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This research was undertaken to examine the symbolism surrounding the sweatlodge and how it pertained to women in Native American cultures. After an extensive literature search I determined that there was little or no information concerning the use of the sweatlodge by women. The goal of the research was an attempt to fill the gap concerning women's usage of the sweatlodge and the reason for the continuation of the sweatlodge tradition when so many other traditions had become lost. To fulfill this goal I chose to work with women from the Nez Perce reservation at Lapwai, Idaho.

The women of the Nez Perce use the sweatlodge to cleanse the body and to achieve social harmony in their daily lives. It is a forum for releasing tensions, an opportunity of marriage counseling, and a method of communing with the spiritworld. In spite of the fact that my women consultants
denied any religious motivations, it appears that the sweatlodge is in fact a religious activity. By participating in the sweatlodge the spiritual traditions are being kept alive. Change has occurred with great regularity since the appearance of the Europeans, but even with all that has been lost, the sweatlodge is still an integral part of the culture.
Sweatlodge Participation Among Nez Perce Women

by

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis was undertaken to examine the symbolism surrounding the sweatlodge and how it pertained to Native American cultures in the past as well as the present. An extensive literature search demonstrated that there was little or no information to be found in print regarding women's sweatlodges. All of the available printed material pertained to men's lodges. Most of this information was in reference to the Indians of the Plains such as the Sioux. Existing sweatbath information consisted of early explorer's reports of the sweatbath being used for specific medical problems such as arthritis and rheumatism. Other reports mentioned the use of the sweatbath to obtain power and for purification of the body before and after major undertakings such as a hunting trip or war.

After examining the literature I determined that there was much information missing on how the sweatbath functioned as a part of Native American cultures. I began my thesis work with the idea of doing field research on women's contemporary use of the sweatlodge. I intended to discover whether women use the sweatlodge, if so, how frequently, and why.
Definition of Sweatlodge Terms

The sweatlodge itself is a dome-shaped structure made of saplings, covered by reed mats, dirt, hides, or blankets and tarps. The structure is used as a type of bath similar to a sauna. The heat is produced by pouring water over heated rocks and bathing in the steam produced. The term sweatlodge, sweatbath and sweathouse are used interchangeably. The term sweat is used to indicate the actual bath function of the structure.

Additional research was undertaken to explore the ceremony, uses, distribution, and significance of sweatlodge ritual. It was approached from the basic tenet expressed by several Native Americans that the sweatlodge was a recreation of the universe. Its shape symbolized the universe as a whole. People participating in the sweatlodge ceremony returned to the womb of mother earth in the moist, dark cramped quarters. Each person had entered the sweatlodge on an equal basis with all others, no weapons, no advantages. Emerging from the sweatlodge was the rebirth of the person. Inside the sweatlodge was total darkness like the darkness of deep space, or the womb. The warmth of steam from hot rocks relaxed the body and represented a mother’s nurturing of each child. The sweatlodge served to keep the individual in tune with the world by providing a place to commune with the Spirit and Mother Earth.
The first step in accomplishing the goal of determining usage of the sweatlodge was to collect origin myths for the sweatlodge from various areas of the country to determine similarities and differences. Four myths were found, one from the Nez Perce of Idaho, one from the Sioux of the Mid West, and two versions from the Navaho of the Southwest. These myths are discussed on the following pages.

Myths of Sweatlodge Origin

One means of understanding the sweatlodge as a feature of a culture is to examine legends and myths regarding its existence and use. Myths help to explain how something is used, who uses it, and the occasions on which the activity occurs. Early myths were recorded by anthropologists who visited various tribes in the late 19th and early 20th century. These explain the shape of the sweatlodge, the number of cycles of hot and cold exposure, the items used within the sweatlodge and the differing use of the sweatlodge by men and women. The four myths below pertain to sweatlodge origins among the Nez Perce, Sioux and Navaho people.

The Nez Perce myth demonstrates the paradox of the Sweatlodge. "Sweat House" is referred to as a man, while the inside of the sweatlodge is referred to as the womb of Mother Earth. One possible explanation for this apparent
contradiction is that many cultures have a mythical being who is hermaphroditic, that is a being who is both male and female. Sweat House may be this being for the Nez Perce. However, there may be other explanations for the contradictions unknown to the author.

Nez Perce Myth

"Sweat House (as a man) conferred on all the animals their characteristic behavior or appearance, e.g., elk's stride and eagle's power of flight. When this was done, Sweat House said to himself, "Since all are gone, I will place myself on the ground for the use of the coming people. Whosoever shall come into my bosom or visit me occasionally, to him I will impart powers which will elevate him above the grade of the common people. He will become great in war and peace. He will have great success in the chase as well as in fishing. In short, he will be a prosperous man from every point of view." (Williams 1896:3 as quoted by Walker 1966:144)

The Nez Perce myth features Sweat Lodge in the role frequently played by Coyote as the creator of specific characteristic powers possessed by different animals. These animals in turn were capable of assisting humans in their endeavors. Humans had no special power awarded to them by the Creator (Great Spirit), so Sweat Lodge gave people the ability to obtain assistance from the beings possessing powers in the natural world. Prosperity would be given to people who visited Sweat Lodge and asked for assistance.
Navaho

The Navajo myths, like the Nez Perce demonstrate use of the sweatlodge to cleanse and to gain power. Also, as in the Nez Perce myth, only men are mentioned as users of the sweatlodge.

Navaho Myths

"First-man made the first co'tce. After coming up the qadjinai, or magic, reed, he was very dirty; his skin was discolored and he had a foul smell like a coyote. He washed with water, but that did not cleanse him. Then Qastcejini sent the firefly to instruct him concerning the co'tce and how to rotate a spindle of wood in a notched stick. As First-man revolved the spindle, or drill, between his hands, Firefly ignited the dust at its point with a spark of fire which Qastcejini had given it for that purpose." (Mindeleff 1895-96:501-502)

There is another myth which is different from the one stated above. This one elaborates on the origin of the lodge itself, not just the fire.

"The co'tce were made by the Sun when the famous twins, Navenezgni and Co'badjistcini, who play so large a part in Navaho mythology, were sent to him by Estsanatlehi. When they reached the house of the Sun they called him father, as they had been instructed to do, but the Sun disowned them and subjected them to many ordeals, and even thrust at them with a spear, but the mother had given each of the youths a magic feather mantle impervious to any weapon. Klehanoai (the night bearer -- the moon) also scoffed at them and filled the mind of the Sun with doubts concerning the paternity of the twins, so he determined to subject them to further ordeal. He made four co'tce, but instead of using wood in their construction he made them of a metallic substance, like iron. He placed these at the cardinal points and sent the moon to make a fire
near each of them. This fire was obtained from the "burning stars," the comets. The co'tce were made exceedingly hot and the twins were placed in them successively; but instead of being harmed they came out of the last one stronger and more vigorous than ever. Then the Sun acknowledged them as his sons and gave the elder one the magic weapons with which he destroyed the evil genii who infested the Navaho land." (Mindeleff 1895-96:501-502)

At first reading this version would seem to indicate strong influence from the European culture in the mention of "a metallic substance, like iron" used to build the sweatlodge. However, according to Grigsby (1989) the Navaho word for flint is used to mean metallic substances. It is possible that this terminology is responsible for the mention of metal in the building of the sweatlodge. It is also possible that the translator was using iron as a reference to indicate a substance immune to damage by fire.

This is why, according to the Navaho, it is well to have many co'tce (sweatbaths) and to use them frequently. "Their use gives rest and sweet sleep after hard work; it invigorates a man for a long journey and refreshes him after its accomplishment" (Mindeleff, 1895-96:502).

First-woman after coming up from the underworld was also foul and ill smelling so she used the co'tce or sweatbath after First-man. That is why Navaho women use the sweatbath like the men but never together except under a certain, unspecified, medical condition (Mindeleff, 1895-96:502).
This is the first and most extensive mention of women using the sweatlodge.

**Sioux Myth**

A young girl and her four brothers were the only people in the world. Each of the four brothers disappeared as they were hunting. Left alone the young girl was going to commit suicide by swallowing a large stone. Instead of causing her death, in four days time she delivered a male child. This child grew amazingly fast. His name was Stone Boy. When he was fully grown, a matter of only a few days, he discovered that he had four missing uncles. Stone Boy developed the bow and arrow and set off to find his uncles. He came across an old woman with four long bundles near her tipi. He knew she was a witch and, as a result, managed to bring about her demise. The rocks near the tipi told him to build a fire, heat the rocks, and pour water on them. The bundles began to move and after Stone Boy had poured water the fourth time the bundles became his uncles. Ever since this first sweatbath, the Sioux have used the sweat to heal many ills and to gain power. (Condensed from Lame Deer, 1972:175-176).

The Sioux myth relates the first use of the sweatlodge to regain health and life. The numbers four, six and seven are a recurrent theme. Since the pouring of the water for the fourth time is when the uncles came alive again, the Sioux continue to sweat in cycles of four, they open and close the door four times, the pipe is smoked to each of the four directions, water is poured on the rocks four times, and so on. A more complete version of this myth is found in the Appendix. Six is the number of cardinal directions plus the sky and earth, seven is the ideal number of participants for a Sioux sweatlodge ceremony.
Myth Comparison and Discussion

These four myths from varying cultures have been placed here together to demonstrate that widely separate groups have similar origin stories for the sweatlodge. A supernatural being (Sweat House, First Man, the Sun, the rocks themselves speaking to Stone Boy) has designated the sweatlodge as a means of achieving power, health, strength, and proving the participant to be worthy of assistance. Each of these myths demonstrates the benefits to be gained from participation. Health, strength, power, life are expected benefits. Often the distinction between the characteristics of different groups becomes blurred in the process of borrowing and trade. There is no sure way to demonstrate how much influence one group may have had over others in the past. Looking at the different myths shows that, in this instance, the sweatlodge has a similar history and purpose in each group; it may or may not be that one group has borrowed from another.
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Bath in Cultural Context

"The Sauna type of steam bath is common today in middle and northern Russia, Finland, Norway, Iceland, Esthonia, and Latvia. It was known to the medieval Germanic peoples, but there is clear evidence that it had come to the Germans from the north . . . If we plot the distribution of the steam bath on a map, we at once discover a dispersal center from which this custom has diffused . . . in Finland. The closer we approach the Urals the less common the steam bath becomes." (Lopatin 1960:986).

The sweatbath is one of several distinctive types of bath found around the world. There are two types of sweatbath in use by Native American groups. Of these types of sweatbath one involves direct fire heating and the other involves steam produced by pouring water over heated rocks.

There appear to be four types of bath that may be considered to be part of what Lopatin refers to as "a bath culture complex around the world." Lopatin (1960:977-979) details the classifications of the baths as (1) the Pool or Plunge bath; (2) the Direct Fire Sweatbath; (3) the Water Vapor bath; and (4) the Mixed type.

The Pool or Plunge bath is perhaps the oldest for which we can find archaeological evidence. It originated in such
centers of civilization as Egypt, Crete, Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Persia, India, and China. The main purpose of this type of bath in all cases was cleanliness. Healing was another purpose as, for example, the Bible prescribed immersion for a number of ailments.

The Direct Fire Sweatbath is also of ancient origin and is still used by some Alaskan Eskimos, Indians of California and a few tribes of the Plateau area of the North American continent. Sweating is the main purpose of this type of bath and water is seldom used in the bath house, unlike the water vapor bath.

