

Good afternoon,

Please listen to the voices of those individuals with a real stake in the prospect of revealing Celilo Falls, the descendants of those people who were displaced, who lost their homes and sense economic and social order. These late comers know nothing of this heritage, to them it is but a series of pictures and news reports. To us it is our story, our life. Ask the leaders of the treaty tribes, whose tribal members were displaced and impoverished by dam building.

I was four years old the year of inundation. My grandmother, Edna Thompson Kurtz, the daughter of Chief Henry Thompson, believed it was important that I be at the village, March 10, 1957. My eyesight was severely impaired, so I have to depend on my other senses to report this out to you.

First, you cannot imagine the original smell of Celilo. It was a sweet, smoky, fresh, compelling, odor. I can close my eyes and bring it forward. The sound, was indescribable, the closest I have come, is where you can hike behind the falls at Silver Falls State Park. But that sound is directly overhead, and the sound at Celilo actually reverberated off the cliffs,,,like a hum of industry and nature combined. The air was sometimes scrubbed clear by the winds and dry air, other times the mist could make you damp. These memories are powerful and evoke a sense of security and joy to me.

There were those who say they did not believe the falls could be silenced, but these same families had witnessed the covering of the Cascades 18 years earlier with the closing of the gates of Bonneville Dam.

The last recollection I wish to share is the day of inundation. I do not know if you are familiar with our cycles of mourning, but please try to understand. When we lose a family or community member, we gather together; we reminisce; we sing; we pray; we share; and we wail with grief for days. For a small child, the

voices of despair on that day were more than frightening: it heralded the end of the World. The rounds of singing and drumming were unending, and the horror of that loss was palpable. We could never be the same.

Afterward, families were dispersed systematically through various government actions. Fortunes, homes, and ancestral memories were wiped clear. Celilo Falls is now a departed ancestor, resting under the lake formed behind the Dalles Dam.

We hold annual memorials for our departed. The first year following a death is a time to honor our ability to move on, to re-enter society, and begin to engage in full life activities. We gift useful items to those who have survived, endured and persevered with us. We periodically have remembrances and ceremonies to honor the loss of the Falls.

Our memorials are a powerful affirmation that life goes on, forever altered, but continues in time and place.

The inundation of the Falls forever changed the societies of the treaty tribes and other Indians who had migrated to the area to fish and provide support services. We have mourned and suffered with the loss of our livelihood, independence, and the control of our resource and lifeways. Our society and families have been torn apart and at times pitted against one another. But the Columbia River Indians proudly claim our heritage, our efforts to persevere, with dignity and tradition.

So here come some outsiders, who believe they know what to do with our memories, our loss and our survival, just as we are beginning to stand tall. Ask the families who live on the 39 acres that are Celilo Village, the gentle people of Lyle longhouse, or those who hang on a thread to remain in Cloudville. I have visited with people who reside on the treaty fishing access sites in order to restore their lives along the river. I also have memories of Celilo Village before restoration under 100-581, how many of these individuals/organizations who are calling for the feasibility of a drawdown know our realities and hardships?

Our tribes and leaders do not endorse these people who are presenting this to you. I read an article where Sean Cruz talks of the economic windfall of resurrecting the falls. One of my relatives, a Celilo resident, Karen Whitford, scorns this idea. We have not survived to become some token on a theme park tour. While I am unable to fathom why these organizations want the USACE to do a feasibility study, at undetermined cost to the Federal government, I can only guess they want to be the sideshow barkers who promote the two week event.

I have lived in Oregon all my life, I have relatives in the four treaty tribes and myself, I am a proud member of the Yakama Nation. I wish you could understand under self-determination tribes decide who are and are not members. Our traditions depend on our leaders' voices, not self-elected spokesmen. Do not be convinced that someone can migrate to this beautiful country, string together our names and images of our spirit, and know better than us what the next best step for this river are. They are not Wyampum, Wascopum, or Wishram, they do not know our real names, our families, or the islands of the falls.

I strongly urge you to bury this House Joint Memorial 15. It is not in the best interest in the members of the Oregon treaty tribes, The Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Spring Reservation of Oregon (CTWSRO) or the Native American Oregonians who have a deep rooted heritage in the Columbia River region.

Sincerely Tabitha Whitefoot