

3701 Commonwealth,  
Yakima, Wash. 98901

Mr. Eagle, Seelatsee,  
Yakima Tribal Office,  
yakima Indian Agency,  
Toppenish, Wash. 98948

(Strongheart Collection)

Dear Eagle:

Enclosed are two of the American Native Arts booklets I purchased. One is for you personally, the other for any other member of the committee you wish to give it to.

As you can see (and you've probably already seen this booklet) there are a few "germs of ideas."

I can't say I agree with the "government" on directing Indian culture along modernistic lines, the "Hippie" kind. But there may be room for all kinds, at least when it comes to preparing a presentation to provide work projects. And you may be interested in the page, 59 "How to Apply to the Institute." Looking into the future any development on the Yakima Reservation could have use for "trained" artists in some form or another, but that's just something to "think" about.

If you think it is time to advertise again for another storage room, something closer at home, let me know and I'll run another ad, on my own like the other, a blind one that no one will know what it is about or who is wanting the storage. Just call me if you want.

Sincerely

Click Kelander

[Yallup - Huckleberry ...]

Click Relander,  
3701 Commonwealth,  
Yakima, Wash. 98901

[1967?]

Mr. Antoine Skahan,  
Yakima Tribal Office,  
yakima Indian Agency.

Dear Tony:

I have been thinking about the projected trip of Yakima tribal delegates and Mr. Cockrill to inspect and evaluate the Nipo Strongheart collection.

And while I am convinced that you and the others would have a good knowledge of the material, it is possible I could be of help by writing or helping you prepare a report, an evaluation. This would be based on my qualifications in that line and in my professional capacity as a curator of the Washington State Historical Society and member of other professional groups.

Additionally, suppose some means is worked out to establish this material as the donor intended. I believe my knowledge of it would be helpful, at the proper time in publicizing such a project, and that through this it could become the nucleus of additional material from friends of the Yakimas. There are many fragmentary collections whose owners look toward the day they can be properly displayed and cared for and be of value to more persons than in individual homes, etc. This includes photographs, books and artifact material. I hate to see these things leaving the area, drifting to Spokane or even further away.

So if you are still thinking about an April 28 date and wish me to be one of the group, and there is a travel ticket, I'll take care of my own accommodations.

Sincerely

Click Relander

Click Relander,  
3705 Commonwealth,  
Yakima, Wash. 98901

May 22

Mr. Daniel F. Strongheart,  
J24544 No. Dustin Rd.,  
Acampo, Calif., 95220

Dear Dan:

I have been so busy catching up on my own affairs here since the hurried trip to California, I've had little time to write. And I know you also have been pressed for time, after taking time off to go south.

I hope everything worked out satisfactorily for you during the rest of your stay at L.A., and that the legal matters with your attorney also are working out satisfactorily.

Since my return I've seen the Indians, and then mostly others, and since they did not say anything about our trip, neither did I. They were involved in their constant requirements to defend and hold their rights against all kinds of encroachments, suits over fishing rights etc., all of which they have won.

Memorial Day will be here shortly, and as I told you in the hotel room, I intend to drive down to the Satus, taking along some floral offering to be placed on Nipo's grave.

The Yakimas are much better organized than many people believe. One very fine man, who still wears long braids (Watson Totus) and a member of the tribal council, is chairman of the graveyard and cemetery committee. There are some 60 cemeteries in all on the Yaki a Reservation. Many of them are really small family graveyards. That at Satus Point is one of the oldest and largest cemeteries.

The tribe makes an annual appropriation to keep roads in repair to the cemeteries, keep fences in repair etc. and the various families go down at various times to clean cemeteries.

Watson is in charge of seeing that this is all done. And it may be I will drive down this weekend, Satus Point is some 38 to 40 miles from Yakima and if there is any necessity for cleanup, I will see that it is done at Nipo's grave, but I do not think that will be necessary. Also I will take some photographs later to send you. Indian cemeteries are something different. Headstones are of later innovation, and then not extensive because of course of the expense. It is also the custom to put a photograph in the headstone and protect it by hard plastic.

Children's graves are decorated with toys, little trinkets which they loved to play with, pin-wheels, etc. Others with bits of token mementoes and they are so profuse it is nothing like you have ever seen unless you have been to one. I will let you know.

I am expecting, before long, some photostats of material from one of the universities that Nipo corresponded with frequently. This is in line with a little more research into the many ways he worked for his people, the various Indian rights associations etc. he worked with and things like that. For instance the Northwest Association of Indian Tribes, much older than the National Congress of American Indians, is meeting now at Portland and Bob Jim and others who you have not met, went there Tuesday, and on Thursday and Friday will attend a Sen. Kennedy subcommittee hearing on Indian education, "physiological" discrimination, in schools. And that I guess you can understand what the Indians feel, who apparently are accepted but not completely, in the schools.

I have also talked considerably with another friend here who brought me up to date on Nipo's friendship with a man, now dead, named Gibson. He was a cattleman, with a big range where the Firing Center now is. Well, he was a true westerner, had some Indian material displayed in his big ranch home, and many years ago imported some buffalos and had, eventually, a large herd on the ranch. Nipo would visit him, and when Gibson would go south he would meet Nipo at the corner of Hollywood and Vine and they (families) would go out to dinner.

This friendship continued until Mr. Gibson's death. Just before his death his big old herd buffalo bull died and he had a big sculpture made of it for his own tombstone in a cemetery north of town out near the cattle ranch or home place.

Just little things like that give me quite a bit of background on the collection. My guess is that if it were known, the trunk full of buffalo horns and the skull wrapped up came from the Gibson ranch.

If you have some good photographs of him, that I can make copies from, and some clippings, that you can send, registered mail, I promise not to keep them longer than to make copies of them and pick out some notes for use when and as the final settlement or whatever it is called is made. In other words I want to set up for all the Valley readers to know, more of how he worked for the Indians and wanted to help them preserve their culture etc., ~~and~~ than they generally know. And I want everyone in the Valley to know that, as he would want it known. He had frequently wanted me to write up something like that, a kind of biography to run in the paper as he was proud of it, and then we 'd go off down to one of the council meetings and never had the time to sit down and DO it. So I know that you are busy, with a big family like you have and a job, but don 't put off too long sending this up, especially the various photos from different angles, so I can have copies made.

Also, don't hesitate about keeping me posted in advance if you plan to come up here later this summer. My vacation period comes in late August and early September and my plans are not quite finalized yet.

It may be I'll be coming down to California, Visalia. My mother there was recently operated on and is getting quite elderly. Last summer we didn 't get down and I don 't want to postpone this too long.

I have thought many times of the pleasure of meeting you and look forward to extending that pleasure.

Most Sincerely

Click Relander