The Water Vapor Bath (sauna) is an artificial type of bath which Lopatin (1960:978) theorizes was invented in a northern country. It was in common use only in countries with long cold winters. Only later did it diffuse to warm climate countries. Today the water vapor bath is in use by the Russians, Swedes, Norwegians, Finns, Estonians, and the Latvians. This is the type of bath most commonly used by the Native Americans in both North and South America. The Mixed Bath combines the plunge bath with the water vapor bath. This type of bath was used by the Greeks and Romans. The misnamed Turkish bath is of this type, as it is described as "a degenerated form of the classical Greco-Roman bath (Lopatin, 1960:979)." Lopatin uses the term "degenerated" to indicate that the Turkish bath was not
typically a water vapor bath in that the effect was achieved by hot air rather than steam.

The type of bath to which this research is devoted is the Water Vapor Bath. Characteristics of the Native American sweatbath are as follows: (1) the small room, (2) the hearth of cobblestones, (3) no smoke hole, (4) the switch of willow or birch branches used to stimulate the skin, (5) the method of generating steam by throwing or sprinkling water on heated stones, (6) the use of aromatic herbs or grasses, (7) therapeutic purposes, (8) ritualistic purposes, and (9) social gatherings (Lopatin 1960:983). Herbs are either burned on the hot stones or made into a liquid preparation by boiling the herbs in water. The alternation of heat and cooling is used by various Native American groups. This can be either in the form of rushing out to plunge into cold water and returning to the heated enclosure or by allowing cool air to fan through the enclosure and then sealing in the heat.

Geographic Distribution of Sweatlodges

According to Lopatin (1960:978), the water vapor or steam bath is used in the Scandinavian countries, North America, Mexico, and certain places in South America. Archaeological evidence shows that the steam bath has had a long history in the Americas, from the ancient Mayan stone
bathhouses in the Piedras Negras ruins and the Aztec
*temazcal* in Mexico, to the Indians of Guiana, the Puri of
Brazil (Metraux 1946:530 as quoted by Lopatin 1960:988) and
one tribe in Argentina (Lowie 1935).

The only sweatlodge found in the literature relating to
North American archaeology north of Mexico which predated
European contact was on the Applegate River in southern
Oregon. The village containing the sweatlodge was dated
between 2000 and 3000 years B.P. (McDonald, 1981:1).

The central area of the sweathouse was identified
during excavation by heavy concentrations of
unmodified river cobbles and fire-cracked rock set
in a dark stained soil. The house area surrounding
the rock feature became evident only after
examination of the artifact and debris distribution
maps from excavation levels 2 and 3. (McDonald,
1981:76)

One theory set forth in the literature to explain how
and why so many cultures utilize the sweatbath is diffusion.
However, the point of origin is not agreed upon by all who
hold this theory. According to Lopatin's theory, the idea
diffused to the New World starting from what is today
Finland and spreading across the Northern Atlantic to the
Baffin Bay area via Iceland and Greenland and from there
south.
On the other hand, the study by Driver and Massey (1957:314, and 1969:133) indicates that diffusion began from central points in Asia and radiated both east and west from there. However, the direction of diffusion, if diffusion is the explanation, is not clear. It is just as possible that the sweatbath originated in North America and diffused to the northern European countries by way of Asia or island hopping through Greenland and Iceland. The complexity of culture cannot be used as evidence either of the direction of diffusion or of the antiquity of the culture.

"Complex cultures have borrowed from simpler ones: maize spread from America to Europe; felt and riding boots from pastoral nomads to the Chinese; and so forth. Hence, though transmissions from the higher culture is more probable, the direction of diffusion in a particular instance remains uncertain." (Lowie 1933:292).

Archaeological evidence of sweathouses in Mexico indicate that the Mayans used sweatlodges which consisted of a "central chamber" and a "fire chamber" (Cresson, 1938:89). The fire chamber was used to heat the stone walls of the central chamber. The heated stone wall of the central chamber bears a striking resemblance to the sweatlodge described in the Navajo myth. There was a sunken passage leading from the fire chamber through the front door and continuing for some distance outside. In spite of the sunken passage, the entry was still so low as to make
stooping required for entry. The person taking a sweatbath also washed afterwards with hot water and soap in the temazcalli (bathhouse). This practice of ablution created a need for a drain which perhaps furnishes an explanation for the sunken passage (Cresson 1938:93).

Temazcalli (bathhouses) are found south and east of Mexico City but there is an absence of such structures reported north and west of Mexico City (Cresson 1938:102). Driver (1969:132) also notes that there is no evidence of sweatbaths in the northern area of Mexico as shown in Figure 1 on the following page. The reason for this absence may be due to the higher altitude, lack of water or some other missing ingredient.

The sweatlodges of Mexico and the Mayan area lie at the southern most area of concentration of the general distribution of sweatlodges and a similarity of use links them to the northern sweatlodges (Cresson 1938:103). The geographical distribution would not be nearly so widespread if it had only been occurring for a relatively short period of time. An alternative theory indicates the possibility of multiple origins.
Figure 1. Geographical Distribution of sweatlodges.
Construction of Sweatlodges

The physical structure of sweatlodges vary somewhat between cultures. The Mayan and Mexican sweatbath is sometimes domed with a fire chamber and sometimes rectangular with a fire chamber. The sweatbaths found most often north of Mexico are round chambers either made from saplings and hides or blankets or semi-pit house structures covered with saplings and blankets, reed mats, or dirt (Figures 2 and 3 on the following pages).

The Nez Perce use 12 saplings of willow, chokecherry, or rosebush (for protection), cover it with blankets or hides, have a firepit just to the left of the entrance which faces east (Pond 1987; Riggs 1981). As shown in Figure 4 (following pages), the saplings are tied together with sinew or twine.

The Sioux use 12-16 saplings of willow. These saplings are bent over to form a dome shape and tied with strips of bark or rawhide. No nails, wire or string are used (Fools Crow 1979; Lame Deer 1972; Black Elk 1953). There is a center pit for the red-hot stones and the participants sit around the outside perimeter of the stones.

The Fox Indians also form a dome shaped structure with the use of four poles, one at each cardinal point then bent and tied. Over this frame flag-reed mats are placed to shut
Figure 2. Traditional sweatlodge of mud-daub and reed mats.
Figure 3. Traditional sweatlodge of mud-daub.
Figure 4. Inside view of sweatlodge.
out the air. The center has a space cleared for the hot stones (Jones 1939:108-109).

Table 1 shows various features or attributes found in sweatlodge across the United States. This chart demonstrates how many aspects of the sweatlodge are common to several Native American groups. The various attributes were found in my search of the literature and compiled as a guide to searching Murdock's Human Resource Area Files (HRAF).

The 13 groups chosen for this sample were selected from the HRAF microfiche files to provide a cross-section from all over the United States. A sample size of 13 was used because old records indicated 130 culturally distinct groups in the United States and 10% of that total would provide a manageable sample. One major criteria of choice was that the group must have a microfiche card for the topics "Bath" and "Structures".

Of the 18 attributes or groups of attributes listed, the Sioux have been found to possess 16. The Nez Perce, among whom this study was conducted, possess 14. The rest of the groups sampled possess fewer attributes. The Sanpoil, Seminole, California and Alaska groups are noted as having only two attributes in the HRAF. No other mention of sweatlodges in these cultures was found in the literature.
### TABLE 1

**ASPECTS OF SWEATLODGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Bath</th>
<th>Supernatural sanctions/communications</th>
<th>Cleansing/Purification</th>
<th>Curing/Preventive medicine</th>
<th>Shaman practices</th>
<th>Structure-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water vapor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Room in house X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plunge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dome shape X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct fire</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Covered pit X</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of poles 12-16 X</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number 4 directions, cycles</th>
<th>Song cycles</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The "x" under each name only indicates the mention made of that particular trait of the sweat being found in that culture at the time the ethnographer was there. The absence of a mark does not necessarily mean that the trait was absent, only that it was not mentioned.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Time of day</th>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Varies</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting house</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heated stones</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division by Sex</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Season of Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal use</td>
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<td>Year round use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tobacco/herb</td>
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**ASPECTS OF SWEATLODGE**

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| **Pipe smoked** | X |
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The theory of diffusion of traits from cultural centers originated among German scholars and was further developed by Franz Boas in regard to studies of Plains Indians. If the theory is advanced that the closer a culture is to the center of a diffusion zone the more attributes will be found, then it would appear from this chart that native groups in the northwestern, Rocky Mountain states and the northern Plains regions are close to the diffusion centers while groups to the east and the southwest are farther away. This would seem to bear out the theory expressed by Driver and Massey (1957:314, 1969:133) that sweatlodges originated in Asia and spread to the Americas and Europe. The west coast of America, being closer to Asia, has retained more attributes which are the same from group to group than cultures located in the east.

There is no archaeological evidence at the present time to support diffusion as the reason for the widespread use of the sweatlodge. There may be multiple origins or some as yet undetermined explanation. Diffusion is only one explanation for why cultures share many sweatlodge characteristics.
Uses of the Steam (Sweat) Bath

The reasons expressed by individual Native Americans for taking sweatbaths are varied. These reasons include: purifying the body, propitiating spirits, curing diseases, social interaction, and hygiene (Henshaw 1910:661-662). Lopatin states that cleanliness was not a major reason for using a sweatbath (1960:983). Walker takes the opposite tack when he states that "physical cleansing was the most frequent motive for sweatbathing" (1966:143).

Walker's studies (1966:143) with the Nez Perce show that etiquette required regular sweatbathing, augmented by the use of deodorants such as kouse-kouse, a root found in the Palouse Region of Southeastern Washington and Central Idaho. Regular, vigorous use of the sweatbath was believed to produce sound bodies and steady nerves. The Nez Perce made a clear connection between the requirements of war or hunting and the physical conditioning afforded by the sweatbath.

The first place a visitor went was to the sweatlodge (Walker, 1966:147) in order to meet with members of the host group as an equal. All the news of interest to the group was made available to the visitor. The news from other groups visited were made known to the host group. Participation in the sweatlodge was a form of acceptance into the group.
General Symbolism

The ritual of the bath consists of four cycles of singing, praying and pouring water on the hot stones. During each cycle a request for aid is made of the four directions, for example: west is power; north is the purification winds; east is wisdom and knowledge; and south is life (Arends 1980; Beckham 1981). After each of these cycles the door flap is allowed to open and air circulates inside the enclosure. During this time stories are told, and events discussed which may be communicated to the spirits the next time the flap is closed (Lame Deer 1975:181; Fools Crow 1979:99). The participants exit the lodge in a counter-clockwise manner because that is the direction the sun travels.

Nez Perce

For the Nez Perce time spent in the sweatlodge was for purification, praying and telling stories of the past. The sweat ceremony was used more by medicine people. During the ceremony there was a specific ritual to be followed, songs and chants to be used, tobacco to be smoked. There were gender differences in the use of the sweatlodge. The women
either used the sweatlodge after the men, or had a separate lodge to prevent the possibility of menstrual pollution of the men's lodge (Walker 1966:148). The sweatbath took place early in the morning, before sunrise to greet the new day and to thank "Old Man" (the sun or Great Spirit) for bringing a new day (Pond 1976). The entrance faced the east, this direction was the source of light and healing power.

