

TRU LIBRARY  
74704149

# Shuswap Homes

SHUSWAP CULTURAL SERIES • BOOK 3  
SECWEPEMC CULTURAL EDUCATION SOCIETY



E  
E9  
99  
.S45  
M383  
1986



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE CARIBOO LIBRARY  
BOX 3010, KAMLOOPS, B.C.  
V2C 5N3

*THE SHUSWAP CULTURAL SERIES IS  
DEDICATED TO THE ELDERS OF THE  
SHUSWAP NATION*

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE CARIBOO LIBRARY  
BOX 3010, KAMLOOPS, B.C.  
V2C 5N3

Published By The Secwepemc Cultural Education Society  
With Funding Provided By Department of Indian Affairs,  
Skeetchestn Band, Kamloops Indian Band And  
School District No. 30 (Ashcroft School District)

Artist - David Seymour

Researcher/Writer - Mabel Caron

Cover Design By - Richard Gray

**Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Caron, Mabel, 1939 -  
*Shuswap Homes*

(Shuswap Cultural Series: Book 3)

Bibliography: p.

ISBN 0-921235-08-9

1. *Shuswap Indians - Dwellings.*  
2. *Indians of North America - British Columbia - Dwellings.*  
i) Seymour, David, 1948 - ii) Secwepemc Cultural  
Education Society. iii) Title. iv) Series.  
E99.S45C37 1986 728.089970711 C86-091278-7

© 1986 Secwepemc Cultural Education Society

NONE OF THE STORIES MAY BE RE-PRODUCED IN ANY  
MANNER WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE  
SECWEPEMC CULTURAL EDUCATION SOCIETY.

*Published in Canada By Secwepemc Cultural*

*Education Society*

345 Yellowhead Highway

Kamloops, B.C.

V2H 1H1

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE CARIBOO LIBRARY  
BOX 3010, KAMLOOPS, B.C.  
V2C 5N3

# ***SHUSWAP HOMES***

**SHUSWAP CULTURAL SERIES - Book Three**

SECWEPENC CULTURAL EDUCATION SOCIETY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SHUSWAP HOMES ..... pg. 1

TEMPORARY HOMES ..... pg. 1

HUNTING LODGES ..... pg. 2

TRAPPING LODGES ..... pg. 2

GIRLS' LODGES ..... pg. 2

WOMEN'S LODGES ..... pg. 3

SWEAT HOUSES ..... pg. 3

WINTER HOMES ..... pg. 3

SOME HOUSE PIT SITES ..... pg. 4

HUT-TSAT-TSL OR "COLD SPRING" SITE ..... pg. 4

CHINOOK COVE SITE ..... pg. 5

SHUSWAP HOMES TODAY ..... pg. 5

REFERENCES ..... pg. 6

## Shuswap Homes

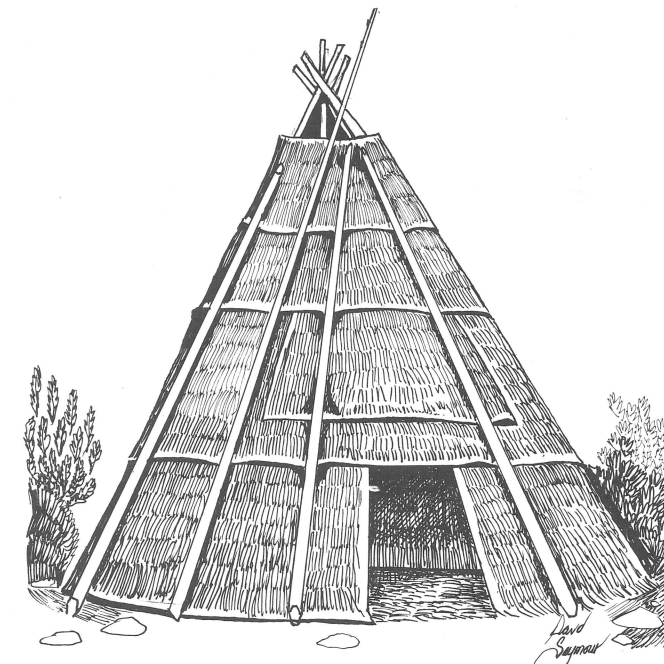
The Shuswap built homes were made of materials found in their immediate area. As people moved to different places in different seasons to gather and preserve food, they established temporary village sites. In spring, summer and fall, families of each winter village moved to other locations, usually within the same area, to fish, hunt and gather vegetables and berries. The seasonal location closest to being permanent was the winter village.

