

Preface

“...the bicentennial revealed that despite the many conflicts that punctuated relations between Indians and non-Indians over the previous three decades, the general public....was ready for a more nuanced view of American history.”

*–Frederick E. Hoxie, 2006
Swanlund Professor of History at University of Illinois*

IN 1994, WHEN PLANNING BEGAN for the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial, the so-called “celebration” was little more than a groan in the throats of those Indian people who saw it coming. For a long time after non-Indian planners began calling the event a “commemoration,” in deference to concerns tenaciously raised by Indians involved early on (Allen V. Pinkham, Sr., Jeanne Eder and Gerard Baker), few tribes hurried to join the effort.

A centuries old inter-cultural communication gap seemed to rise insurmountably between us. It would take nearly ten years of cautiousness, misunderstandings and shared commitment to a more complete telling of history before we could create a trustable bridge to one another.

Many Indians saw – and still see – ourselves and our cultures as survivors of a historical genocide, comparable to the Holocaust, that continues in perhaps less dramatic fashion today.

Many non-Indians thought of Indians as historical relics or Hollywood stereotypes. Few were aware of Indians as modern educated Americans with active, vibrant cultures, or of the urgent problems – like poverty, health, education, safety, sacred site looting and language loss – that face tribal communities today.

Many Indians were bitter toward non-Indians because of the past and because they feel non-Indians don’t know or care about tribal histories and current problems.

Most non-Indians saw Indians as all the same, unaware of the rich assortment of tribal cultures, languages and traditions across the continent.

Yet – in one area we found common ground. Indians wanted to tell our own stories and to educate others about us. Non-Indians wanted to learn about our histories, cultures, arts, treaty rights and contemporary life. So we began the journey described in this book.



“...the ancient history of the US is the Tribal history.
We must help other citizens
understand that our ancient history was not
in Rome or Greece, but was here.”

–Mike Iyall, Cowlitz, 2006

Enough Good People was created by the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial’s Circle of Tribal Advisors (COTA), a national advisory committee representing forty modern Native Nations whose homelands were traversed by the 1803-1806 Lewis & Clark Expedition.

The book’s first purpose is to express appreciation to all the good people who built a bridge to one another, making tribal involvement in the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial possible and successful. We begin the book in a traditional way, with respect and honor for those good people and their accomplishments, by listing their names first.

The book’s second purpose is to offer reflections and well-tested recommendations to non-tribal and tribal planners of the next shared American history commemoration, and the one after that, and the one after that. We hope our experiences and recommendations will streamline your mutual learning phase and help you to advance inter-cultural understanding and respect. We hope *Enough Good People* will help you contribute further to a more comprehensive and honest telling of American history.

Mahzegadatz
Kw’alánawasamatas
Qe’ciyéw’yew
Thank you