The men would approach the sweatlodge, circle counterclockwise and crawl into the lodge backwards, always facing the light. The counterclockwise motion symbolizes the earth's motion around the sun (Pond 1987), or the perceived motion of the sun in its yearly cycle. One enters the sweatlodge from the east circling counterclockwise toward the north. The sweatbath would last anywhere from one hour to three or four hours. The reason for this variation is that each person must accomplish some specified personal goal. The act of cleansing necessary varies individually. Each person continues to sweat until feeling at ease and ready for the upcoming event, such as a hunting trip, competitions, or raiding parties. Clothing is not worn since it would be a barrier between people and the earth.

Each item in the sweatlodge has a meaning. The willows of the framework symbolize protection. The green boughs of white fir, which form a cushion upon which to sit, symbolize
cleanliness. The stones are seen as the heart of the creator, while the fire is the balance between man and woman, humans and the earth. The sun is referred to as Old Man, and the earth is referred to as Old Lady or Old Woman. The earth is the mother and the sun is the father of all beings. The fire serves as a means of opening channels of communication between the two. The warmth kindles the fire of life. The sweatlodge is used year round no matter what the weather (Pond 1981). Although the traditional time to take a sweatbath was early morning, Walker (1966:147) notes that at the present time most such activities are held in the evening because of the wage labor performed during the day.

Most of my consultants stated that there was no ceremony connected with the Nez Perce sweatbath. However, on the one occasion when a ceremonial sweatbath was discussed, a Sioux type ceremony was described. Therefore, since there is more information in the literature pertaining to Sioux ceremonies than to Nez Perce, I have included here a description of a Sioux sweatlodge ceremony.
The Sioux sweatlodge is built near dwellings and the sweatbath ceremony is performed once per week during spring and summer (Powers 1975:139). Black Elk, Lame Deer, and Fools Crow report that the sweatlodge was used whenever a medicine man was called upon to perform a healing ceremony; it was used year round only for this purpose.

Black Elk tells us that the sweatlodge was built facing the east because it is from this direction that the light of wisdom comes (Brown, 1953:32). On the other hand, two other Sioux medicine men tell us that a sweatlodge which faces east can only be built by a heyoka medicine man (Lame Deer, 1972:178; Fools Crow 1979:95). The heyoka are the clowns among the medicine men who do everything in a backwards or contrary manner. Despite the differences of opinion about the direction of the sweatlodge three important Oglala Sioux medicine men do seem to agree on almost everything else.

"The sweatlodge is the lodge of the wind, the universe itself" (Powers 1975:181). The earth on which the participants sit is "grandmother" from whom all life comes. The circular hole in the center of the lodge will hold the power of the Great Spirit (Wakan Tanka) and will become the center of the whole world. The earth scooped from the pit is carefully used to make a ridged path to lead the spirits
into the sweatlodge. At the end of the path, approximately ten steps from the entrance the remainder of the dirt will be used to form a mound called unci-grandmother. The fire pit also represents the beloved, dead relatives who have returned to the earth. The pit, a circle within the circular lodge, also stands for life which has no end (Lame Deer 1975:178).

The rocks which are heated represent grandmother earth and the indestructible and everlasting nature of Wakan-Tanka (Brown, 1953:32). The terms "grandmother earth" and "mother earth" often are used interchangeably. Both terms appear to be an indication of respect. Grandmother is used to signify the greatest respect and is used to refer to all deceased female relatives just as grandfather is used to refer to all deceased male relatives. Grandmothers, or women who have reached menopause are greatly respected as medicine women (Grizzly Bear Eagle, 1988), and they take part in the most important ceremonies. Women who have passed childbearing are regarded as very powerful spiritually.

The fire which is built outside of the sweatlodge to heat the rocks also has significance. The logs are laid in a specific pattern -- four east-west sticks then four north-south sticks cross-wise on top. Logs are placed in a tipi form over the crossed sticks. This structure represents the
four directions, the earth and the sky above, as well as the tipi with the Indians inside (Lame Deer 1975:178).

At the entrance of the lodge is a rack for holding the pipe which will be filled with kinnickinnick tobacco and smoked during each of the four cycles of hot and cold. Sometimes the rack holds a buffalo skull with six tobacco offerings tied to the horns. A pail of fresh water from a running stream is placed on the rack to represent the water of life. The ground inside the lodge is covered with sage which signifies that green living things (from which power may be gained) are with the participants in the sweathouse (as well as providing something to sit on). Sweetgrass, a type of prairie grass, is burned and the smoke waved into every part of the lodge to purify and drive out all bad feelings and thoughts (Lame Deer 1975:178-179).

The number of participants varies from one to 12, however many can fit into the lodge. The ideal number of participants is seven. This allows for one to be the leader, one to represent the earth, another to represent the clouds, and the other four to represent the four directions. No clothing is worn in the sweatlodge because the participants are to be reborn. The person who is in charge of the ceremony sits near the door and sprinkles water over the heated rocks with a fir bough. Using the same fir bough the leader also sprinkles water upon the participants.
"You'll be like a baby coming out of your mother's womb, our real mother, the earth. You'll come with a new mind. You don't want to be reborn with a pair of shorts on" (Lame Deer 1975:179).

Women use the Sioux sweatlodge as well as the men but normally, as with the Nez Perce and Navaho, they have a separate lodge. According to Grizzly Bear Eagle (1987), women are kept separate because they have a special power of their own. A woman does not sweat during the menstrual cycle because it is at that point in time that her power is at its peak. The innate power of women does not mix well with the power of the sweatlodge at that time. Grizzly Bear Eagle states that men fear women's power since it is dangerous to them. (He did not specify the danger.) This belief explains why women who have passed menopause are the only ones allowed to tend the fires outside the men's sweatlodge.

Participants enter the sweatlodge in a stooped position and move counter-clockwise to find their seats. The leader sits on the right of the entrance and a person designated as an assistant sits to the left. The others form a circle around the stone pit. One person remains outside to place the stones into the pit, hand in the ceremonial pipe filled with tobacco and open and close the door as required. As
mentioned above, this outside person is frequently a woman who has passed menopause (Grizzly Bear Eagle, 1987).

Rocks are placed into the pit in a specific order. The first rock represents grandmother earth and is placed into the center of the pit, signifying the earth is the origin of all life. The next four rocks are placed around the first -- one for each of the four directions from which the winds blow. Then a fifth rock is placed on top of the center or grandmother rock; this rock represents the sky and the grandfather spirit. Earth and Sky are said to be the parents of all beings. Here Grandmother and Grandfather are joined once more to aid their children. After these six rocks have been placed in position the remaining rocks may be stacked in any manner and in any number. These additional rocks represent the trees, plants and animals of the world (Lame Deer 1975:180).

The sweatlodge is used over and over again until it falls apart or the willow saplings which form the framework finally break. When no longer serviceable the lodge is burned down, the rocks are buried and the ground is smoothed and restored to the original condition. A new sweathouse is built in a new location and use of the bath begins again (Lame Deer 1975:182).
"The rites of the inipi (sweatbath) are very wakan (sacred) and are used before any great undertaking for which we wish to make ourselves pure or for which we wish to gain strength; and in many winters past our men, and often the women, made the Inipi even every day, and sometimes several times in a day, and from this we received much of our power" (Black Elk 1953:43).
Sioux Pipe Ceremony within the Sweatlodge

When a medicine-man is asked to do a healing ceremony the person suffering illness, or close relatives, fill a pipe with kinnickinnick (red willow bark tobacco), offer it to the six directions (the four cardinal directions as well as sky and earth) and then presents it to the medicine-man; they smoke it to the finish to signify the willingness to undertake the healing (Fools Crow 1979:99). During the healing ceremony itself, the person sponsoring the ceremony lights a pipe filled with kinnickinnick, presents it to the six directions and everyone smokes and rubs the smoke over themselves (Lame Deer 1975:180). The helper stationed outside closes the door of the sweatlodge tightly so that no light will enter. The ceremony proper begins with introductory songs and statements of purpose (e.g., the wish that the patient will live through the next four seasons) followed by prayers for curing. Then water is poured on the rocks from each of the four cardinal directions beginning at the west and moving clockwise (Fools Crow 1979:98).

The four cycles in sweatlodge ceremonies represent the four ages of humankind (humans are believed to have lived through three different ages, this is the fourth age on earth) and how Wakan-Tanka (the Great Spirit) has given light to all persons. Black Elk stated that the entrance of
the sweatlodge was at the east and that the helper outside was often a woman (Brown, 1953:35). Inside the sweatlodge the men would move in a counter-clockwise direction with the leader sitting at the entrance on the east. The woman helper would hand in the pipe which was taken by a man sitting at the west (the medicine man's helper inside). He places the pipe in front of him with the stem pointing west. When the pipe is smoked it is offered to the six directions (north, south, east, west, sky and earth) and then passed to the left to be smoked. When the pipe is finished it is returned to the person in the west who empties it and purifies it. The use of the pipe in the first cycle of the ceremony symbolizes White Buffalo Calf Woman, a mythological figure who presented the pipe to the Sioux. After all have smoked, the pipe is then passed outside to the helper who refills it and places it at the unci mound, mentioned earlier. The bowl is left facing the east and the stem facing the west since the power of the west is to be invoked in the first cycle.

During the second cycle, the pipe again is passed inside and shared. This time, when it is passed back outside to the helper, it is refilled and placed with the stem leaning to the north, to invoke the power of the Winged One (the purification winds) of the north. In the third cycle the pipe is passed first to the person at the north to be lit
and started around. When it is passed outside, it is filled and placed with the stem to the east since it is the power of the east (wisdom and knowledge) which is being invoked. During the fourth cycle, the person at the east (the entrance) is responsible for lighting and starting the pipe around the lodge. When it is finished and passed to the helper outside it is placed against the mound, stem to the south to invoke the power of the spirit of the south, life (Brown, 1953:36-42).

During each of the four cycles, water is poured on the rocks to cause steam to rise. By the end of the fourth cycle the water must be all used up. At the end of the ceremony when the door is opened for the last time, all participants are happy because they are living in the Light (Brown, 1953:42). "Moving around sun-wise, all the men now leave the sweatlodge . . . those who have participated are as men born again, and have done much good not only for themselves, but for the whole nation" (Brown, 1953:43).

Summary of Literature Survey

It appears from these brief descriptions of the Sioux and Nez Perce sweatlodges and their meaning that the sweatlodge ceremony in both cases is performed to regain the balance between nature and human, to rebalance personal relationships with others in the human community. There is opposition and balance evident in every aspect of the
sweatlodge from the precisely placed poles to the placement of the rocks within the center pit. The participants' movements are balanced to provide continuity between segments of the ceremony, and to maintain the atmosphere intended to be created within the lodge and carried out into the external world at the end of the ceremony. The purpose is to move closer to the center of being, the spiritual heart (Pond 1987).

The sweatlodge ceremony provides a prime example of Turner's (1964:234-243) liminal period, a period of margin in an interstructural situation. To pass through this marginal period a person experiences a "rite of passage". Such rites indicate and constitute transitions between states, a relatively fixed or stable condition. Initiation rites are forms of "rites of passage".

The world within the sweatlodge is isolated from the outside, a special feeling built up among all participants of the ceremony, and there is a ritualized entrance and exit from the sweatlodge. The ceremony creates a change of state, a transformation, from that of "normal" person in everyday life to that of "purified" person ready to participate in the hunt, the curing ceremony, the vision quest, whatever the intended objective of the purification ceremony. Turner (1964:235) notes that "rites of passage" are not confined to culturally defined life-crisis but may accompany any
change from one state to another." The sweatlodge ceremony is performed at any time of year, in all weather for various reasons. It may or may not deal with crises, but always with change and transformation.

