

Illinois, Northwestern retiring famed tomahawk trophy

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. (AP) — The University of Illinois put Chief Illiniwek on the shelf last year and the school says it's now retiring another piece of American Indian imagery.

Saturday will be the last time Illinois and Northwestern play football for the Sweet Sioux Tomahawk, Illinois athletic department spokesman Kent Brown said Friday.

The framed tomahawk has been a part of the in-state rivalry since 1947. Its run will end as part of the 2005 NCAA directive to stop using American Indian imagery, Brown said Friday.

"We for several months have been working toward this," he said, explaining that university trustees told Chancellor Richard Herman that, like the chief mascot, the tomahawk had to go. "This was part of that edict on campus."

The schools agreed to stop playing for the tomahawk "out of tremendous respect for the Native American community," Northwestern Athletic Director Jim Phillips said in an e-mailed statement.

Both Brown and Phillips said the two schools will work next year on a new trophy for the rivalry game. It's been played every year since 1927, and the teams first met in 1892.

The NCAA in 2005 told Illinois to stop using American Indian imagery, which it called demeaning and offensive, and barred the school's sports teams from hosting postseason games.

Illinois last year decided to stop using Chief Illiniwek — a buckskin-wearing student who had danced at sports events since 1926. The school said nothing at the time about other potentially problematic imagery.

The school knows of no other such traditions, Brown said Friday.

The decision to retire Chief Illiniwek angered supporters of the mascot, who say it honors American Indians. The chief is still a frequent topic of letters to newspaper editors in downstate Illinois, and last weekend a student group rented the Assembly Hall on campus for a performance by an unofficial chief.

The leader of that group, student Roberto Martell of Aurora, Ill., wasn't aware of the tomahawk decision until contacted by a reporter on Friday and declined comment until he knew more about it.

The Sweet Sioux, according to the University of Illinois, was originally a wooden statue of an American Indian that the schools started playing for in 1945. It was stolen from a showcase at Northwestern the next year — details, according to Illinois, are sketchy at best — and replaced by the tomahawk.

Illinois, like many Big Ten schools, exchanges trophies with other teams. The Illini and Ohio State play for Illibuck, a wooden turtle, and Illinois and Purdue play for a cannon.

By Erick Newhouse
Great Falls Tribune

BROWNING, Mont. — The mayor and police chief of Cut Bank have been invited to a public meeting Wednesday evening to listen to allegations of racial discrimination in their border town on the edge of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.

The meeting was called by Mike Little, who filed a complaint against the city with the Montana Human Rights Bureau. The agreed upon settlement required police officers to go through nondiscrimination training.

Nez Perce seek medal after a 202-year journey

SPALDING, Idaho (AP) — From the rolling Clearwater Valley to New York City's concrete canyons, a silver medal that may have been given to a Nez Perce Indian chief by Lewis and Clark in 1806 has made an improbable journey.

Its provenance isn't ironclad, but some historians believe this Jefferson Peace Medal minted in Philadelphia went up the Missouri River in a pirogue, was buried in an Indian grave, later plundered by Northern Pacific Railroad workers, and eventually landed with Edward Dean Adams, the New York financier and J.P. Morgan contemporary.

Long considered stolen, it surfaced around 2002 in the American Museum of Natural History's South American collection.

