



Lushootseed Name(s): Snah-Talc, Wah-de-pah, Sadkok, Wonnapot, and others

English Name(s): Napoleon, Bonaparte, Napoleon Bonaparte

Birth/Death: abt. 1782 – 1874

- Historic references indicate that Snah-Talc was born at *D'GWAD'wk* village. Other records suggest he may have been born at a village abutting the Skykomish river or the village at Hibulb – both villages on the mainland were occupied by “high born” families known in the English vernacular as upper class.

- His people called him Wah-de-pah, meaning “very mean man”, as he did not provide support to a wife he was forced to banish. The reason for banishment has two historical references: one was Catholic missionaries told him it was a sin to have more than one wife; the other version suggests it was a condition of the Treaty of Point Elliott in 1855 which prohibited multiple wives and ownership of slaves.
- Village leaders were often given names of famous figures of the era by white people in order to gain support for their expansion. Snah-Talc was known as Napoleon Bonaparte. In this photo, he wears a silk coat, carries a regulation dress hat for enlisted men during the American Civil War, and

holds a walking cane that has brass tacks from traders. Snah-Talc believed this suited his position among the white men and added to his status of superiority amongst his people. The U.S. Government provided these items to intentionally influence Indigenous people away from their traditional customs as they began to take their land and move them onto the reservation.

- With the signing the Treaty of Point Elliott on the 22nd day of January, 1855, the Snohomish People became wards of the United States, ceding their territorial lands. Bonaparte was a signer of that agreement and is listed as a "sub chief" although he was the principal leader of the Snohomish at the time. The title "chief" was a label used by the U.S. Government to influence and gain favor

of tribal leaders nationwide while implementing the reservation system.

- In the 1870s, Napoleon relocated to the Tulalip Reservation where he continued to represent the Snohomish People to the U.S. Government, advocating for better living conditions. He addressed the need to keep his people safe from the encroachment of colonial settlers and merchants who peddled whiskey on the reservation, resulting in an increase in violence and widespread health problems.