The participants in each ceremony are placed into a situation in which all are equal, e.g. naked and unarmed. The ceremony, while it usually is performed for men and women separately, may be experienced by anyone regardless of sex, race or culture. The mere act of participating in the sweatlodge does not convey knowledge itself. However, it is the proper preparation for any quest for knowledge such as the vision quest, the Sun Dance, etc. The sweatlodge provides preparation by cleansing the participant of all evil thoughts and bodily impurities.

In the sweatlodge, the spirits are represented by participants. As mentioned in the Sioux segment, the best number for performing a sweat is seven so that one can be the leader, one represents the clouds, another represents the earth, and one for each of the four directions. Additional participants would be assigned other roles such as the other people in the world, the trees, plants, animals, etc.

The sweatlodge appears to reflect a circular theory of time in that it is a never ending cycle which may be repeated over and over again. Events such as a hunting trip
occur after the sweatbath. When the hunters return from the hunt, another ceremony occurs to mark the return to the community. The sweatlodge ceremony is made up of four segments, each much like the one before with only minor changes. Repetition assists in making sure that all participants are aware of the purpose of the ceremony and the results to be expected.

The sweatlodge was a means of achieving village solidarity. Besides developing and maintaining goodwill within the village, it helped to keep interpersonal relations smooth on an intervillage level also. When a visitor arrived, the first priority he did was to seek out the sweatlodge (Walker 1966:147). The sweatlodge provided a means of communication between realities: inside/outside, nature/culture, sky/earth, high/low (Vogt & Vogt 1970:276).
METHODOLOGY

I decided to contact women on the Nez Perce reservation at Lapwai, Idaho to conduct the research regarding women's sweatlodges. The Nez Perce reservation at Lapwai was chosen because I was interested in the Nez Perce culture due to having lived near the reservation as a child. I lived in the area for 17 years and had many friends on the reservation. To facilitate this research I attended various committee meetings attended by the women at Lapwai. These meetings included a meeting with personnel from fisheries to discuss traditional fishing rights and localities, the November 11 Veteran's Day Dinner, the Four-Nations Pow-wow, and a Memorial dinner given the first day of the Pow-wow. I was also invited to attend a luncheon sponsored by the Head-start classes in honor of the elders of the tribe. Many of the women who were to help in my study were present.

I gathered short life histories relating to sweatlodge use from ten women and two men. My main consultant was chosen because she was an "adopted aunt", Beth. Beth and her husband are elders in the tribe. She traces her family line on one side to Chief Timothy, one of four chiefs who did not fight in the Nez Perce War of 1877. The other side of her family is traceable to Chief Looking Glass who was killed while with Chief Joseph during the Nez Perce War. Her husband traces his family to a third chief who also
accompanied Chief Joseph, Two Moons. The women she introduced me to were mostly her cousins. One woman, chosen because she was the only woman in the room when we entered, turned out to be related also. One of the men I interviewed was a brother of one of my consultants. He was chosen because he was the unofficial tribal historian. He was charged by the elders with maintaining the traditional ways as much as possible.

I made contact with a second sweatlodge group by means of a friend of my father. This gentleman had worked with the second man that I interviewed, Tom. Tom and his wife, who was also a consultant, are very active in the Meals-on-Wheels program for the elders and shut-ins of the reservation.

I was in Lapwai in the capacity of a Participant Observer. Interviews were conducted and tape recorded to discover the reasons why each person participated in the sweatlodge. In addition to the tape recordings I kept a nightly journal of observations made during the day. Questions asked included "How often do you sweat?", "What benefit do you receive from such sweating?", and "Why do you feel that the sweatlodge has continued for so long when you have lost so many of the other traditions?" Answers to these questions varied in some respects but in other respects remained similar.
One main idea that was expressed in all interviews was that sweatlodge must be experienced. Unless you actually participate you cannot understand what is being told to you. Therefore, I participated on six occasions with the original group of consultants and on two occasions with the single woman consultant. These events took place at two different sweatlodges.

I made five trips to Lapwai, Idaho over a two month period. Each of four trips consisted of three days of actual participation with the Nez Perce women. The fifth trip occupied an entire week, and included a lecture, a luncheon, preparation of a holiday meal and three sweatbaths.

I made a follow-up visit at the end of January to take pictures. I also visited with several of the women I had interviewed previously.

The study was done over an a period of two months. Lapwai now is a sedentary community not a traditional, semi-nomadic village.
Nez Perce legend says that Monster devoured all the early people (animals) and Coyote went to rescue them. Monster was on the Clearwater River above Kamiah when Coyote found him. Coyote hid in the grass and called to Monster: "We are going to inhale each other!" (Dryden, 1972:17) Monster succeeded in inhaling Coyote, who then proceeded to cut Monster to pieces from the inside and set the people free. Wherever Coyote threw away pieces of Monster humans came to life. The result was the creation of Indian tribes of that region--Cooper d'Alene, Cayuse, Flatheads, etc. The people reminded Coyote that he had kept no pieces for the local area. Coyote solved this problem by washing Monster's blood from his hands. The Nez Perce came from Monster's blood. Coyote told them, "You may be little people but you will be powerful. You will be little because I have deprived you; nevertheless you will be manly (Dryden, 1972:18)". They call themselves "Ni-mi-poo" meaning "the Real People."

The **Ni-mi-poo** lived in the area of North Idaho, ranging from the Bitterroots Mountains on the East, to as far north as Coeur D'Alene territory, and South to the Shoshone territory in southern Idaho (Figure 5). They fished for salmon, on the Columbia, as far West as the Dalles and
Figure 5. Nez Perce Territory
Celilo. They were expert canoe makers and, when horses were introduced, the Ni-mi-poo developed a breeding system which helped produce the Appaloosa horse, the name deriving from the Palouse area of Southeast Washington (Dryden, 1972:22-23). Appaloosa horses were much prized by other Indians for their easy temperament, stamina and intelligence.

Discipline was maintained by the father, by chiefs, and an elected council. Private and Communal property was recognized. Whatever a person had produced was the private property of that person, whether male or female (Dryden, 1972:24). No land was held by individuals, but, each village laid claim to special grounds. Each band of Nez Perce took its name from the place where they lived, for instance, the Alpowas, the Asotins, the Lapwais, the Wallowas, the Wahas. The area for which they were named was their home base. Disputes had to be settled by the council.

The Ni-mi-poo belong to the Sahaptin language group found in Northern Oregon, Southeastern Washington and central Idaho. They had strong familial feelings and did not succumb to as many of the white man's social diseases as Coast Indians had done (Johansen, 1957:21). When Lewis and Clark made their journey to the Pacific Northwest in 1804-1806, they crossed the Bitterroots Mountains by way of the present day Lolo Pass and traveled down the Clearwater
River. The Nez Perce (Ni-mi-poo) aided the Lewis and Clark party in reaching the Columbia by canoe.

According to the 1988 Nez Perce Executive Committee report, the original territory claimed by the Nez Perce was estimated at 17,000,000 acres before 1855 (Figure 6). The Treaty of 1855 (see Figure 7) awarded the Nez Perce a reservation of 5,000 square miles (Dryden, 1972: 188) or 7,500,000 acres. This reservation included Lewiston, Florence, Kamiah, Kooskia, and several Clearwater mining towns. The treaty allowed the Nez Perce to retain the Wallowa Mountains, the upper Grand Ronde Valley and much of central Idaho (Johansen, 1957:255). This meant that this area was excluded from the rest of the Idaho Territory and Lewiston could not be its capitol. The Treaty was revised in June 1863, reducing the reservation to 756,958 acres (1988 Nez Perce Executive Committee Report). The reduced reservation was less than one-fourth the original size (Johansen, 1957:275), making a reservation of 600 square miles (Dryden, 1972:148). Many bands refused to sign the treaty because they had little confidence in promises to exclude whites from the reservation. This produced a schism among Treaty vs. Non-treaty Indians (Johansen, 1957:269-270). The Non-treaty Indians managed to live peacefully among whites until 1877. Treaty Indians, under Chief Lawyer, moved to the much reduced reservation and waited
Figure 6. Original Nez Perce Territory Pre-1855.
Figure 7. Nez Perce Territory Treaty 1855.
four long years for the Senate to ratify the Treaty. In 1867, Lewiston became the official capitol of the recently created Idaho Territory (Johansen, 1957:270).

In a special report, Assistant Adjutant General H. Clay Wood concluded in 1876 that "the Nez Perce undoubtedly, were at liberty to renounce the Treaty of 1855 . . . the Governor having violated the treaty obligation," and that "the non-treaty Nez Perce cannot in law be regarded as bound by the Treaty of 1863; and in so far as it attempts to deprive them of a right of occupancy of any land. Its provisions are null and void" (Johansen, 1957:275). In spite of this, Oregon's governor insisted the Nez Perce, now led by Young Chief Joseph, be removed from the Wallowas and installed at the Lapwai Agency (Johansen, 1957:276). This was the final straw which led to the Nez Perce War of 1877, culminating in the defeat of Joseph at Bear Paw Mountain near the Canadian border. The removal of the survivors to Oklahoma followed. Several years later, after many deaths among the Nez Perce due to the poor conditions in Oklahoma, Joseph and his immediate followers were sent to the Colville Reservation, while a few were allowed to settle at Lapwai (Dryden, 1972:169).

The Treaty Indians comprised less than one-third of the tribe. This meant that two-thirds of the tribe was harrassed and held to be morally bound by the actions of a
few. In 1887, Congress passed the Lands-in-Severalty Act (Dawes Act), which limited Indian personal holdings and made the surplus land available to whites. This allocation gave 542,074 Acres to whites and less than one-half that amount to the Nez Perce. (See Figure 8)

At the present time the Nez Perce Reservation encompasses 756,958 acres, but this figure is misleading since the land owned by the Nez Perce Tribe is merely 11.45% of that total due to the above mentioned allocation of "surplus" lands to whites under the Dawes Act (Table 2). The following is the land data and information breakdown as supplied by the 1981 BIA Land Report:

1. Tribal Land 35,397 acres
2. Individual allotted 51,067 acres
3. TOTAL LAND 86,454 acres

The remaining land is the land which was made available to the whites by the Treaty of 1863 and the Dawes Act. The reservation is divided in two parts with the main headquarters for Tribal business located at Lapwai and the remainder of the reservation at Kamiah. Counting the reservation lands and the lands between the two sections the area totals the 756,958 acres "encompassed" by the reservation.

In 1957, through their Executive Committee, the Nez Perce filed a claim against the United States to recover
Figure 8. Present Day Nez Perce Reservation.
Table 2

Indian Land Base History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Era</th>
<th>Sea Parc. Land</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>% of Original</th>
<th>% of 1855 Tr.</th>
<th>% of 1863 Tr.</th>
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<td>1855 Treaty</td>
<td>7,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1863 Treaty</td>
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<th>Era</th>
<th>Base Parc. Land</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>% of Original</th>
<th>% of 1855 Tr.</th>
<th>% of 1863 Tr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DAVIES ACT 1887</td>
<td>86,454</td>
<td>.51%</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
<td>11.42%</td>
<td>88.30%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Era</th>
<th>White Land</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Indian Reservations Today After Dawes Act 1887-1934</td>
<td>670,504</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>138,000,000</td>
<td>34.78%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Land</td>
<td>48,000,000</td>
<td>69.22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Land</td>
<td>90,000,000</td>
<td>30.78%</td>
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compensation for lands lost in Washington, Oregon and Idaho under the Treaty of 1863. The Indian Claims Commission awarded them $4,297,608 in 1959. In 1971, the Claims Commission approved an additional compromise settlement of $3,550,000 on ancestral lands lost by treaty (Dryden, 1972:244). In the fall of 1988, the question of usual and accustomed fishing and hunting places was still under discussion. Meetings between the Nez Perce and the State Department of Fisheries were taking place at the time of my research trips (Fisheries Meeting, October 27, 1988).

