

**The Repatriation of the Canoe Stolen by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark in 1805
as witnessed by Joan Tuttle Wekell
on September 24, 2011 at Fort Columbia, Chinook, WA**

Background information: Lewis and Clark arrived on the Columbia River in 1805. They were shown the Pacific Ocean by the Chinook people who helped them survive and unusually cold Winter. When Spring came the Corps of Discovery packed up and prepared for their long journey back east. The Chinook item that the Corps coveted most was the superior canoes owned by the Chinook Tribe. They decided to steal the canoe for their return journey.

In 2004 the nation celebrated the Bi-Centennial of the Corps of Discovery and the Chinook tribe took part in the celebration and hosting the reenactors in November of 2005. When the celebration ended. One of the Chinook leaders (I believe it was Ray Gardner). Reminded the Corps leaders about the canoe which was taken 200 years before. The Clark family agreed that this wrong should be made right and the healing must begin.

The Clark family arranged for the funding and building of the replacement canoe.

The other witnesses to this event were: Rick Holton Jr., Clark Family; Anna Haala, Tlingit Peace elder; Angie Wymer, Snoqualmie Lushootseed Language instructor; Mike Evans, Chairman of Snoqualmie Tribe; Delores Parmenter, Grand Ronde; Charlene Nelson, Chairman of Shoalwater; and Phil Hawks Chinook Council and Tribal Elder.

So, on September 24, 2011 a seventh generation Clark family member, Carlota Clark Holton, her husband Rick Holton, their son Robert and daughter (do not know her name) made the presentation of new and beautiful canoe, which the Clark family arranged to have built for us. The canoe is now the largest canoe owned by our tribe. It is made to carry us on the ocean. Tribal members agreed that the new canoe should be named Klmin (a Chinook word meaning "moon". It seemed appropriate because the moon controls the tides which our canoes and pullers depend upon to safely chart our travels. Klmin was also the name of a great chief of long ago who died without heirs so his name died out too. Now it lives again.

The Clark-Holton family generously brought other gift. To the witnesses, Tribal Council members, and many honored guests they gave each a white woolen blanket, made especially for this occasion, with a blue stripe representing the Columbia River and red-orange stripe representing the salmon. They also gave knives in a leather sheath which was decorated with dyed porcupine quills in the shape of a salmon with a blue border of porcupine quills representing the Columbia River.

The witnesses also received fine gifts of smoked salmon, blackberry jelly, fry bread mix, a Klmin T shirt, a Middle Village Cup and a necklace. Many gifts were given to our visitors also.

There was lots of singing, drumming and dancing on this day. After that we feasted on roasted salmon, salads, corn, fried bread and many wonderful desserts.

We would have liked to put Klmin in the river and see how she handled; but the day was too windy and there were large waves on the Columbia River. We hope to take Klmin on the canoe journey next Summer.