

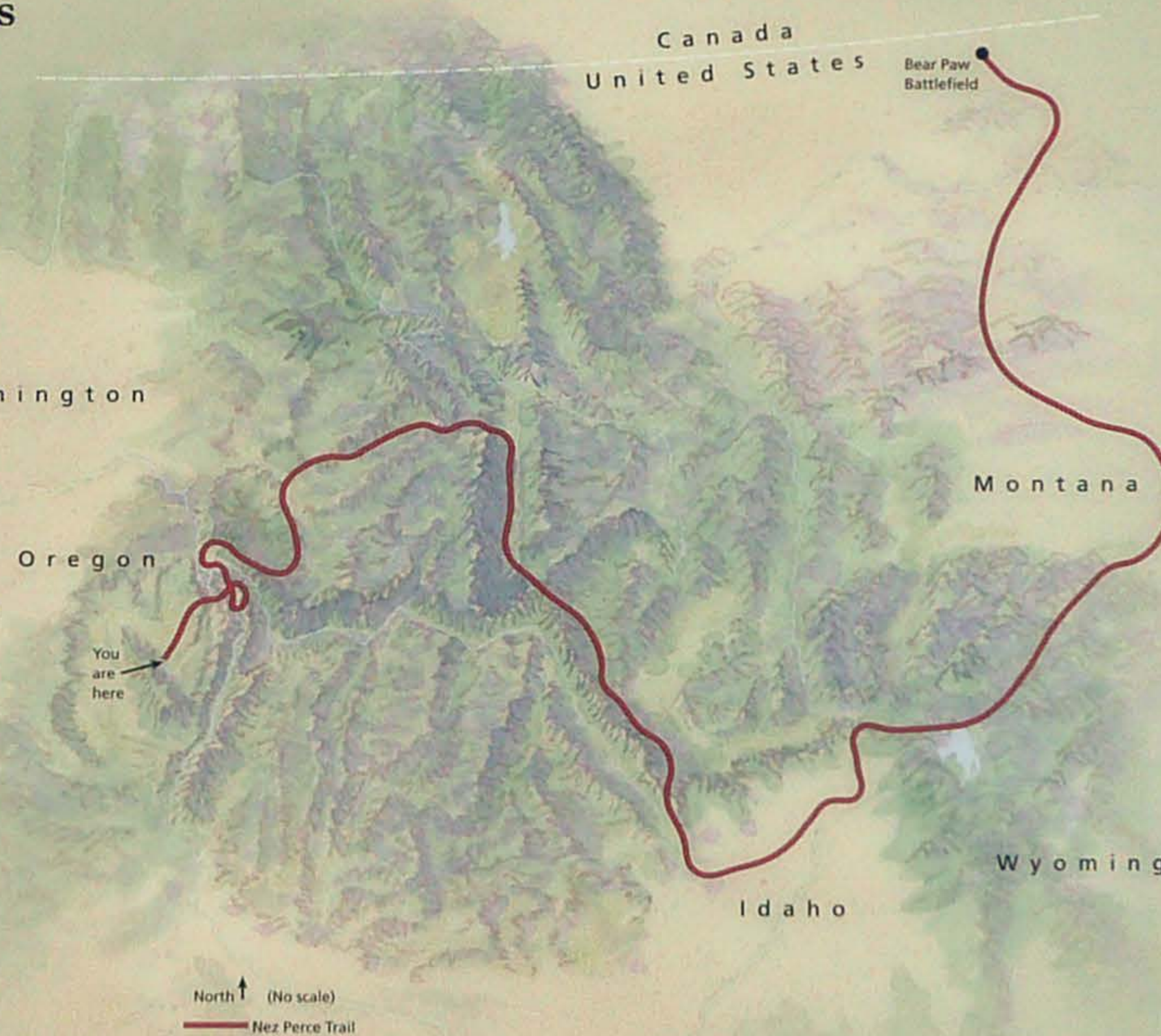
# “Only the sounds of the horses ...”

Here at the south end of the Wallowa Valley, the wal'wáama band of the Nez Perce Indians gathered to begin a sorrowful journey: leaving their homeland.



In 1877, the wal'wáama were driven out of the Wallowa Valley, which had been their homeland since time immemorial. Leaving was full of heartbreak and hardship. Over the next 1170 miles they would join with other Nez Perce bands, cross extremely rugged mountain terrain, and battle with the military in their attempt to reach the safety of Canada. Many died. Some reached Canada. Others sought refuge in the Blue Mountains, or were imprisoned in Oklahoma.

Today, their descendents live on the Nez Perce, Colville, and Umatilla reservations, as well as in Canada, and in communities throughout North America. They continue to honor this sacred land full of memories and heritage.



*“I was a small girl then, and I didn’t understand... I remember being so worried, because I had a new pair of moccasins, and I didn’t want to ruin them crossing the river.”*

The moccasin story was told to Horace Axtell by his grandmother, who was a girl of six when she made the trip. She had recalled how quiet everyone was. “The only sounds were those of the horses and cattle as we left.”

This area marks the beginning of the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail. The Nez Perce Trail is part of our shared history to be preserved and protected by all.

