

Lesson 4a&b: Medicine Creek Treaty Student Information and Graphic Organizers

Make a copy of this document.

Essential Question:

Why did the talks and the attempted signing at the Treaty meetings lead to conflict?

Criteria: Be able to:

- Analyze text to search and find the best evidence (examples, quotes, or portions to paraphrase) to support your responses.
- Discuss different viewpoints/perspectives
- Explain the purpose and procedure of the Medicine Creek Treaty.
- Draw conclusions based on evidence on the impact of the Medicine Creek Treaty signing on the culture and movement of Nisqually People
- Note: **Criteria** within each activity

Graphic Organizer 4a: *Analyzing the Medicine Creek Treaty*

Write your responses here:

Section Summary:	
Essential Questions Response:	
Other thoughts or ideas:	

Graphic Organizer 4b:**Treaty Sources**

After reading the two sources, explain how the events at the Medicine Creek Treaty signing led to conflict with Americans.

Sources	Evidence from the text (example, quote, or facts)	Explanation of the potential effects on the Native Americans and why these events lead to conflict.
Source #1: <i>Treaty Talks</i>		
Source #2: <i>Treaty Time at Nisqually</i>		

Essential Questions: In at least one paragraph and using what you have learned, respond to the essential questions to explain your conclusion:

How did the Medicine Creek Treaty affect Nisqually People?

Why did the talks at the Treaty meetings lead to conflict?

Lesson 4: Analyzing the Medicine Creek Treaty

DEFINITION: A **treaty** is a formal, written agreement between sovereign states, nations, or international organizations.

Directions: Examine the Medicine Creek Treaty to answer the following question: *How did the Medicine Creek Treaty affect Nisqually People?*

Step One: Make a copy of this document or load it into Notability.

Step Two: In groups of four, assign each member the numbers 1-4. Match the member number with the corresponding number of that treaty section (See copy of treaty below).

Step Three: Circle words you do not know. Predict their meaning based on the words around them. Then, look up the word to see if it is correct. [Link to dictionary.com](http://dictionary.com)

Step Four: Take notes and summarize your assigned section.

Step Five: Get together with your whole group and teach each other what your section was about to understand the treaty. Then, discuss how difficult the treaty is to understand. Why or why not?

Step Six: Discuss and come up with a consensus to answer the question: *How did the Medicine Creek Treaty affect Nisqually People?*

Step Seven: Discuss with the whole class and submit your work to your Graphic Organizer.

Medicine Creek Treaty

Group Member 1: Articles 2 & 3

Article 2

There is, however, reserved for the present use and occupation of the said tribes and bands, the following tracts of land, viz: The small island called Klah-che-min, situated opposite the mouths of Hammerslev's and Totten's Inlets, and separated from Hartstene Island by Peale's Passage, containing about two sections of land by estimation; a square tract containing two sections, or twelve hundred and eighty acres, on Puget's Sound, near the mouth of the She-nah-nam Creek, one mile west of the meridian line of the United States land survey, and a square tract containing two sections, or twelve hundred and eighty acres, lying on the south side of Commencement Bay; all which tracts shall be set apart, and, so far as necessary, surveyed and marked out for their exclusive use; nor shall any white man be permitted to reside upon the same without permission of the tribe and the superintendent or agent. And the said tribes and bands agree to remove to and settle upon the same within one year after the ratification of this treaty, or sooner if the means are furnished to them. In the meantime, it shall be lawful for them to reside upon any ground not in the actual claim and occupation of citizens of the United States, and upon any

ground claimed or occupied, if with the permission of the owner or claimant. If necessary for the public convenience, roads may be run through their reserves, and, on the other hand, the right of way with free access from the same to the nearest public highway is secured to them.

ARTICLE 3.

The right of taking fish, at all usual and accustomed grounds and stations, is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the Territory, and of erecting temporary houses for the purpose of curing, together with the privilege of hunting, gathering roots and berries, and pasturing their horses on open and unclaimed lands: Provided, however, That they shall not take shellfish from any beds staked or cultivated by citizens, and that they shall alter all stallions not intended for breeding-horses, and shall keep up and confine the latter.

Group Member 2: Articles 4&5:

ARTICLE 4

In consideration of the above session, the United States agree to pay to the said tribes and bands the sum of thirty-two thousand five hundred dollars, in the following manner, that is to say: For the first year after the ratification hereof, three thousand two hundred and fifty dollars; for the next two years, three thousand dollars each year; for the next three years, two thousand dollars each year; for the next four years fifteen hundred dollars each year; for the next five years twelve hundred dollars each year; and for the next five years one thousand dollars each year; all which said sums of money shall be applied to the use and benefit of the said Indians, under the direction of the President of the United States, who may from time to time determine, at his discretion, upon what beneficial objects to expend the same. And the superintendent of Indian affairs, or other proper officer, shall each year inform the President of the wishes of said Indians in respect thereto.

