunities in the region and established his own trading post and ranch at the mouth of Navarre Coulee. His store not only served the miners, but an occasional group of soldiers as well. As Wapato John’s reputation for fairness grew, almost everyone treated him with respect.

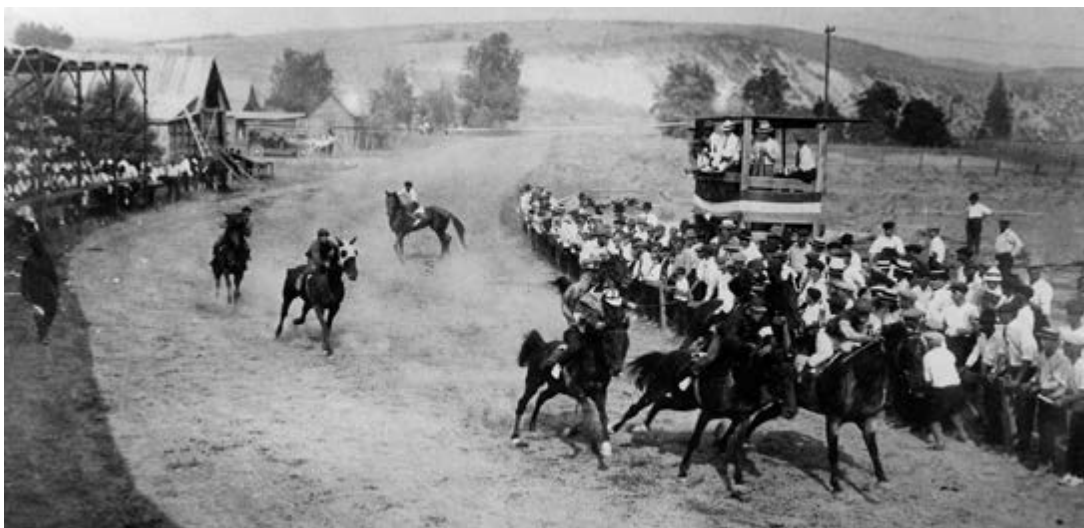
Years later, Wapato John took an allotment in the Mill Bay area near Manson and planted the first apple trees on the north shore of Lake Chelan from seeds he brought back from Fort Vancouver (Furey, East, Pufa and Gordon ca. 1915).

During the 1920s, the Wapato family developed their Chelan property into a recreation destination. There was a racetrack, rodeo grounds, picnic grounds, campgrounds, swimming areas, bathhouses, sheds, corrals and a dance pavilion. Wapato Point became the leading celebration ground where people would come from all over the northwest



to camp, dance, play stick games and participate in the celebration that were scheduled around July 4. The Wapato family continued to operate a recreation area maintaining a picnic area and beaches for swimming into the 1940s and 1950s (*Hackenmiller 1995:73*).

The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation continue Wapato John's recreation endeavors with the operation of the Mill Bay Casino and Deep Water Amphitheater.



5 Domke Falls



In 1886, two men, William Sanders and Henry Domke (sometimes spelled Dumpke or Dumke), set out on a journey to Lake Chelan by way of the Methow Valley. Sanders and Domke made their way down the mountains to the lake's edge, then proceeded to travel down lake until they reached sheer cliffs, which stopped them from traveling any further. In this area was another small stream. Here they constructed a crude dugout or raft, thus giving the little creek the name "Canoe". With the boat they made, they safely made their way to the foot of the lake where friendly natives fed them. Both Sanders and Domke remained and settled in the Chelan Valley, becoming the first white settlers of record here. A couple years later, Domke tried to develop a sawmill toward the upper regions of the lake. Though his little mill was never operational, a mountain, a small lake and a beautiful waterfall still honor this pioneer's name. (**Domke Mountain, Domke Lake and Domke Falls**).

It was Domke and Sanders who gave other pioneers the courage and confidence to settle in the Lake Chelan Valley.