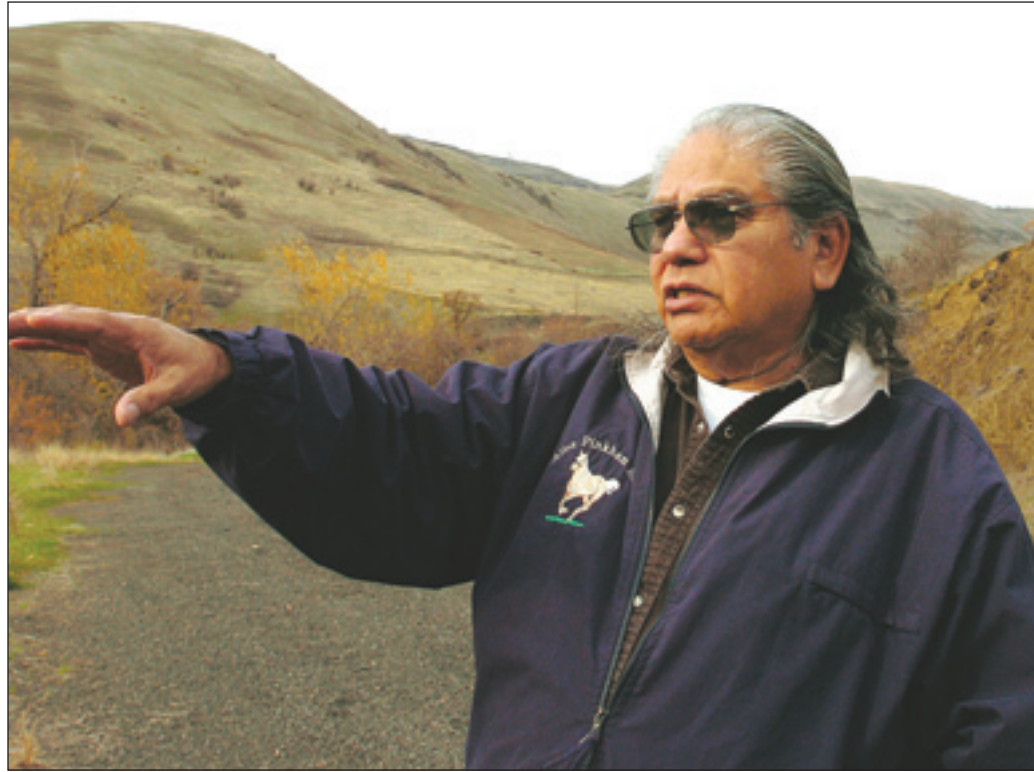
Allen Pinkham, a distant nephew of Cut Nose, the chief believed to have received the medal, is now pushing for its return to Idaho. Pinkham sees it as a step in correcting two centuries of injustices since the "extremely hungry and much fatigued" adventurers — Lewis's and Clark's own words and spelling — tromped into his great-great-great-uncle's village and changed the tribe's world forever.

"When we quit stealing from one another, then we become one people," he told The Associated Press. "This is also part of that recovery."

Historians say the medal with President Thomas Jefferson's image on one side and hands clasped in friendship on the other is a numismatic Forrest Gump that bore witness to Manifest Destiny in action: the opening of the frontier, the laying of the rails, Edward Adams' Wall Street — in short, America's rise to power, and Indians' fall from it.

"It's this portal to all these stories," said Mike Venso, a former Idaho journalist now living in St. Louis who helped trace the medal to museum storage at New York City. "That's the magic of this object."

When Lewis and Clark departed St. Louis May 14, 1804, they brought about 90 medallions to impart a clear message on the Indians who received them: A U.S. juggernaut spanning the North American continent was rising to replace the French, Spanish and British.



Associated Press

Allen Pinkham speaks near a cut out hillside along the banks of the Clearwater River Tuesday, Nov. 18, east of Lewiston, Idaho, near the site where a Jefferson Peace Medal was uncovered by Northern Pacific Railroad while exhuming an Indian grave. The medal was believed to have been given out by Lewis and Clark to Pinkham's great-great-great-uncle, a Nez Perce leader named Cut Nose, on May 6, 1806, as they trekked through present-day Idaho. Pinkham would like the medal returned to his tribe.

"Your great father...could consume you as the fire consumes the grass of the plains," Lewis warned one tribe in 1804, on the consequences of not cooperating.

"These objects were very much delivering the message that there's a new and dominant government overseeing these areas," said Robert Miller, a Lewis & Clark College professor in Portland, Ore., and author of "Native America, Discovered and Conquered."

After wintering on the Pacific Ocean, the explorers had just entered present-day Idaho when they encountered a Nez Perce village on the Clearwater. Though first unimpressed by its leader, they gave him "a medal of the small size with the likeness of the President," according to a May 5, 1806 entry describing the scars on Cut Nose's face, which had come from a lance wound in battle.

Their estimation likely grew — especially after Cut Nose helped bring about the return of a stolen tomahawk that belonged to Charles Floyd, the

only expedition member to die along the journey.

