

City of Vancouver, Washington

Proclamation

- WHEREAS, The Nez Perce lived in harmony with nature and were a peaceful nation inhabiting southeast Washington, northeast Oregon, and northern Idaho; and
- WHEREAS, the Nez Perce co-existed with new settlers for many decades, until the treaty rights and human rights of the tribe were violated; and
- WHEREAS, during the Nez Perce War of 1877, thirty-three members of Chief Redheart's band, intent upon avoiding war and returning to their homes, were taken into custody, and imprisoned unlawfully at Vancouver Barracks from August 7, 1877, to April 22, 1878; and
- WHEREAS, a member of the band, the infant son of Little Bear, died in captivity and was buried in an unmarked grave at Vancouver Barracks; and
- WHEREAS, the Nez Perce show their esteem for their ancestors and preserve and honor their cultural heritage with traditional memorial ceremonies at locations of significance in their history; and
- WHEREAS, it is very important for the young tribal members to learn from and honor their ancestors; and
- WHEREAS, the annual ceremony in Vancouver commemorates the date in 1878 when Chief Redheart's band of the Nez Perce was released from captivity at Vancouver Barracks, and includes ceremonial singing, the Riderless Horse (empty saddle) ceremony, sacred pipe ceremony, and recognition of veterans; and
- WHEREAS, Wilfred Scott, tribal elder of the Nez Perce Tribe, encourages commemoration of this event as a starting point for learning more about the ancestors and the part they played in events based upon their commitment to actions they believed in; and
- WHEREAS, the issue, he says, is not to question the how's or why's of history, but to take pride in knowing about the decisions the ancestors made and to honor them for their dedication to following the paths they chose. Each memorial ceremony is another opportunity to learn from the stories of the elders and to honor them for their steadfastness in pursuit of their ideals; and
- WHEREAS, for the past twenty-five years, this traditional ceremony has created a new legacy for the grandchildren of Chief Redheart's band, the Wood family ancestors, and the citizens of Vancouver to come together to commemorate and honor their sacrifices and courage; and
- WHEREAS, this traditional memorial ceremony conducted at the site of imprisonment of the Redheart band will take place on April 20, 2024, at 10 a.m. on the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Anne McEnery-Ogle, Mayor of Vancouver, Washington, do hereby proclaim the 20th day of April as:

“ Nez Perce Chief Redheart Day”

in the City of Vancouver and join the Nez Perce in honoring the memory of their ancestors and encourage all community members to join in this observance



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and cause the seal of the City of Vancouver to be affixed this 20th day April 2024.

Anne McEnery-Ogle
ANNE McENERY-OGLE, MAYOR