The second treaty negotiation attended by the leaders of the Chinook Indian Nation. This Council was led by Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens in 1855. Prior to this negotiation he sent individuals to Chinook territory to learn what we desired from a new treaty. We named a location in our territory, and stated we would give up the rest if allowed to stay there. At the negotiation it became clear that we would be asked to move north from our territory to the lands of our enemies. Chinook Chief Nahcotta expressed our feelings clearly:

“When you first began to speak, we did not understand you; it was all dark to us as the night; but now our hearts are enlightened, and what you say is clear to us as the sun. We are proud that our great father in Washington thinks of us. We are poor, and can see how much better off the white men are than we are. We are willing to sell our land, but we do not want to go away from our homes. Our fathers, and mothers, and ancestors are buried there and by them we wish to bury our dead and be buried ourselves. We wish, therefore, each to have a place on our own land where we can live, and you may have the rest; but we can't go to the north among the other tribes. We are not friends, and if we went together we should fight, and soon we would all be killed.” (Narkarty in Swan 1969:345)

Our ancestors and those of our Lower Chehalis neighbors returned to their homes furious and without results. Still we stayed with the bones of our ancestors. Governor Stevens expressed his intent to come back to the Chinook to negotiate an independent treaty with us after his 1855 efforts failed. He left Washington in 1857 and was killed in the United States’ Civil War.

Chief Nahcotta’s grave in Oysterville, Washington