As of 1987 there were 2930 persons enrolled in the Nez Perce tribe. The total number residing on the Nez Perce Reservation was 1,671 with an additional 349 residing in the Lewiston/Clarkston area. This makes a total of 2,020 residing in or adjacent to the reservation (Source: BIA Labor Force Report and Nez Perce Tribal Rolls, 1987). There were 60 tribal members who were full-time students at institutions of higher education located throughout the United States. A total of 23 families totalling 109 tribal members were attending BIA vocational/technical schools (BIA Education report, 1987).

The unemployment rate was 42.4% with an underemployed rate of 32% of the labor force. It was estimated that 70% of the Nez Perce family units were below the poverty line income levels as established by the United States
government. (Source: Nez Perce Tribal Specific Health Plan, Department of Labor and BIA Labor Force Report, 1987).

The standard of living was below that of the average American, whose national average income was rated by the United States Department of Commerce at $10,263.00. The average income for an Idaho resident was $6,836.00 while a member of the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho was $5,829.00 (average family size - 3.96). The per capita income for the Nez Perce was $1,531.00 compared to a national per capita of $7,281.00 and an Idaho per capita of $4,896.00. On the Nez Perce Reservation there were 630 adults (16 and over) who were listed below the poverty line. This estimate is low as the number of children below the poverty line was not compiled. (Source: Idaho Department of Commerce and Development, BIA Labor Force Report, 1987).

Even today there is a separation between descendents of the Treaty and Non-treaty Indians living at Lapwai. Much of the discussion heard in places such as Pi-Nee-Waus (the community center), the grocery store, or the sweatlodge still pertain to events which occurred over one hundred years ago. Those "darn treaty Indians did us out of some right," or "We were there to fight for our rights and the non-treaty Indians never showed up." One woman was reported to be very mixed up because she had both treaty and non-treaty family members. One day she might be regarded as
"treaty" and the next "non-treaty". No matter with which side ancestors had been aligned, everyone agreed that since part of the treaty has been enforced then all of it should be. Therefore, they believed that "as long as the grass grows green, and the rivers run to the sea, as long as the sun rises in the East and sets in the West" the people should be allowed to hunt and fish in the places their fathers and grandfathers used.

The people make their living by working on cattle or wheat ranches, at the lumber mill in Lewiston, working for the Tribal offices, gas stations, and so forth. Families live in single family dwellings for the most part. There are some extended family units in town. There are two major Pow-wows held in town each year. There is also a cultural day event during the summer. There are four churches in town --- Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentacostal and Catholic.

The **Pi-Nee-Waus** building is the community center, houses the tribal offices and provides a gymnasium for basketball games. There is a new elementary school in town because the old one burned two years ago. The high school has a very good athletic program and the basketball team has taken the state championship three years in a row. The town of Lapwai has a population of 400 people. Like many towns, most residents live outside the city limits. There is one grocery store in town and two gas stations. The county
library has its headquarters across the street from the Post Office.

When I asked the women consultants how many sweatlodges were in the area, they immediately named the two in which I participated, the community sweatlodge and the Spalding sweatlodge, as well as a Sun Dance sweatlodge, and seven others in the outlying areas. Consultants estimated of 10-15 sweatlodges near Kamiah, in the other section of the reservation. The two sweatlodges that I visited were in use by extended family members numbering from ten to twenty people, both men and women. If the other sweatlodges have as many participants, then each of the 2000 Nez Perce on or near the reservation have easy access to a sweatlodge.

The community sweatlodge has been boycotted by the elders due to the group of young men who meet there regularly to smoke marijuana and drink beer. The elders do not approve of these actions in conjunction with the sweatlodge.

The scope of this thesis is limited to ethnographic description and did not include a community survey to document community-wide participation in sweatlodges.
On my first trip to Lapwai I arranged to meet with my friend Beth. We discussed briefly what I wished to accomplish. She offered to find women with whom I could interact. This weekend was an especially busy time. It was the occasion of the Four-Nations Pow-wow to be held at the Pi-Nee-Waus building (the community center). Many of the women she wished to introduce to me were actively engaged in the Pow-wow. We took a chance that someone would be available to talk with us.

When we arrived at the Pi-Nee-Waus about 11:00 A.M we found a lady sitting alone in the cafe. Beth went to her and introduced herself. She explained that I was there to do research on the sweatlodge as used by women. The woman introduced herself as Ellen. Then she and Beth spent some time determining their kinship ties. They were related to each other through the Looking Glass side of the family although Ellen was living at Yakima and Beth at Lapwai. They had never met before. After the kinship tie had been established Ellen was very willing to talk with us. I learned that Ellen was one of the elder women being honored at this Pow-wow.

Ellen told about sweating to cleanse when she was a girl. Girls would spend five days and nights in the
"monthly tipi" (menstrual tipi) and then sweat to cleanse before returning to the longhouse. She also said that the women of her tribe sweated after childbirth. Sweating was done with certain medicines, one "drug" Ellen mentioned, but not by name, was like a love potion. Used in the water, it was supposed to help you catch and keep your man. The Colville reservation was supposed to have the right herbs to make this medicine. Since Ellen had never used it she couldn't say if it really worked or not.

Both women and men would sweat before men went to hunt. Men had to be clean so that the deer and other animals wouldn't smell them. The skin of the pine was added to the water to be dripped on the stones. This was done five times. When the men went to the forest to hunt, all the animals would smell was the pines. The women had to be clean also, for the husband to have luck at hunting.

Ellen claimed that sweatbath brought her luck in gambling games. She played the sticks, a game similar to craps except that several sticks are thrown on the ground rather than dice. The pattern formed by the sticks has a value or meaning somewhat like that of dice. She said that once she had a whole blanket full of goods and money which she was wagering. Because there were some "ugly Indians" there "looking evil" at her, she lost all the money and goods. She decided that she had to do something to change
her luck. This something was to go take a sweatbath. Afterward, even though the "ugly Indians" were still there, she won all her money back and more besides. She said that she always won if she went to the sweatlodge regularly. After this incident, Ellen reports, she made a point of always attending a sweatlodge before gambling or participating in any social event.

The interview with Ellen was cut short at 12:30 because it was time for a memorial luncheon to begin. This was the first time since the death of a woman a year ago that her family was participating in a community function. The family was putting on a memorial lunch followed by a giveaway. This event took most of the afternoon with a short break for people to dress for the Grand Entry of the Pow-wow that evening. At the Pow-wow there were 14 drum groups and 500 dancers. The Pow-wow lasted three days and effectively ended interviews for the weekend.

On my second trip to Lapwai Beth met me and announced that she had arranged for me to join several women at a private sweatlodge between Spalding and Lapwai. We loaded wood from her woodpile into her car trunk, as well as mine, and drove to the sweatlodge. The other women were not at home but we began to make preparations. (See Figure 9)
Figure 9. Entrance to sweatlodge showing burlap sacks and rock pit inside.
Beth instructed me to open the sweatlodge and remove the burlap bags on the floor (Figure 10). These were placed in the tub of water nearby for rinsing (Figure 11). She began laying the framework for the fire with which to heat the rocks. Kindling was laid between two concrete slabs and then the firewood was laid across the top forming a platform. The next layer of wood was laid down across the first layer. The layers were oriented east-west and north-south. When a sturdy platform of wood had been constructed Beth asked me to remove the rocks from the pit where they were stored inside to the left of the entrance.

The rocks were placed upon the platform and more wood was stacked around them. Then Beth lit the kindling. When the fire was going well (Figure 12) we turned our attention to straightening the area. Everything had to be picked up from the ground. The water barrel (Figure 13 and 14) at the end of the fire pit had to be filled with water to provide warm water for pouring on the rocks when they were hot. The burlap bags had to be rinsed and hung to dry (Figure 15 and 16). All debris left by the previous users had to be swept and picked up.

By the time the fire was going and the bags were rinsed, the other women arrived. When they came down from the house, Fiona said that Vicki had asked her who was "making the sweat." They did not recognize my car, and Beth's car
Figure 10. Inside view of Sweatlodge and rock pit.
Figure 11. Tub full of water for rinsing.
Figure 12. Fire heating rocks for Sweatlodge.
Figure 13. Firepit and water barrel.
Figure 14. Firepit, Water barrel and rocks for heating.
Figure 15. Burlap bags hung to dry.
Figure 16. Burlap bags being rinsed in tub.
was gone. Fiona reported that she told Vicki "We were sure wishing to sweat too." She had forgotten that Beth and I were coming.

By this time there were six of us gathered in the enclosure waiting for the rocks to become red hot. Fiona's daughter-in-law had joined us along with a friend, another So-ya-poo or white woman, Tina. Tina was married to Vicki's first husband and was therefore counted as a relative by marriage. This was her first time to attend a sweat and she was a little nervous. We convinced her that since it was my first sweat also, I needed company.

A laugh-filled discussion was going on as we waited for the rocks to heat up. One conversation touched on the herbs that were used in the sweatlodge. One herb was referred to as a "love-drug" to entice a man to your side. This herb was to be placed in the water to be poured over the hot rocks. As Ellen had stated last week, the place to get this "drug" was the Colville reservation. Then one of the women said that when you came out of the sweatlodge, you must douse yourself with cold water from the tub (Figure 17). When the cold water hits, you are not to make any noise. When asked the reason for this the women replied that if you can take the cold water, then when someone steals your man you will not cry and carry on. "If you carry on," Beth said, "You are sort of what they call them, cus-cus, you have a little heart, you can't take nothing." I replied,
Figure 17. Tub with pans ready for rinsing.
"OK, you are right there." All the women laughed.

Beth remarked, "I get a kick out of Carol. She is studying anthropology at Corvallis." She went on to remind them that they knew my parents. My father had been the Bookmobile Librarian for four counties in north Idaho. My mother was a singer who was often invited to sing for various functions on the reservation. Mother and Beth were considered "sisters". I had spent my summers on the Bookmobile with my father visiting the people on the reservation. I had also been active in Girl Scout activities involving Nez Perce girls both at Kamiah and Lapwai.

As in the meeting with Ellen, Beth traced my relationship to her and to the women with whom we were conversing. All of the women in this group were related in some manner. Fiona and Vicki were close cousins; Beth was a more distant cousin; and as mentioned earlier, Tina was married to Vicki's first husband. Since Beth thought of me as her "niece", I was also related.

The conversation went on in three or four different directions with all the women participating consistently throughout. There was much good humor. Then Beth spoke several phrases to Fiona and Vicki in Nez Perce. They broke out laughing. Fiona said, "Oh, yeah. No clothes!!" Laura
replied that this was not like the spa. She continued,

"I went to the spa one time. I was ready to . . . (strip down) you know. And everybody wore their swimming suit and the lights were on and I said, 'Oh, this is not the right place'."