From A trip back in time By Vickie Watson

"The Cascade Mountains are home to large game including mountain goats, big horn sheep and elk. They were hunted by the Native Americans in the late fall to take advantage of the animals' stored fat, and the wool was used to make clothing. These animals are depicted in a pictograph near Domke Falls using red ochre as a pigment."

Logging

Logging on the east side of the Cascade Mountains did not begin until the 1880's, when the land became open to settlement. Logging occurred year-round, and the snow aided the transportation of logs to flumes by creating a slippery surface on which to skid the logs. At Chelan Falls, materials needed to build a saw mill, company

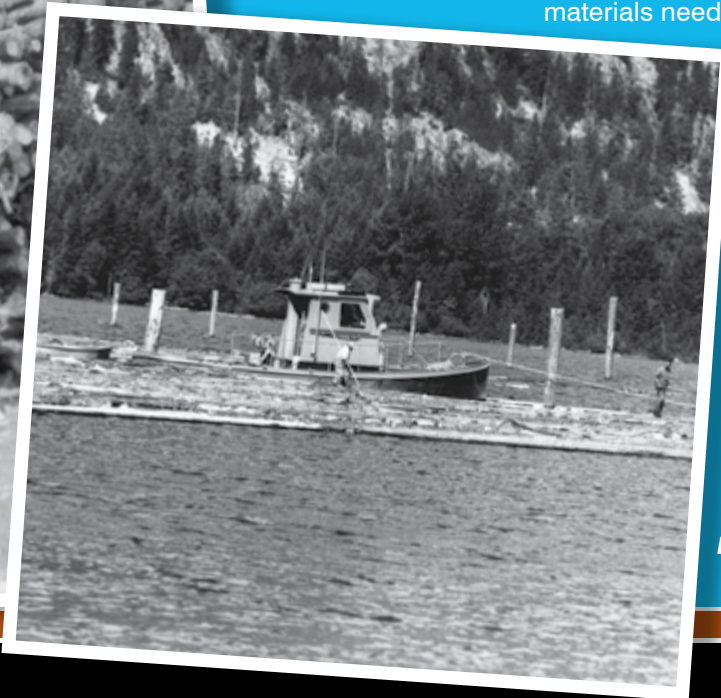
store, and bunk house were delivered by steamboat.

Local Indians Long Jim, Cultas Jim, Crooked Mouth Bob, Wapato John and his son, Sylvester, helped transport the equipment.

These saw mills furnished almost all of the lumber for Chelan during its early years of operation.

Remnants of logging history remain, but the Lake Chelan Basin is managed today primarily for recreation.

Hackenmiller 1995



6 Lucerne Basin



This is a Chelan Indian oral tradition to explain the appearance of large waves that can appear on Lake Chelan on otherwise calm days.

Oral traditions abound about a monster that lives in Lake Chelan, and many people have witnessed evidence of its existence. One of the oldest of these tells of a monster that came to the area and started devouring all of the grazing animals that the native people relied on for food. The people asked the Creator to help rid them of the monster. The Creator battled the monster and eventually cut it into pieces.

The monster did not die and was able to reassemble itself. Finally the Creator plunged a huge stone dagger into the monster. A great cloud of dust filled the

sky, and when it cleared the people saw a huge hole in the earth and great mountains surrounding the place where the monster lay pinned beneath the stone dagger. The Creator filled the gorge below the mountains with water, trapping the monster for all time. The monster is said to still be alive at the bottom of Lucerne Basin and thrashes its huge tail which can cause huge waves that travel down the lake. Many people have seen these waves appear during calm, windless days. The monster goes by many names including N'hah'haut'q and Chelly (pronounced Shelly).

The landing on Lake Chelan associated with Holden Village is called Lucerne, and it is here that the buses meet the daily boats coming and going. The boats heading up lake to the town of Stehekin drop off visitors heading to Holden Village. The boats stop again at Lucerne on their way down lake to take on visitors leaving Holden Village.