ARTICLE 5.

To enable the said Indians to remove to and settle upon their aforesaid reservations, and to clear, fence, and break up a sufficient quantity of land for cultivation, the United States further agree to pay the sum of three thousand two hundred and fifty dollars, to be laid out and expended under the direction of the President, and in such manner as he shall approve.

Group Member 3: Articles 6&8:

ARTICLE 6.

The President may hereafter, when in his opinion the interests of the Territory may require, and the welfare of the said Indians be promoted, remove them from either or all of said reservations to such other suitable place or places within said Territory as he may deem fit, on remunerating them for their improvements and the expenses of their removal, or may consolidate them with other friendly tribes or bands. And he may further, at his discretion, cause the whole or any portion of the lands hereby reserved, or of such other land as may be selected in lieu thereof, to be surveyed into lots, and assign the same to such individuals or families as are willing to avail themselves of the privilege, and will locate on the same as a permanent home, on the same terms and subject to the same regulations as are provided in the sixth article of the treaty with the Omahas, so far as the same may be applicable. Any substantial improvements heretofore made

by any Indian, and which he shall be compelled to abandon in consequence of this treaty, shall be valued under the direction of the President, and payment to be made accordingly thereof.

ARTICLE 8.

The aforesaid tribes and bands acknowledge their dependence on the Government of the United States, and promise to be friendly with all citizens thereof, and pledge themselves to commit no depredations on the property of such citizens. And should any one or more of them violate this pledge, and the fact be satisfactorily proved before the agent, the property taken shall be returned, or in default thereof, or if injured or destroyed, compensation may be made by the Government out of their annuities. Nor will they make war on any other tribe except in self-defence, but will submit all matters of difference between them and other Indians to the Government of the United States, or its agent, for decision, and abide thereby. And if any of the said Indians commit any depredations on any other Indians within the Territory, the same rule shall prevail as that prescribed in this article, in cases of depredations against citizens. And the said tribes agree not to shelter or conceal offenders against the laws of the United States, but to deliver them up to the authorities for trial.

Group Member 4: Articles 9&10

ARTICLES 9

The above tribes and bands are desirous to exclude from their reservations the use of ardent spirits, and to prevent their people from drinking the same; and therefore it is provided, that any Indian belonging to said tribes, who is guilty of bringing liquor into said reservations, or who drinks liquor, may have his or her proportion of the annuities withheld from him or her for such time as the President may determine.

ARTICLE 10.

The United States further agree to establish at the general agency for the district of Puget's Sound, within one year from the ratification hereof, and to support, for a period of twenty years, an agricultural and industrial school, to be free to children of the said tribes and bands, in common with those of the other tribes of said district, and to provide the said school with a suitable instructor or instructors, and also to provide a smithy and carpenter's shop, and furnish them with the necessary tools, and employ a blacksmith, carpenter, and farmer, for the term of twenty years, to instruct the Indians in their respective occupations. And the United States further agree to employ a physician to reside at the said central agency, who shall furnish medicine and advice to their sick, and shall vaccinate them; the expenses of the said school, shops, employees, and medical attendance, to be defrayed by the United States, and not deducted from the annuities.

Medicine Creek Treaty Talks

By Annette Bullchild and Abbi Wonacott



From December 24-26, 1854, at She-nah-nam Creek (also called Medicine Creek) in present-day Thurston County, 62 leaders from the Nisqually (their leaders **Leschi and his brother Quiemeth**) Puyallup, Squaxin (Squawskin), Steilacoom, S'Homamish, Stehchass, T'Peeksin, Squi-aitl, and Sa-heh-wamish begin “talks” about a treaty with Territorial Governor

Isaac Stevens. To Native Americans, this location was a shared gathering spot to meet for potlatch to visit, celebrate marriages, trade, or resolve conflicts. So, entire families of men, women, and children were looking forward to a celebration. In her work [*Treaty Time at Nisqually*](#), Nisqually Tribal historian Cecilia Carpenter included an account from George Gibbs. “The scene was lively. Thin, temporary huts of mats with the smoke of their numerous campfires, the prows of the canoes hauled up on the bank and protruding from among the huts, the horses grazing on the marsh, the gloom of the fir and cedar tree and the scattered and moving groups of Indians



in all kinds of odd and fantastic dresses.”

