

PART II

INDIAN TITLE

Separateness of Palus Tribe

The Plateau Culture Area

7. The Palus lived in the southern part of the geographical plateau area formed by the relatively high land between the Cascade and Rocky Mountains.<sup>1/</sup> All of the Indian tribes living in the geographical plateau have been found through the field researches of anthropologists to possess certain cultural characteristics in common which set them apart from other Indian tribes or groups.<sup>2/</sup> In general cultural character, the Palus resembled their neighbors in this area, which is referred to by the anthropologists as the Plateau Culture Area.<sup>3/</sup> There were, however, important cultural differences between the Palus and the neighboring Indian tribes in the Plateau Culture Area.<sup>4/</sup>

Language

8. The language of the Palus Indians was of the Sahaptin stock.<sup>1/</sup> Their neighbors on the east, south and west were also Sahaptin-speaking people.<sup>2/</sup> There were, however, marked dialectical differences between the Palus and their Sahaptin-speaking neighbors.<sup>3/</sup> The languages of the Palus and the Cayuse, their neighbors on the south, were mutually unintelligible.<sup>4/</sup> The Palus could converse most easily with the Walula, on the south, and Wanapam, on the west;<sup>5/</sup> and in a fairly satisfactory manner with the Yakima, on the west.<sup>6/</sup> There were striking differences between the languages of the Palus and the Nez Perce, their neighbors on the east.<sup>7/</sup> The neighbors of the Palus on the north, the Spokane and Columbia, were both Salishan-speaking people.<sup>8/</sup> The Sahaptin and Salishan

linguistic stocks are mutually unintelligible.<sup>9/</sup> The linguistic separateness of the Palus is proof of their long standing existence as a definable and autonomous group.

### Environment

9. Because of the nature of their environment, the Palus Indians developed certain distinctive cultural characteristics.<sup>1/</sup> Unlike their neighbors, the Palus Indians lived in an area which was almost entirely level and flat.<sup>2/</sup> There were no mountains or other geographical features to break the wind.<sup>3/</sup> To protect themselves from the cold, the Palus located all of their winter villages in sheltered and milder places in the canyons of the Snake, Palouse and Tucannon rivers.<sup>4/</sup> Moreover, the Palus were unique among the Indian tribes of the Plateau Culture Area in their use of wooden houses for their winter dwellings.<sup>5/</sup> The Palus territory was virtually devoid of trees, and the Palus Indians expended great effort and care in obtaining and conserving wood for building planks for their houses, and for tool manufacture, canoe making and fire building.<sup>6/</sup> During the summer, most of the Palus Indians lived in single family mat covered houses of conical shape and never used the tipi as did the neighboring Nez Perce Indians.<sup>7/</sup> Unlike the territories of the neighbors, the Palus tract did not provide any mountains for large game-hunting, and the Palus hunted deer and antelope in open country. The antelope was a specially important source of meat for the Palus Indians.<sup>8/</sup> In these and other ways, the necessity of the Palus to adapt themselves to the environment in which they lived, tended to set them apart rather markedly from their neighbors.<sup>9/</sup>