Fiona remarked that there was no one to scratch your back at the spa and Laura continued her story.

"I know. Lights on, and a little artificial girl, and I said, 'You throw water on that?' and the lights are on. And you are trying to do just like the sweathouse here, you are trying to scratch and itch. Gee! You can't get nothing clean that you want vitally to get clean. To heck with your legs and arms. I said that was crazy. I couldn't get over that sweat. Sitting there with the lights on trying to shut your eyes."

By 5:00 P.M. the stones were red hot and ready to be placed in the lodge. As the women were checking the temperature of the rocks, they discovered a willow switch. They commented about people who used a switch in the lodge:

Fiona: That's the way the Montanas sweat. What is it a branch of . . . ?
Beth: It looks like willow.
Fiona: Willow, yeah. While you are in there. .
Carol: Do they sprinkle water with it?
Fiona: No they go like this. (She hit her arm to demonstrate.)
Carol: Ah, OK.
Fiona: And you put it on your back. I don't know whatever whipping does.
Carol: Sort of stimulates the skin I guess.
Fiona: You see we don't do that. Nez Perces don't do that.
Beth: Was there a Crow here?
Fiona: Yeah, from Montana.
Laura: We snuck a Crow in here. Ah, those tribes. We are going to get this one right here.
As we were beginning to put the rocks into the lodge a man arrived. He had come to participate. When he discovered that women were there he hurried home and sent his wife to join us. Since there were seven of us and the lodge only held four comfortably, we rotated in and out.

During the discussion before entering the sweatlodge I found out that, although the men back into the sweatlodge, the women enter in the normal face-forward manner (Figure 18). Laura told about having sweated with her husband. She commented that "Men’s is different, I am not kidding. It is. Because when I sweat with my husband, like, he always goes in backwards. Yeah, butt in."

I commented that in an interview with a gentleman from Umatilla, he was telling me that you never turn your back on the light, so you back in. But he added that he had no idea what the women do. Laura’s comment was, "We don’t butt in." There was laughter from all the women. "We face forward."

Laura commented that when she sweated with her husband he asked her why she went in that way. She replied:

Laura: We don’t butt in. But he does do it different. He will put the water on, and he will say, "Thank you Old Man," and one for the Old Man, and he does that. He does that, and then you don’t go out until it stops sizzling. You are going to sweat today and find out. When it dies down. Then he will say, "One more for the Old Man, then we will go out," and I look at him and say, "There ain’t
Figure 18. Entrance to Sweatlodge.
no Old Man in here." LAUGHTER. But he does that. Then it dies down and we will go out. But men are different. With the women I don't know, everytime I have come it has been fun. Well, it is fun that way too but I mean they sweat a long time, and they sweat hotter.

Carol:
The gentleman I interviewed told me three or four hours total. You come out about four times. And it is a total of four hours that they are in there between in and out, and in and out.

Laura:
They do, they go a long time, and they go hot, and nobody moves. Even when my son goes. They come back tired, but he says they stay in there and they don't go out. When everybody is ready to go then they all go out. And they go a round for each of them. "This is for you." And, Oh my Lord!. When I go with them, why I am always down there ducking on the floor.

Carol:
A little cool air there.

Laura:
Yeah, he does go back in. I don't know why, I have always wondered about that. He just does it cause that's what he was taught. He always does it that way. But when I went the other way he got mad at me. "You can't go like that."

In spite of the cold weather the air felt good against the body when emerging from the lodge. I managed not to squeal when I poured the cold water over me. We rotated four times before calling it quits for the weekend. I made arrangements to return in two weeks to join them again. The next time I would bring the wood.
BUILDING A SWEATLODGE

Each time I was introduced to someone who was willing to aid in my study I explained that I was doing research for my Master's Degree and that the topic was the sweatlodge and its use by women in particular. When I met Tom, he remarked that there was no such thing as a women's sweatlodge.

A sweatlodge is a sweatlodge and the men folks use it first and the women folks use it after the men folks are done. Of course, this varies in different parts of the country. In Montana, the men and the women sweat together. They clothe themselves with a towel, swimming suit or whatever. But I imagine, in years back, they probably sweat the same way that you did up here, without any clothes on at all.

When asked the significance of the sweatlodge Tom replied that the Nez Perce people believe that the earth is the Mother.

"We eat from it like a baby from the time that we are a baby till the time that we die. We eat what our Mother Earth provides us. It nourishes the animals that we eat. And the sweathouse is like a pregnant woman. Our Mother is pregnant and we are inside, and we are where it is warm and everything and sometime, we even get in the "fetal position", and you lose all your cares and become innocent like a baby in there. The only thing that you think of is how the sweat is cleansing the body and your spirit."

Tom remarked that sweathouses are built differently by various tribes. The Siletz for instance, an amalgamated
tribe unlike the Nez Perce and Sioux, build a square sweathouse made of cedar as well as the more common circular houses. The round ones represent the "circle of life," there being no beginning or end. The rocks represent the earth, as they are old; hence they are called "Old Man". The rocks have been around since the beginning of the earth.

I asked Tom if there was any special ceremony in connection with building a sweatlodge. The response was "no." The only requirement is that one must maintain calm thoughts, and not be angry or upset while building the structure. The builders also must prevent bad feelings from surfacing while using the sweatlodge. At times builders will place the saplings in a clockwise pattern to signify the way the sun travels, but this ritual is not essential. Several rules are enforced when building a sweatlodge for a group.

Carol: So, if a group decided they wanted to build a sweatlodge and participate in sweating, they would not necessarily have to have a special person come in and dedicate the sweat, or anything like that before they could use it. Is that it?

Tom: You can.

Carol: But it is not absolutely required.

Tom: No, other than the people that are going to use it understanding that there couldn’t be any drinking there. That they would understand that they couldn’t abuse it in any way. Some people, when they take the rocks out to reheat them, they don’t throw them because its like they are
handling an old, old man. If you throw those rocks out after they have been used for a while, they’ll break up. Just like anything old, they’ll break up in pieces. The people, when they build a sweathouse, they have to be really careful for attitude in making the sweathouse. The door is always facing to the east. And, like I say, do not have any bad thoughts or thinking or anything like that when they are making the sweathouse, because they know the end result will be a place of worship.

My discussion with Sam revealed that there had been a ceremony of dedication for the sweatlodge custom which had been lost in the early 1900’s. Sam’s generation was sent to boarding schools at a young age. They were too young to have paid much attention to the ceremonies of their elders, and much emphasis was placed on the white man’s way of doing things. He wishes now that he had access to a tape recorder when he was young so that he could have recorded his elders and still have a record of the songs and ceremonies which are now lost.

The next question I asked Tom pertained to the location for building a sweatlodge.

Carol: Traditionally, was there a specific location away from the village or something where the sweat had to be placed, or was it just near a stream?

Tom: Of course, you wouldn’t, nowadays, think about building a sweathouse down the main street of town. Being next to natural water, like that, well, it doesn’t have to be. You can connect hoses to the
sweathouse, if need be, but, in an area where there is some privacy and . . . That's why there are high boards surrounding the sweathouse. For privacy. I don't think that any men wouldn't go up there to try to look at the women and I know that the women wouldn't go up there to try to look at the men. They would simply know that the men are sweating and the men would know that the women are sweating and they would stay away. So, it's just a mutual respect and common sense. The sweathouse, it can be built anywhere, really. But, you have to realize the importance of keeping it blocked off from everybody's view.

The women said that the lodge was constructed of chokecherry saplings having been stripped, heated and bent. The bottom of the lodge was lined with pine boughs. Burlap sacks were laid over the pine boughs, and pieces of rug or carpet provided a cover of protection from the rough burlap. The chokecherry saplings were covered with canvas, blankets, drapes, whatever was available. (Figures 19 and 20)

The kind of wood used to make the lodge varies. A builder may choose chokecherry, red fir, thorn bush or willow. These wood types are supple and easily bent into shape. Reeds may be used by heating them gently over a fire and then bending them into the desired shape. The ends of the saplings are then stuck into the ground to prevent them from flying up into the air. The height of the sweatlodge is about four feet. The participants should be able to sit straight without having to bend their backs.
Figure 19. Sweatlodge and shelter.
Figure 20. Sweatlodge and enclosure.
When asked why some sweatlodges maintain even heat all over and others do not, Tom replied that the sweatlodges that maintain even heat have a type of clay dirt piled up around the back side of the sweatlodge to provide insulation from drafts. In some sweatlodges, people place tin around the rock pit, but that is dangerous since fumes are formed from the action of the heated rocks and tin. The best lodges use flat rocks to line the pit (see Figures 21 and 22). This allows heat to be generated from the hot rocks without dangerous fumes rising.

I asked Tom about the rocks used in the firepit. Tom replied:

Tom: The rocks, themselves, are a special kind of rock. You have to go up into the high country to get these rocks because, just a normal river rock would probably break from the heat and explode, like a hand grenade.

Carol: Somebody said something about they had to be rocks that had never been exposed to water. Is that . . .

Tom: That’s not true, because the earth was once covered with water. Most of the time, the rocks are uh . . . You’ll see big piles of them that the farmers pick up after they till their land. You pick out the round ones. Some of them have little pock marks on them, little holes, and those are good for sweat rocks. If they are too blue in color, those are bad because they will explode in the heat, also. So, there is a certain type of rock that you have to get.
Figure 21. Flat rocks or rock pit inside Sweatlodge.
Figure 22. Rock pit within Sweatlodge.
Volcanic rocks like those desired for the sweatlodges are also used in earth ovens by cultures of the Pacific.

I asked the women if there were any special order in which the rocks were placed inside; the answer was no. Only red hot rocks go into the sweatlodge pit. I was also told that I had to be very careful to put no wood or ash into the pit. The pit was lined with flat rocks both on the bottom and on the sides. There was a large flat rock placed on the top of the hot rocks. This was to prevent bursting rocks from hitting someone inside the lodge.
SWEATLODGE HERBS & TABOOS

Herbs were mentioned by my consultants as often being used in sweatlodge sessions. Each herb has a different use. One is used for cleansing the lungs, as a decongestant. This same herb may also be rubbed on sore muscles and it will act like a deep heat rub. Some of the elders used to crush this medicine up and mix it with their tobacco for smoking. It was also mixed with juices and drunk as an emetic to clean the inner system.

The root of the kouse plant is added to the water to provide a clean natural smell. This herb rids the body of human odor. Traditionally it was used by men before going hunting so that they could approach an animal without being detected. From the time they emerged from the sweatlodge until the hunt was over the men refrained from contact with their wives. Beth told of her father’s precautions before hunting.

Beth: He didn’t believe in handling any child because they smelled like pee.
Carol: Frequently they do.
Beth: "I want to be clean, so don’t hand me any kid. I am going out hunting. Because the deer can smell humanness."
Carol: Did they sweat after the last meal?
Laura: Yes, they would sweat like now in the evening. So those things he hangs onto (speaking of her husband). I never thought about them being customs, or whatever, but they are.
I asked Laura to tell us more about the use of herbs in the sweathouse. "What herbs do the Nez Perce use?" She replied:

"We were using kouse-kouse. That's the only herb that we use. That is for the smell, for purification, for smell to get rid of the human smell when you go hunting or you are going to participate in some kind of ceremony. The kouse-kouse is like Indian perfume. It is medicine. Really. Some people boil it, a little bit of it, in water and if you drink it, like if you take a little bit of it and put it in your teeth and suck on it when you have a sore throat and you cough, you won't hack anymore. But, for cleanliness sake, it is the only thing that the Nez Perce practice or use in the sweathouse."