In fact, Lewis and Clark's encounters with Nez Perce like Cut Nose left them with a glowing impression of the tribe, especially after the petty thievery and harassment the exploration party suffered from Indians downstream on the Columbia River, said Gary Moulton, a University of Nebraska historian and Lewis and Clark journal editor.

"In the Nez Perce, they found people that were distinguished, welcoming, generous and friendly," Moulton said.

In all, the journals mention Cut Nose on 12 dates — including a June 12, 1806 entry describing how the chief borrowed one of the explorers' horses to capture young eagles to raise for their feathers.

After the June 23 entry, Cut Nose made what under ordinary circumstances might have been his last cameo in documented western U.S. history: He was at a 1834 rendezvous with Protestant missionary Jason Lee, according to the book "The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening

of the Northwest," by Alvin Josephy.

But in 1899, workers building the Northern Pacific Railroad where the Potlatch River runs into the Clearwater some 15 miles east of Lewiston unexpectedly unearthed several Indian graves. Items exposed included beads, a flintlock rifle, rusty hatchets — and the peace medal with President Jefferson's likeness "carefully wrapped in many thicknesses of buffalo hide," according to a 1919 railroad history written by Olin Wheeler.

Given the grave's proximity to where Lewis and Clark put Cut Nose's village, historians surmise the medal was the one that changed hands in 1806.

"This is the joy and frustration of researching historical objects and history in general. We weren't there, and the people who were aren't here. They leave us only little clues," said Venso. "I believe very strongly that the medal found at the Potlatch River was given by Lewis and Clark to Cut Nose."

Adams, a railroad president

and Wall Street banker featured on the May 27, 1929 Time magazine cover, eventually took ownership before giving the medal to the American Museum of Natural History in 1901, according to the museum's records.

Pinkham, a former Nez Perce tribal chairman and storyteller, first learned of it around 1998, while serving on the board of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., amid preparations for the Lewis and Clark bicentennial. An anthropologist friend at the American Museum of Natural History told him it had been stolen in the 1930s.

About four years later, however, the same friend had better news.

"He all of a sudden tells me, 'Hey, we found the medal,'" Pinkham said. "He said it was kind of embarrassing: 'We found it in our South American exhibit.'"

Laila Williamson, a museum anthropologist, confirmed this week that the medal remains in storage.

Pinkham has asked tribal leaders to push for its return, possibly under the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, the 1990 law governing American Indian cultural items and human remains.

Rebecca Miles, a member of the tribal executive committee, told the AP in an e-mail nothing has been initiated. Still, she plans to "formally get the tribe involved to accomplish just that," Miles said.

Even if the medal comes to Idaho, it's final destination is uncertain.

A separate Jefferson Peace Medal likely given to another Northwest Indian leader by Lewis and Clark and unearthed in 1964 during construction of the Snake River's Lower Monumental Dam was reburied at an undisclosed site in 2006.

Another option: Put the medal on display at the Nez Perce National Historical Park museum at Spalding, just downriver from where it was likely found in 1899.

Pinkham said the important thing is to let the Nez Perce decide for themselves its fate, something not possible if it's in New York.

"It is an injustice," he said. "It was grave robbing."

Casino opens in spite of contract concerns

By S.E. Ruckman
Native American Times

HINTON, Okla. — Despite opening its first casino this week, Wichita and Affiliated Tribes officials are questioning a \$250,000 expenditure outlined by its casino contract agreement.

Wichita chairman Leslie Standing said a review of the contract that allowed the 2,200-member tribe to open their casino specifies thousands to renovate a community building that sits near the tribal complex.

The tribe planned to open a gaming site on its tribal property in Anadarko, but the Caddo County town is already home to the Western Delaware's Gold River Casino and the Apache Tribe's Silver Buffalo Casino.

Standing said the clause outlining

the payment for the community building can be found in the contract between its gaming developers and the tribe for the casino that opened this week. That contract was signed by the tribe's former chairman, Gary McAdams, who Standing defeated in tribal elections earlier this year.

"They slid it in there and that added to the overall casino costs," Standing said.