To the Americans, this gathering site was strictly a business meeting to complete the signing of a legal document. Instead of sending someone with negotiation skills to discuss the treaty's terms, President Franklin Pierce sent Isaac Stevens, a skilled military officer. Gov. Stevens arrived with soldiers on a mission to get those signatures and complete his task of securing land for American settlers “legally.”

The treaty was written in a complicated, legal manner in English. Instead of using Salish, Lushootseed, or any other language of the Native People, Gov. Stevens relied on B. F. (Frank) Shaw to interpret the treaty using Chinook Jargon (a simple trading language between Indians and non-Indians). The jargon contained only 500 words and did not include the concepts of land ownership or where people could live.

Usually, a treaty is an agreement between two nations with back-and-forth discussions, bargaining, and revisions until there is a mutual agreement. This type of negotiation did not happen at Medicine Creek. Governor Stevens did not come to hear or seek what the Native People desired or wanted, or even needed. He came with a completed treaty document already written in permanent ink.

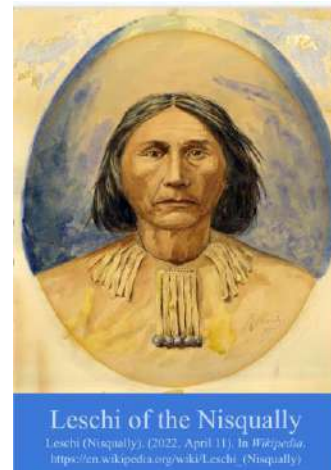
Gov. Isaac Stevens spoke to the Indian leaders as if they were children, and the “Great Father” (President Franklin Pierce) knew what was best for them. During the meetings, George Gibbs kept minutes (documented what was spoken). The Medicine Creek Treaty minutes are gone, but the Point No Point Treaty, conducted after, gives an idea of how Gov. Stevens spoke to Nisqually, Puyallup, and other Native Americans.

*“My Children – You call me your Father. I too have a Father, who is your great father. That Great Father has sent me here today to pay you for your lands, provide for your children, to see that you are fed and that you are cared for. The Great Father wishes you to be happy, to be friends with each other. The Great Father wants you and the Whites to be friends, he wants you to have a hope of your own, to have a school where your *little* children can learn. He wants you to learn to farm, to learn to use tools, and also to have a Doctor. Now, all these things shall be written down in a paper. That paper shall be read to you. If the paper is good you will sign it, and I will sign it. I will then send the paper to the Great Father. If the Great Father finds that paper good he will send me word, and I will let you know. If the Great Father does not find the paper good he will send it back to me, and say what alterations he wants in it. If you then agree to the changes, the paper is a bargain and will be carried out. The Great Father lives a great way off and some time will be required to hear from him. I want you to wait patiently till you hear from him. In the meantime the Great Father has sent to you some presents simply as a free gift. I shall give you more in the course of the summer. Your Agent Mr. Simmons will give you notice of these presents. But besides these presents, you will have to take care of you, your Agent Mr. Simmons. You will also have a man you know, Gov. Mason, to take care of you. This you will have all the time and when the paper comes from the Great Father then you will have your own houses and homes and*

your schools. Now what have you to say – if good give your assent – if not say so. Now sit quiet a moment; and the paper will be read.”

On the second day, December 25th, Stevens had each leader draw a map of what they believed was their traditional area of land. As Frank Shaw interpreted the treaty with awkward explanations, Leschi realized that his people would be moved and placed in an area away from the Nisqually River. Many assumed that none of the Native Americans could understand English. Though there may have been more, Quilquilton could speak English and informed Leschi and others of the treaty terms. According to Ezra Meeker, Leschi became angry and was part of a "very stubborn opposition, and resulted in the spectacular action of Leschi, as related elsewhere, when he tore up his commission as sub-chief before the Governor's eyes and left the council grounds." Leschi refused to sign the Medicine Creek Treaty because he believed it would lead to a slow death for his people. Article I of the treaty stated they were to “cede” or “relinquish” the entire land area, including the Nisqually River Basin. The lands “reserved” for them in Article II were too small of a place located in the adjoining highland with rocky, infertile soil away from the Nisqually River with all its resources.