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LAKE CHELAN

and C



7 Holden



When gold was found by a US Army captain and an Indian scout along the Columbia River, it brought intensive mining to the Lake Chelan area. Mining began in Holden as early as the 1850's, and mining around Lake Chelan contributed a great deal to the settlement of whites in the area (*Holstine et al. 1994:5.1*).

The best known mining property in the Chelan district is the Holden Mine. The initial strike of copper in 1896 was made by J. H. Holden. After his death in 1916, the mine was sold several times. As copper prices fluctuated, so did the work at the mine. WWII increased demand for copper, and the U.S. Government became the principal buyer of Holden copper. "During this



time the mine complex consisted of an extensive underground mine, a mill, administrative offices, three town sites/camps for over 500 miners and their families". Over its lifetime, Holden Mine was the largest nonferrous producer in the Pacific Northwest. From 1938 to 1957, it produced nearly 212 million pounds of copper, 40 million pounds of zinc, 2 million ounces of silver and just over 600,000 ounces of gold from 10 million tons of ore. The mine was closed in 1957 (*Adams 1976*).

The Holden mine complex was later sold to the Lutheran Church, which currently uses the facility as a religious retreat. The Holden Village respects and welcomes people of all faiths and backgrounds as a part of the community.



8 Stehekin



From Stehekin, you can enjoy the beautiful mountainous region of the North Cascades. Stehekin is a unique location accessed only by the waters of Lake Chelan, hiking and float planes.

The word “Stehekin” may be a Skagit Indian word which means roughly “we crossed through” and refers to routes which ran across the Cascade Mountains linking the Skagit River area and the Lake Chelan region. These rugged trans-Cascade routes saw wide spread use by both Plateau and coastal Salish people to conduct commerce, social relations, inner marriage, and hunting and gathering.

Stehekin emerged as a mining base camp in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Fertile soil, easy access to mines and a link to water transportation made this a logical place both for settlement and for the growth of a community. Situated as much as 50 miles from the growing population centers down lake, Stehekin was sustained as a permanent community owing to its important role as the head of the lake and the



gateway to the Cascades (*Luxenberg 1986*). Tourism and the outfitting of prospectors, mountain climbers, hunters and fisherman shaped the economy of the town. Advertisements for tourism at Field’s Hotel can be found from as early as 1902. The raising of the lake level caused the location of the boat landing to be moved to its present day location and change the general look of the town of Stehekin (*Smith 1988:282-288*).



8 Field Hotel

In the great tradition of grand hotels, this was a destination for hundreds of visitors from the 1890s until the building was removed when the lake level was raised in 1927. Parts of this hotel were used in the construction of the Golden West Lodge which is now the North Cascades National Park Visitor Center in Stehekin.



Tsi-Laan

Tsi-Laan (Lake Chelan), meaning “deep water,” is a natural body of water that developed in a broad glacial valley during the last ice age. The lake is 50.4 miles long and averages a mile in width. With a maximum depth calculated at 1,485 feet, the lake floor is almost 400 feet below sea level. Lake Chelan is the third deepest naturally forming lake in the United States (behind Lake Tahoe and Crater Lake) and the 24th deepest in the world.

One of the most astounding parts of your journey up Lake Chelan is the visual reminder that the topography surrounding Lake Chelan increases rapidly from 700 feet above sea level at Chelan Falls, to 9,500 feet (Bonanza Peak) in the Cascade Mountains. The lake level can fluctuate as much as 21 feet as Chelan County Public Utility District lowers the lake to make room for spring runoff and refills for the summer.