## Temporary Homes

The temporary home was of mats of tule, rushes or grass placed over a conical framework. These mat materials were plentiful, light and durable. The degree of completeness for these homes depended on weather. They were made as quickly and simply as possible from available local materials. They housed one or two families, rarely more.

Lean-tos of poles and mats were built in areas where bark was plentiful.

Sometimes the framework was square or oblong. They were also covered with bark of black pine, spruce, balsam or cedar. This was put on in overlapping strips, sap-side down, up as high as the cross poles. The ends were covered with scraps of bark and brush or more sheets of bark. Poles, sometimes piled high, were laid parallel to the base along the outside to hold the bark in place and to keep it from curling. Larger vertical poles covered joins in the bark and kept the bark in place. Long pieces of bark were placed up on the side, over the ridge pole, and down the other side. Short strips were used along the centre of the lodge on both sides, to leave a smoke hole above the fire.



## Hunting Lodges

Hunting lodges were round, or square, pole framed buildings covered with mats, poles or brush.

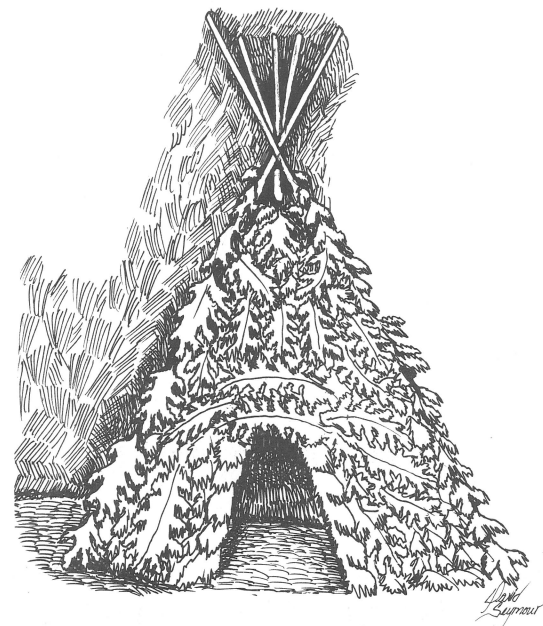
## Trapping Lodges

Trapping lodges were square shaped and made of poles, sticks, or bark and covered with fir branches. They were built in sheltered valleys of mountains, close to hunting and trapping grounds.

In areas where enemies might attack, these lodges were made of horizontal, interlocking logs, chinked with moss and covered with earth to four feet high. Spaces were left between logs at about six feet high and these openings were covered with overhanging brush. The enemy could be seen from these spaces. A zigzag trail made of short poles stuck into the ground was the only entrance to the lodge. Some lodges were also cone-shaped, with a double row of poles running up and down all around it.

## Girls' Lodges

Girls' lodges were cone-shaped and covered with fir brush or mats.