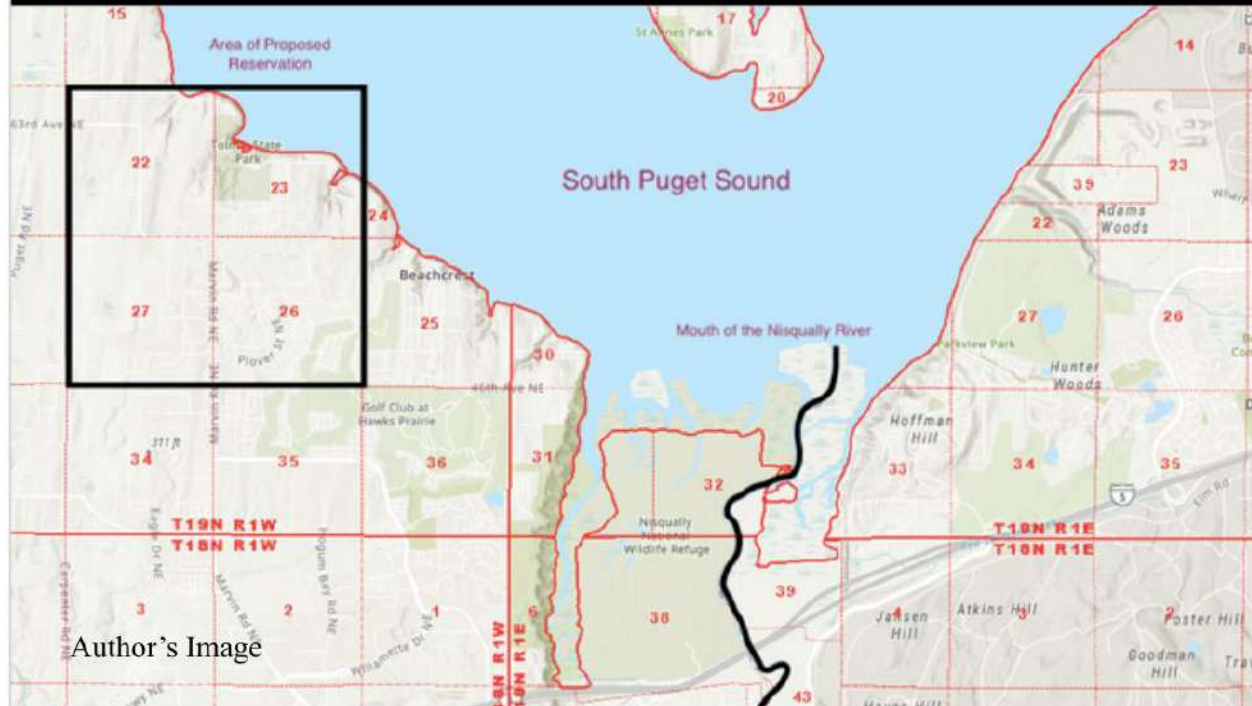
In exchange for 2.4 million acres, Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin, and the other tribes were forced to live on 1,280 acres divided into three separate reservations. The Squaxin People had to live on a small island off Puget Sound with no fresh water source. However, George Gibbs placed an article in the treaty that secured and allowed them to hunt, gather, and fish outside the reservations in their “usual and accustomed places.”



Leschi of the Nisqually

Leschi (Nisqually). (2022, April 11). In *Wikipedia*.
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leschi_\(Nisqually\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leschi_(Nisqually))

Modern Day Map of Proposed Reservation Area for the Nisqually Indian Tribe: See Square indicating section 22, 23, 26, and 27 (Carpenter). Notice how far away from the Nisqually River.



The treaty promised a payment of \$32,500 for the lands (Article IV). The Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin, and others never received this money but were given farming tools and other items that were not even close to being worth the money they should have been given. Additionally, the Nisqually Tribe had to reduce their horse herd to 500, not allowed to keep enslaved people or war on any other Native Americans.

December 26th was the third day for a potlatch but for signing the treaty by Native American leaders. Instead of honorable gifts of worth and generosity, Stevens's men handed out cheap fabric and ribbons, insulting those who remained. At this point, more and more Native Americans were now aware of what the treaty meant. On the actual Medicine Creek Treaty are "X" marks as signatures from many leaders, including one for Leschi. The "X" was forged. Leschi and other leaders had left the day before.

The Medicine Creek Treaty was ratified on March 3, 1855, and is still legally binding. Even before it was legal, Stevens proclaimed the new treaty lands were now open for more American settlers to get land grants to farm and homestead. The Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin, Steilacoom, S'Homamish, Stehchass, T'Peeksin, Squi-aitl, and Sa-heh-wamish had one year from the date the Medicine Creek Treaty was ratified by the Senate to leave their homes and move to the designated reservations near present-day Olympia.

All of this led the Muckleshoot, Puyallup, and Nisqually Indian Tribes to believe that they were being invaded by a people who did not value their connection to the land, dependence on the salmon, river systems, way of life, or even them as people. Tensions increased.