Payment may have been outlined, but renovations have not been completed, the chairman said. He called the earmarked monies "highly questionable."

"That's a quarter of a million dollars that we could be out of," Standing said.

Other issues surrounding the new casino are already surfacing, Standing

said. Early discussions about whether the tribe will issue annuity payments to tribal members have already come up, Standing said.

"It has to be voted on, whether we should allow per-cap payments rather than putting the revenues into paying off investors," Standing said.

The Wichita tribal chairman also has issue with the original contract that allows \$3,000 per day fees for gaming consultants that he believes is unreasonable.

The tribe's first gaming site, Sugar Creek Casino, was opened Nov. 19. The Hinton site sits adjacent the I-40 West corridor. The site has potential to draw in interstate customers traveling both east and west, officials said.

"I want to see the casino pay off so we can take care of our own affairs,"

Standing said.

The Wichitas join the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes who have a casino in the vicinity with their Lucky Star in nearby El Reno. The Wichitas' new Sugar Creek casino features 400 machines.

The property that the tribe wants to open a casino on already belongs to the tribe, unlike the land the tribe purchased for its Sugar Creek Casino. Both sites are gaming eligible, officials said.

"The land in question for the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes will open their casino indeed falls under the category of gameable lands because of the definition of former reservation area," said Shawn Pensoneau, National Indian Gaming Commission spokesman.

Cut Bank officials to listen to Blackfeet concerns

By Erick Newhouse
Great Falls Tribune

BROWNING, Mont. — The mayor and police chief of Cut Bank have been invited to a public meeting Wednesday evening to listen to allegations of racial discrimination in their border town on the edge of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.

The meeting was called by Mike Little, who filed a complaint against the city with the Montana Human Rights Bureau. The agreed upon settlement required police officers to go through nondiscrimination training.

Mayor Joni Stewart said the settlement was not an admission of guilt, adding she believes there is not any discrimination in Cut Bank's city government.

"Chief Jason Abbott will attend and assure the Blackfeet Tribe that his police department is taking every opportunity to make sure there is a zero tolerance of discrimination," Little said. "This will be an opportunity for Browning residents to voice any concerns they might have, and an opportunity to make a difference for all Native Americans."

The settlement also called for the appointment

of a liaison between reservation residents and city officials to present any future allegations of racial discrimination. Little said he would take on that role.

Little filed the complaint after a Cut Bank police officer stopped his 15-year-old daughter Alyssa as she left a Cut Bank store with items she had left there the day before. According to an investigative report, when Little asked why his daughter was being questioned, the officer responded that he was stopping reservation residents in an effort to cut down on shoplifting at the store.

Lobbyists wanted measure attached to transportation bill

By Zachary Roth
TPM Muckracker

NEW YORK — So what did James Hirni and Todd Boulanger -- the former Team Abramoff lobbyists now in hot water for plying congressional staffers with undisclosed gifts -- want in return?

Both men were working for Abramoff at the law and lobbying firm Greenberg Traurig, on behalf of United Rentals, an equipment rental company. Court documents filed by prosecutors allege that in 2003, they wanted action on an amendment to a federal highway reauthorization bill that would have encouraged state public works

agencies to rent, rather than buy, construction equipment. That would clearly have benefited United Rentals.

The documents further allege that immediately after they had paid for Blackann and another staffer (identified as Staffer D) to attend the World Series (and a "Gentlemen's Club" in New York), Boulanger and Hirni sent drafts of the specific measure they wanted to Trevor Blackann, the staffer who just pleaded in connection with the scheme, and Staffer D.

Staffer D at the time worked for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which was then chaired by Rep. Don Young (R-AK). That com-

mittee was overseeing the larger highway reauthorization bill to which Boulanger and Hirni were seeking to attach their measure.

In November of that year, say the documents, Boulanger and Hirni prevailed on a Senate staffer to offer the amendment they wanted to the Senate version of the bill.

United Rentals hardly has a squeaky clean reputation. This September, it agreed to pay the SEC \$14 million, ending a four-year probe into claims that the company fraudulently inflated its earnings and made fraudulent leasing transactions with suppliers, between 1997 and 2002. It did not admit or deny the charges.