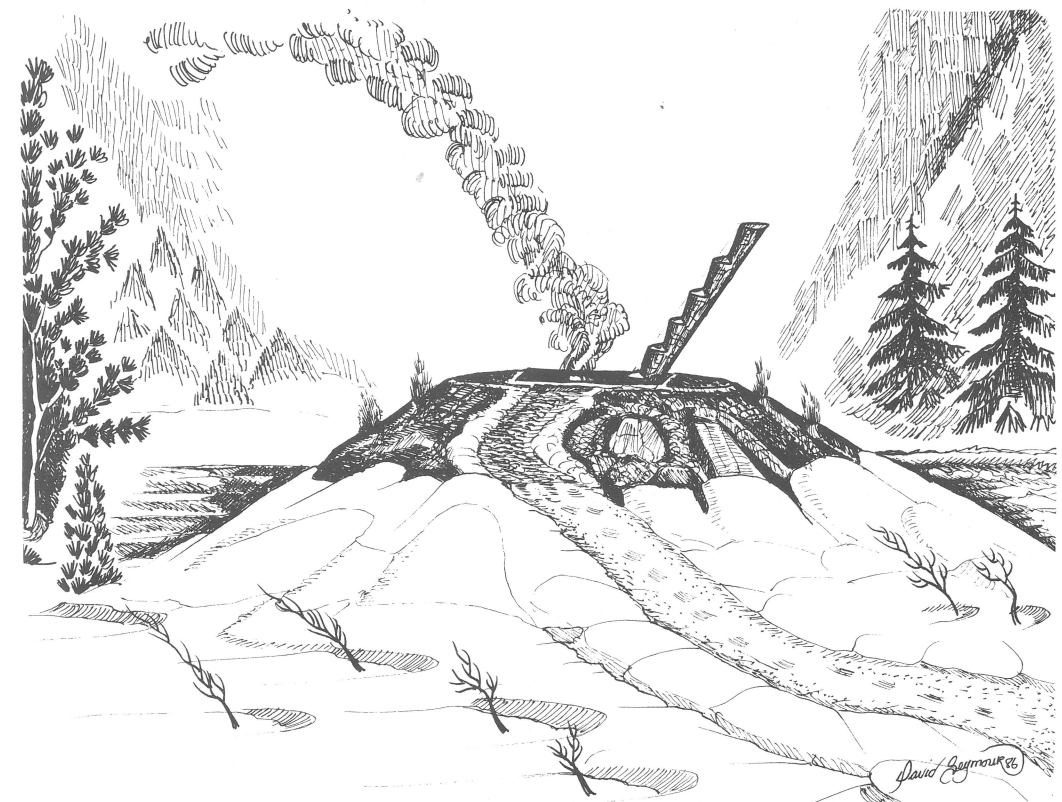


## Women's Lodges

Women, in good weather, lodged in a simple mat shelter or a small tent open on one side and only big enough for one person to sleep.

## Sweat Houses

The sweat house was made of willow branches bent over to make a curved shape. It was covered with brush, mats or bark, with a bark door facing the water (the door could face a certain direction also, i.e. west or east). The sweat house was then covered with earth.



## Winter Homes

Winter villages had names and consisted of a small number of families who came together in the late fall each year and stayed together until early spring depending on how severe the winter was. One or two families lived in each home, as a rule, but they could be large enough to hold many people.



These homes were semi-subterranean and constructed of logs and earth. They were built generally in valleys of the principal rivers. They were refurbished each fall. A winter home was simple but durably made. It was quite a task for twenty or thirty people who helped to construct it in just one day. They used tools they made themselves - such as wedges, hammers and stone adzes.

Women would begin digging the hole with digging sticks where the dwellings was to be. The pit was about one to two metres deep and from five to twenty-five metres in diameter. Baskets were filled with the dirt and dumped outside the hole to be used later to cover the roof.

Trees were cut, barked and hauled to the site with stout bark rope. Logs were placed to meet at an angle over the middle. Cross branches were placed over their structure. Grass and earth were placed on top. A ladder was placed through the opening at the top so that one of the sideroom spaces was next to the water.

These homes were snug and secure buildings well-suited to fending off winter's icy blasts. Moisture could, however, seep in and the occupants could expect a little of the earth which covered the roof to shake loose when someone entered or left. The house and contents were owned by the wife and inherited by her daughter.

### **Some House Pit Sites**

There is evidence in the Kamloops area, in the form of surface depressions, that show where winter villages had indeed been located.

Thirty-one of more than two hundred original depressions can be seen today directly north of the John Deer warehouse, in the industrial park, at the Kamloops Reserve Site. Their diameters are about four metres and all are much less than one metre in depth.