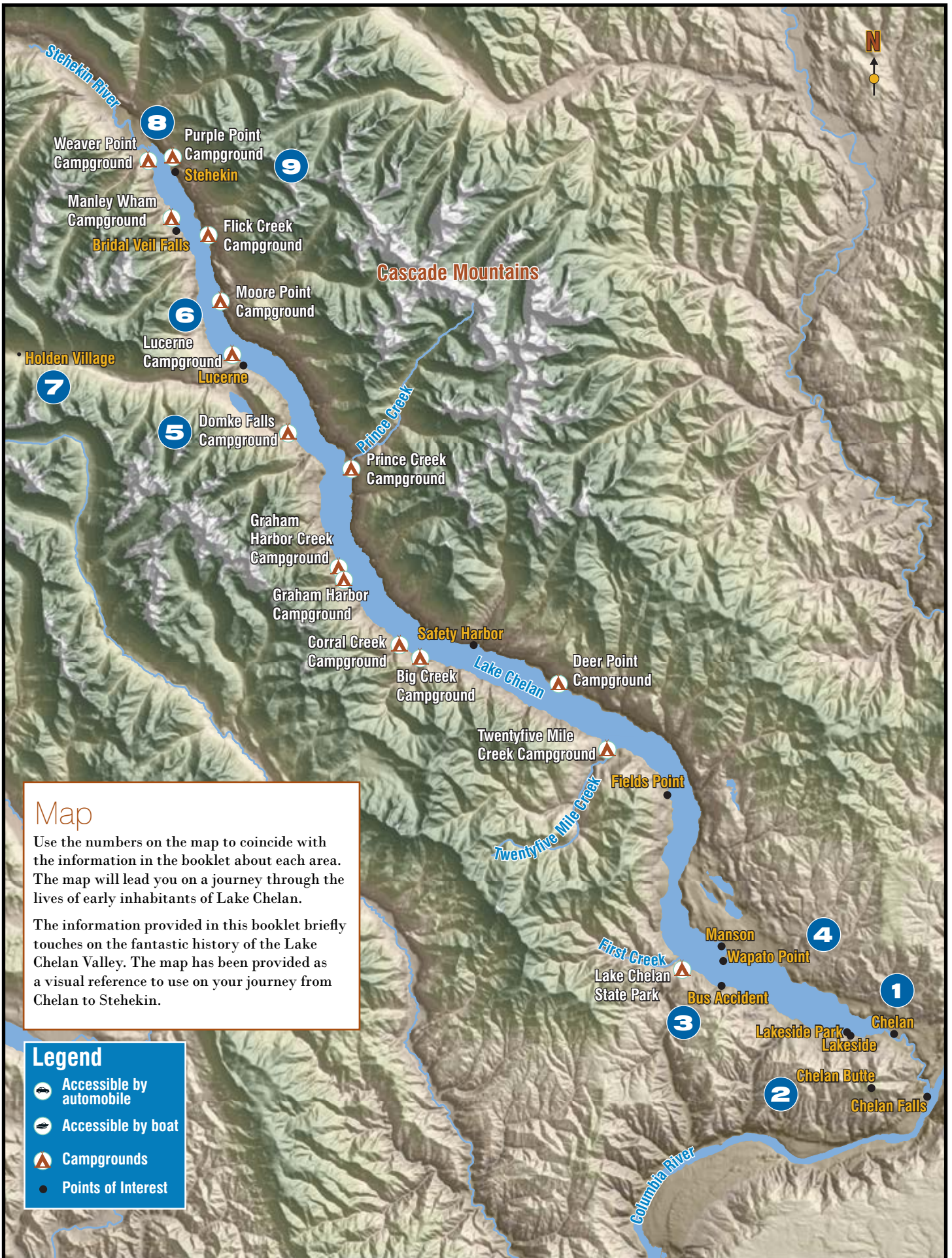


Conclusion:

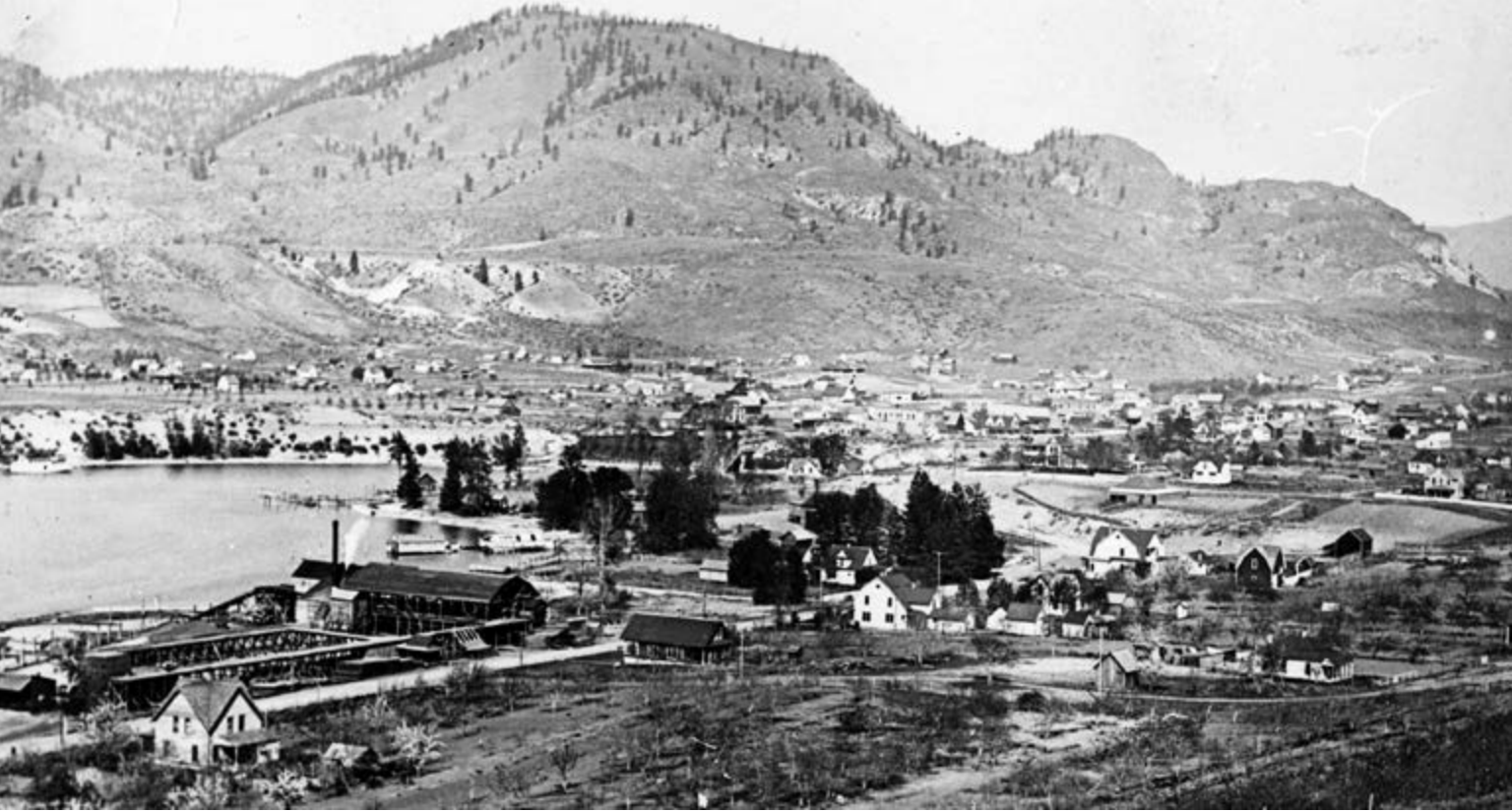
As your journey along the beautiful waters of Lake Chelan draws to a close, imagine for a moment the spiritual connection and bond that was formed between the natives that lived here and this magical place. Now, imagine the awe experienced by early settlers crossing the dry desert land of Central Washington only to stumble upon the magnificent and fertile land of Lake Chelan.

Understanding humans' connections to and awe of Lake Chelan is the deepest understanding of the history of this area. With this awareness we all must remember to preserve and protect the landscape and the history for the next generations of people who come and are impacted by the beauty and spirituality of such a place.









Acknowledgements

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