I asked Laura about taking sweatbaths and any taboos which might pertain to participation at the present time. For instance, were women permitted to take sweatbaths during their menstrual cycle? Laura replied that women used to not "sweat" during the "moon" (menstruation) because of the inconvenience. However, she knew of no real taboo against such participation at the present time. It was left up to the individual woman whether or not she wished to participate. In the ceremonial sweatbath, on the other hand, there is a strong taboo. Women do not go near the fire, the lodge or any paraphernalia, including the drums, during the "moon".
Laura’s father was from Northern Mexico. When Laura was told that there were sweatbaths in Mexico that required both sexes to participate, she replied that she didn’t know that they had sweatbaths in Mexico. As stated earlier, according to the information which I have been able to gather on the geographical distribution of sweatlodges, there appears to be a large area of Northern Mexico where no sweatlodges are found.
The Nez Perce ceremonial sweatbath is very similar to that of the Sioux (see the description earlier); it is filled with well-established rituals and a specific time and place for every action. The purpose of the ceremonial sweatbath is similar to attending a church, temple or synagogue service for the participants. An atmosphere of worship and communication with the spirit prevails. Nez Perce men, I was told by Sam, have specific songs and chants. However, any song can become a sweatlodge song by being introduced and used at the sweatlodge.

The women on the other hand, have a much more casual attitude. There is much laughter and joking among them; there is no specified number of times to enter the lodge; and there is no prescribed amount of water that must be poured over the rocks. Each participant makes the decision regarding how long to remain in the sweatlodge.

We asked Laura to describe the traditional Nez Perce sweatbath. She replied,

"It is convenient, and there is no ceremonial about it. It is for cleanliness. The sweathouse that we have got is for cleanliness, and that is the way we practice it. Other people can come in and practice what they want. Sometimes they do. We just ask them to linger around because we don't practice it (the other ceremonies). We don't believe in it (the Sweatlodge Religion). That, and no drinking. But sometimes we practice that (drinking)."
When I asked if they had regular cycles with singing and chanting similar to the Sioux, her reply was that people came and went when they pleased. Some people could not stand the heat very long. I found no evidence that Nez Perce women practice what they referred to as the Sweatlodge Religion. They claimed that there was a combined group of men and women on the reservation who practiced the Sweatlodge Religion. However, they could not, or would not, tell me anything about it. Nor did they appear willing to introduce me to anyone who did practice the Sweatlodge Religion.

The topic of leadership in the sweatbath was discussed with Tom. He commented that there was no such thing as "leading a sweat" for Indians of the Northwest. Tom stated that "leading a sweat" was a custom imported from the Plains area where the ceremonial sweat is used. He added, "You only hear about leading a sweat from 'the street people'" (outsiders who want to appear knowledgeable about the subject). Tom also remarked that the reason for the sweatlodge being covered by a building is to protect it from the weather since the covering of modern blankets and carpet disintegrates faster than traditionally used hides and dirt. The building also helps to keep the area clean.
"That's one thing that you have to do when you get your sweathouse is to keep it clean. They say that if you'll keep "the Old Man" clean, why, then he'll also help you in whatever your needs are. That's why it's nice and clean up there."
USES OF THE SWEATLODGE

My women consultants had referred me to Sam for background information on the sweatlodge. When I asked him about origin legends, he replied that there was very little reference made to the sweatlodge in Nez Perce legends. "The sweatlodge is more or less looked upon as a sacred activity." He emphasized that it is an activity which brings peace of mind and the ability to carry on with daily activities. The sweatlodge is considered by some to be a place of worship. Though not exactly like a church, it is still a place of quiet meditation. Tom qualified Sam's statement saying that most people nowadays go just to cleanse their bodies.

Sam repeated that the sweatbath was used as an important aid in hunting. Since they did not have guns before white men came they had to mask human odor to get close enough to the game to use a bow and arrow. The men cleansed their bodies for this purpose. The skin of the pine was added to the water to be dripped on the stones. This was done five times. When the men went to the forest to hunt the animals would smell only the pines. The heat and cold water plunges were also part of an education for hunters which taught patience, cleanliness, and discipline.
An old man would sit there when we came out of the sweatlodge, steam coming out. It would be cold and all the old man had to say in our language was "get in" so I had to get up. Us boys had to get up and get into that hole in the ice and wash off the sweat. Whether it was cold or not we had to do it. This was part of our training, a kind of a discipline course I guess.

The sweatlodge was an important part of his life. When he went to boarding school he had an extremely hard time becoming accustomed to using the shower and soap. He felt as if he were just piling more "gunk" on his body and not getting clean.

I just couldn't feel clean. I don't know how many months it took me to become accustomed to using soap. I kind of had the feeling that the soap was, all it was doing was caking up my skin and nothing else. It really bothered me, I just couldn't get accustomed to getting away from the sweatlodge. With the sweatlodge your pores open up and it, it brought out a lot of the inner poisons that you may have had in your body.

Glenna, one of my women consultants, commented that she often told her own girls that, "there was no need to pay $300 to learn to meditate from a guru. All you have to do is go to the sweat. You can learn all about meditating there for free." Glenna and Tom started their children sweating when they are two or three years of age.

Ellen told about taking sweatbaths to cleanse her body when she was a girl. Girls would spend five days and nights
in the "monthly tipi" (menstrual tipi) and then take a sweatbath to cleanse themselves before returning to the longhouse. Ellen also said that the women of her tribe "sweated after childbirth." Sweating was done with certain medicines.

Women also took sweatbaths when men went to hunt. Men had to be clean so the deer and other animals wouldn't smell them. The women had to be clean also, for the husband to have luck at hunting.

Beth told of a white man who came to "sweat" with her father one day when she was young. Following the experience he said "I always thought I was clean. The Indian must be cleaner because when I was in the sweat the dirt just rolled off of me."

The main reason for a sweatbath as stated by my women consultants was that it cleansed the entire system. The dirt just rolled off of the body. The amount of heat had to be carefully regulated. If the sweatlodge became too hot, it made skin turn into leather and burned the dirt in.

Fiona: That's what I hear about a lot of Indian people because they sweat a lot you know. It helps your skin. You don't get as much blackheads.
Laura: And keep it clean.
Fiona: It makes us look younger.
Carol: Many So-ya-poos (white people) have no way of gaging ages for Native Americans.
Laura: Yeah, it does, it makes you look younger. We don't get as many wrinkles.
The sweatlodge is used for outward cleanliness; it also promotes patience, and controlled breathing. The teaching of controlled breathing helps in childbirth. A person who hyperventilates in the sweatlodge will become dizzy. According to Glenna, the objective is to "keep cool and just sit there. Go slow."

During my discussion with Glenna, she mentioned that she advocates the sweatlodge for many reasons. Once for example, she recommended the sweatlodge to her sister-in-law who was having problems with her marriage. "If you communicate with him, if you want to talk with him, why don't you go sweat with him?" Glenna continued, "My husband and I did that when we were first married and found it did quite a little, because there were step-children to adjust to. I thought that was a way to bind us together."

In talking about divorced couples her statement was,

"Before you go anywhere, before you do anything, sweat before you make up your mind what you are going to do. Go sweating every chance you get, because, you know there is so much hostility within them towards their husbands, towards their boy friends."

The sweatlodge was recommended for young women who needed to slow down, relax and really think about what was going on in their lives.
When I asked how long a sweatlodge could be used before being rebuilt the answer was that it varied. Following the death of a person who participated in building the sweatlodge, the structure is torn down and rebuilt with new saplings. This action serves to prevent the other users from looking at the lodge and having painful memories of the departed person. A new lodge is built so that the memories will be new. In other cases the wood may become brittle and break due to the continuous heat inside. When the breaks can no longer be repaired, the poles must be torn down and a new lodge built. The sticks that form the frame are burned, but the remainder of the items, blankets, carpets, etc. may be used again. This re-use of materials among the Nez Perce differs from the custom of the Sioux who move the location of the sweatlodge and use all new materials for construction.

A person who is ready to go out of the sweatlodge utters a sound, "Owhooooo", before being allowed to exit. The sound is difficult to translate into English, but it carries a connotation of reverence for nature. When women are in the woods gathering berries they make the same sound. Often the women become separated from the group and need to be able to find each other without disturbing the animals. This utterance carries for long distances and yet is similar enough to natural forest sounds that it doesn't scare the animals and birds.
DIVISION BY SEXES

Men and women among the Nez Perce do not sweat in mixed company unless it is a husband and wife. This restriction is to enable them to sweat in the traditional manner wearing no clothes to hamper the cleansing process. The logic is simple -- one does not wear clothes in the shower so why wear clothes in the sweatlodge?

Glenna told about an occasion when her family had been visiting in Montana. They had been invited to join in a sweatbath. A problem arose when it became apparent that the Montana group was bathing in mixed company. Glenna's daughters were in the midst of stripping off their garments on the way to the lodge when they noticed the others dressed in swimsuits. The Montana group began teasing Glenna's daughters, "Must be Nez Perces."

This point was made again when I was talking to Sam. The Nez Perce take sweatbaths in same sex groups while among Montana Indians the groups may include both sexes. Sam felt that the Nez Perce custom was probably related to the use of the menstrual lodge. Girls spent the whole week of their cycle in the menstrual lodge and then went into the sweatlodge before rejoining community activities.
Laura's husband told her, "You are supposed to go in "Old Man" (the sweatlodge) butt first. We have to go in the "Old Man" like that." She replied that they would probably hit each other by "butting in" together. Laura also reported that women use shampoo and soap after a sweatbath, but men do not shampoo and soap off; they just dress and go home. The feeling among the women appears to be: why go home and have to undress again to shower? The smell of shampoo or soap would not affect women's activities. For men, however, the smell of soap or shampoo would negate the purpose of removing human smell to prepare for hunting. This custom has carried over to the present even though hunting with bows and arrows is no longer an important subsistence activity.

Other differences between men and women appear to be in the duration and intensity of the heat in the sweatlodge. The men sit for longer periods at a time and have a "faster sweat". They throw lots of water on the rocks at once to generate heat quickly. Women build the heat more gradually, slowly pouring water over the rocks without dumping it and allowing a heavy cloud of steam to rise.
CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE SWEATLODGE

A question that has been asked by scholars is, "How old is the sweatlodge?" "Can we find it in the archaeological record?" I put the same question to my Nez Perce consultants.

Tom's answer was, "They have had sweathouses before they even recorded things about these people, the Nez Perce. It's been around for thousands of years."

Carol: I'm sure it has. A professor that I know said that he discovered one in an archaeological site that was connected with a village dated at two thousand years. However, there is a professor at the University of Idaho who would not agree with that. He says that there has been no evidence of sweatlodges found in the archaeological record.

Tom: There certainly has. Also, it's strange, the people down at Siletz had the very same thing, and the very same ideas about the sweathouse, as did people all over the country. Yet, they didn't know that each other was doing it. Certainly the people in Siletz didn't go clear down into New Mexico to see how a sweathouse was built. They just knew what they were wanting to do and they came to that end, and it's amazing how... The doors of all of the teepees are always facing to the east. The sweathouses, whenever possible, the doors are facing to the east, as was that one up there that you used.