The Van Male Site is located 450 metres northwest of the Kamloops Reserve Site and contains eight rimless house pits depressions and part of the site had been eroded away by the annual flooding of the South Thompson River. This site is 600 metres west of the Yellowhead Highway Bridge and 300 metres east of the confluence of the North and South Thompson Rivers.

The Harper Ranch Site is 20 km. east of Kamloops and 2,000 metres west of Canada Lafarge Cement plant. Fifteen pit depressions and one hundred fifty-six cache pits can be seen here. One house pit depression is rectangular and it indicates the presence of a pit house side entrance facing the river.

### **Hut-Tsat-Tsl or "Cold Spring" Site**

One of the largest and most important sites of the old winter villages which has been noted is that known as Hut-Tsat-Tsl, or "cold spring". This is situated on the north side of the valley of Kelly Creek, about two miles below the lake. If all the old Keekwilee-houses here indicated by hollows still visible were at any time simultaneously inhabited, the population must have been numerous. It has been long abandoned, and in and about the sites of the houses large trees of at

least one hundred years of age are growing. This site was an ideal one for a winter residence, being well sheltered, having a southern exposure, and being amply supplied with food and water. The neighborhood must also have been a good one for hunting deer.

### **Chinook Cove Site**

The Chinook Cove site was located on the North Thompson River valley bottom on Point Bar #3, North Thompson Indian Reserve #1, 600 metres southwest of Chinook Cove Station and 750 metres east of the North Thompson River, 6.6 km. north of the town of Barriere. The Shuswap here formerly wintered in small villages of one to four pithouses.

### **Shuswap Homes Today**

Today the Shuswap live in log homes, trailers and frame homes built of many modern materials. They are homes for all seasons.

## References:

British Columbia Provincial Museum, Interior Salish Kit, Teacher's Guide, 1977

Dawson, George M., **"Notes on the Shuswap People of British Columbia"**, Ottawa, Royal Society of Canada, 1891

Owen, Edward E., **How Families Live**, Teacher's Manual Year 1, Toronto, 1972

Okanagan Indian Curriculum Project (O.I.C.P.), **We Are The People**, Teacher's Guide, Grade Four, Okanagan Tribal Council, 1982

Richards, Thomas, **Salvage Excavations at the Chinook Cove Site**, North Thompson River, British Columbia, Report No. 1, 1982

Teit, James, **The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Volume I, Part IV, The Thompson Indians of British Columbia**, New York, 1900

Teit, James, **The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Volume II, Part IV, The Thompson Indians of British Columbia**, New York, 1900

Wilson, Robert L. and Carlson, Catherine, **The Archaeology of Kamloops**, Simon Fraser University, 1980

### SHUSWAP DECLARATION

*TO WORK IN UNITY ON SHUSWAP LANGUAGE, HISTORY AND CULTURE*

Traditionally, Shuswap territory covered an area of 56,000 square miles and included the Thompson River drainage basin, extended eastward to the Columbia River Valley and reached north into the Fraser District. European settlement and colonialism eroded Indian title to traditional lands and lead to the eventual breakdown of the Shuswap Nation. Where thirty communities existed at the turn of the century, seventeen remain occupying only one-third of the traditional territory.

British imperialism and the colonizing of the Indian nations resulted in the disintegration of the society and a gradual decline of Shuswap culture and language.

For years the Shuswap bands have struggled to recover their heritage and restore it to its true role as the foundation of their nation.

Perseverance and hard work resulted in the signing of the Shuswap Declaration, August 20, 1982. The seventeen Shuswap bands had agreed to work together to preserve, record, perpetuate and enhance the Shuswap language, history and culture. The Shuswap Declaration marked the renewal of a strong and harmonious relationship that existed among the bands prior to European contact.

The Secwepemc Cultural Education Society is one of two sub-groups of the larger Shuswap Cultural Working Committee involved in cultural education programming and carrying out the Shuswap Declaration Agreement.

*THE SECWEPENC CULTURAL EDUCATION SOCIETY  
would like to thank everyone who assisted  
in the research and production of the Shuswap Cultural Series.*