I discovered a relationship between the style of Nez Perce and Mexican sweatlodges in this discussion when Tom mentioned that the "Old People" (early Indians) used to have a little groove in the ground from the firepit to the
sweathouse along which they would take a pronged stick and roll the rocks into the sweatlodge. This feature is slightly reminiscent of the trench built up to and through the entrance of the sweatlodge in Mexico. The groove also may have been used by the Nez Perce as a traditional method of carrying hot stones from the fire to the lodges. Now the groove has been replaced by pitchforks as a method of carrying rocks (Figures 23 and 24).

In addition to preparation for hunting or warfare the sweatlodge was used for the Vision Quest in which a person receives a guiding spirit and a name. Tom stated that he did not think that the sweatbath would ever disappear. Indian people might lose their hunting rights and fishing rights, and all their treaty rights, but this was one part of the traditional life that no one could ever take away. "It has always been and it always will be."

Carol: Why do you feel the sweatlodge has existed, in spite of everything, when so many of the other traditions have been lost.

Tom: It started out, in my lifetime, very young. The Indian people can move away from their homeland and when they come back, they invariably go back to the sweathouse. We moved away, for a while, and was in Salem, right in the city and no place to build a sweathouse, and we tried all of the other sweathouses (in the Salem area where they lived). But, they didn't have the same effect that we get from the ones over here.
Figure 23. Pitchforks to carry rocks.
Figure 24. Entrance to enclosure and pitchforks.
Carol: What was different about the sweatlodges in Salem?

Tom: They were built differently, and we felt, at least I did, I don’t know what about my wife—I think she did, too, feel differently about sweating at the same time that the men folks do. And, the way that the sweathouse was built, the way uh ... what they put on the floor was nothing more that pieces of rug, whereas, in our sweathouse they put straw down, we put fir boughs down, and ... to give it a nice clean smell.

I asked Sam why the sweatlodge continued when so many of the traditions otherwise were lost. His reply was that subconsciously his people still value the sweatlodge. They still value many of the ongoing cultural activities. He said that they still feel obligated to publicly proclaim their heritage and pride in their culture.

Participation in the sweatlodge was one way of maintaining that culture. He was, however, critical about the abuse of the sweatlodge by some of the younger people. They are using it to cure hang-overs. They do not understand that they cannot drink and sweat out the poison.

I am very much disappointed in some of the sweatlodges with the way they are being abused. I know in some places there are young people that will come there drinking alcohol and they will come there with their, you know, some kind of intoxicants intending to sweat. And, that’s no good. They go in there half shot, and they really don’t care, you know, they just really don’t recognize the value of it. They just think that the more they drink the more of that alcohol poison
they are going to sweat out. So, that’s probably the reason for it. They are using it to cure hangovers and help cure hangovers. But really the sweathouse really doesn’t cure hangovers.

When asked if the AA program on the reservation made use of the sweatlodge he replied that he was not sure how much use was made of it. Sam himself once had a problem with alcohol. When he attended AA he did not feel that he had an adequate support group. He did not make progress until he turned to the sweatlodge and traditional ceremonies to guide him through the problem.

The sweatlodge is an important integrating feature of community life. Participating in a sweatlodge is a tie to the traditions of the elders and a means of expressing a young person’s connection to those elders. The sweatlodge creates community cohesiveness.

There are young people that are crying out for something and they would like to get attached to whatever that is. I believe it is their identity, to be identified directly with their culture. I think that’s what it is. You see young people wearing long hair but they can’t speak their language. They want to identify themselves as being part of the tribe and they think that perhaps the only way to do it is to have braids or to take part in cultural activities which is good. Which is good, and if they want to do that then my encouragement is that they should do it right. Not like I stated earlier, not try to make a "Shake and bake" practitioner out of it, but believe in it and do it right. That’s the way it should be done. If they want to maintain and protect the knowledge of that culture that’s the way that it has going to
have to be done. There is people now that all of a sudden have switched to the Indian, or Native ways, where it was not too long ago I used to see them go into the Presbyterian Church, or to the Catholic Church and you couldn't talk sense to them about the native culture.
The sweatlodge to which I was introduced for a return visit to Lapwai was located in a smaller enclosure than the one at Fiona’s house. The lodge itself, however, was a little larger. Five people could be seated comfortably in a cross-legged position. The major difference in the sweatbath procedure was that the heat was very slow and steady as Glenna poured the water sparingly over the rocks until the entire lodge was warm. At Fiona’s lodge my feet remained cold no matter how hot the lodge.

The women participants were Glenna’s sisters and cousins between 30 and 40 years of age. At Fiona’s sweatlodge the only woman this age was Laura. The other women were aunts and cousins, but they were older. Three women, two of whom were Glenna’s sisters and a third who was the sister-in-law of one of the first two, joined us after we had sat in the lodge for one cycle. The talking was general, about various events and people known to all of the women.

The water barrel at the firepit was small (Figure 25). Therefore, the water was hotter than in the big barrel at Fiona’s. The hot water was mixed with cold water from a spring which was caught in a tub. This mixture provided a comfortable temperature for rinsing. The cold water in
Figure 25. Small water barrel and fire pit.
the tub was used for the final rinse seemed to tighten pores in the skin (Figure 26).
Figure 26. Burlap bags being rinsed in tub of clear spring water.
CONCLUSION

The sweatlodge is a tradition which enables participants to become an integrated part of the community. For the Nez Perce its main function, at the present time, is for cleanliness of spirit and body. In the past, the sweatlodge was a place of worship where the individual could commune with Mother Earth, and the Creator (see Figures 27 and 28).

The custom of using the sweatlodge still is deeply ingrained in all aspects of native life from the preparation for hunting, to education of the young. Since all Indian tribes in the continental United States as well as Canada, Alaska, and many portions of Mesoamerica have this tradition by whichever form, it is likely that the sweatlodge has been in use for many thousands of years. The sweatlodge is probably one of the oldest traditions to have been developed by Native American cultures. The gap in information concerning women's usage of the sweatlodge has been partially filled by this research.

The cleanliness of the sweatbath is stressed. The individual must possess patience to go through the entire ritual of heating the rocks, cleaning the sweatlodge area, rinsing the articles of carpet, sacks, rugs, and then spending anywhere from one to four hours alternately sweating and cooling.
Figure 27. Poem in honor of Sweatlodge by poet Phil George, Nez Perce.
Figure 28. Brief statement of function of Sweatlodge.

From Cultural Center at Spalding, Idaho
The Nez Perce emphasize men and women using the sweatlodge separately. Each person with whom I talked made a point of mentioning that the Montana Indians take sweatbaths together while remaining clothed. The Nez Perce on the other hand keep the sexes apart so that they can "sweat" in what they consider the "proper manner." In their view this enables them to get really clean. Each person also mentioned the need for maintaining a calm attitude and allowing tensions to dissipate. Participants must always maintain the proper mental attitude.

This observation would seem to confirm that the sweatlodge is essentially a sacred place in spite of the individual denials to that effect. The sacredness for women is inherent in the fact that attitude will affect the outcome. Only by having a good attitude will benefit be realized. The men, on the other hand, use prayers and chants in their sweatlodge ceremony.

The sweatlodge is a means of maintaining goodwill and solidarity in the community among a group of kin. In addition it helps to keep good relations on an intervillage level. When a visitor arrives, the first order of the day is to seek out the sweatlodge. Kinship ties define groups that use the same sweatlodge. Therefore the sweatlodge is the focus for enduring relationships. There is no feeling
of strangeness in the sweatlodge. Even visitors are totally welcomed and find their initial acceptance in this setting.

The sweatlodge ceremony is performed at any time of year, in all kinds of weather, and for various reasons which may or may not deal with life crises such as the breakup of a marriage.

Different groups of Nez Perce women use the sweatlodge in different ways. Some use it daily, like Glenna and her sisters and cousins. Others, like Fiona and her daughter and cousins, use it infrequently. In spite of these differences the sweatlodge symbolizes Nez Perce traditions. By participating in the sweatlodge, no matter how infrequently, the traditions are being kept alive. Change has occurred with great regularity since the appearance of the Europeans, but even with all that has been lost, the sweatlodge is still an integral part of the culture.

The ceremony of the sweatlodge serves to preserve or restore social harmony by drawing the participants together and inducing a state of relaxation to eliminate individual tensions and stress. No arguments were allowed to continue within the sweatlodge. The sweatlodge ceremony also is a meditative act. As such it is the equivalent of any ceremony performed in other cultures for curing or religious purposes, including the Christian religions.
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APPENDIX
Sioux Myth

The tale begins with a young girl with 5 brothers who all lived together. The girl did the cooking and making of robes from the hides which the brothers furnished by hunting. They followed the game from place to place. One day they came to a place where a creek flowed through a canyon. They all felt strange and uneasy but could find no reason for such feeling. The next day, as was their custom, they each hunted separately, but one failed to return that evening. The next day the same thing happened. One brother failed to return. This happened each day until the girl was left totally alone. She didn’t know what to do. She had no one to protect her or to bring her food. "She didn’t even know how to pray to the spirits for help, because this happened long ago, before the people had ceremonies or ways of worshipping. They did not dance or have a pipe then" (Lame Deer 1972:175).

The girl did not wish to go on living alone; she went to the top of a hill and cried. She picked up a good sized round stone and swallowed it thinking it would kill her. Immediately she felt at peace. After she drank some water the stone began to move within her. She was pregnant but didn’t know what child bearing was. After four days she gave birth to a boy. Inyan Hoski (Stone Boy) grew very rapidly (in one week he grew as much as other children do in one year). His mother would not let him go far because she didn’t want to lose him as she had her brothers. They lived on herbs ad roots until one day Stone Boy made a bow and arrow. He took a sharp stone and chipped it into a barbed point which he then fitted to the arrow shaft. This was the first stone point since prior to this warriors had used pointed sticks hardened in the fire.

Stone Boy’s mother started to weep when she saw the bow and arrow because she knew that he would now go out to hunt and not return. She told him of his five uncles who had not returned from hunting. Stone Boy told her to fix him a pair of moccasins and food so he could go hunt his uncles, and not to worry, that he would return.
"He started out early the next morning. In the evening he smelled smoke. He followed the smoke and came to a tipi before which an old ugly woman was sitting. Next to her, propped up against her tipi, were five large bundles. She invited him to stay and gave him some meat to eat. When it was dark he wanted to lie down and sleep, but the old woman said, 'I have a backache. I wish you would rub my back or, better still, walk on it. That will make me feel better.' Stone Boy walked up and down on the huge woman's back and felt something sharp sticking out of her backbone like a spear. He told himself: 'This is what she used to kill my uncles.' He jumped high into the air and came down hard on the old woman, breaking her neck" (Lame Deer 1972:176).

He built a big fire and burned the old witch to ashes. He looked at the five bundles and thought: 'Could these be the bodies of my uncles?' He felt the presence of spirits and heard their voices. On their instructions Stone Boy built a little lodge of willow sticks and hides and put the five bundles inside in a circle, then he put in red-hot stones from the fire into the middle of it, took water in an animal skin bag and poured it over the rocks.

"He thanked the rocks. He said, 'You brought me here.' He covered the lodge up so that no hot air could escape. It was dark inside. Stone Boy saw something moving in the darkness. The souls were returning to the bodies in their bundles. When he poured water over the rocks for the fourth time, his uncles came alive again. They started talking and singing. He told them, 'The rocks saved me, and now they saved you. And from now on this sweat house shall be sacred to us. It will give us good health and will purify us.' That was the first inipi" (Lame Deer 1972:176).