

## Introduction to the Siusway

SHUSWAP CULTURAL SERIES - BOOK 1
SECWEPENC CULTURAL EDUCATION SOCIETY



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### INTRODUCTION TO THE SHUSWAP PEOPLE

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### The Lands of the Shuswap People

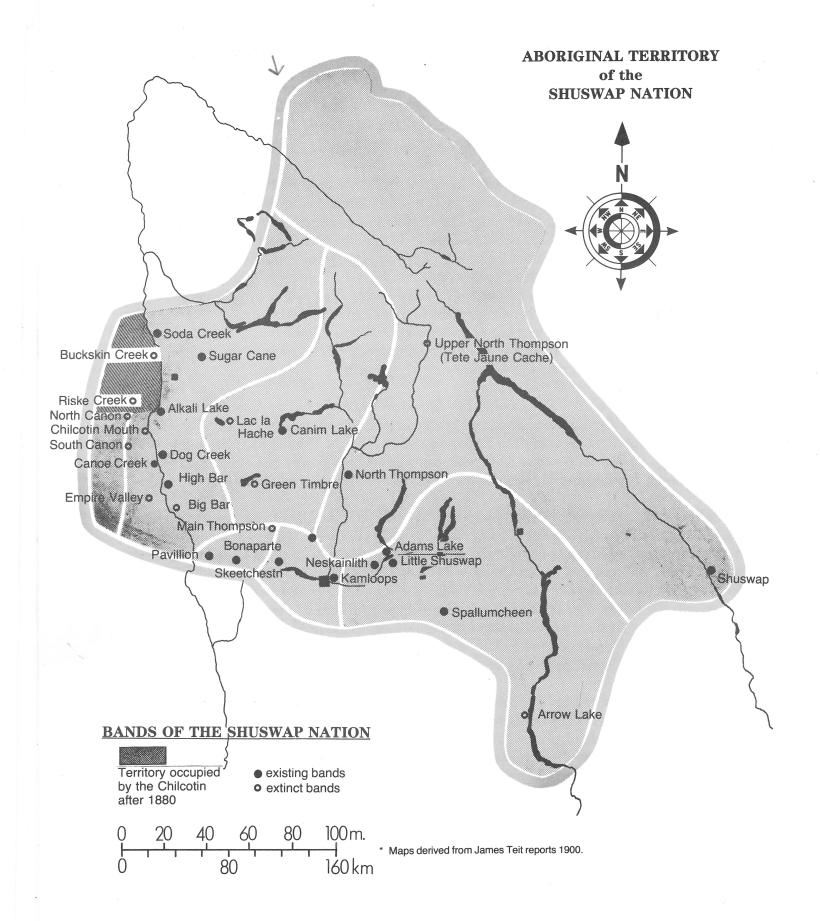
As recently as two hundred years ago, only native people lived on the interior plateau of what is now called British Columbia. The area includes several plateaus in the northwest, high mountain country in the northeast and rolling grasslands in the south. Throughout the area flow the waters of the Fraser and Thompson Rivers and their many tributaries. Of this plateau region, 70,000 square miles, or 180,000 square kilometres, were traditionally occupied by the Shuswap people. Their territory extended from about 50 degrees and 30 minutes north to about 53 north latitude. They lived west of the Fraser River and east as far as Jasper House, beyond the Rocky Mountains. To the southeast, a band of Shuswap occupied lands along the Upper Columbia River. Further south, a small band lived on the Lower Arrow Lake. Within this vast area the majority of the Shuswap population lived along the valleys of the Fraser, North Thompson and South Thompson rivers. But they moved throughout the entire plateau, hunting, fishing and gathering the foods that the land provided and meeting with the neighbours, both Shuswap and non-Shuswap.) (Refer to the next pages for maps.)

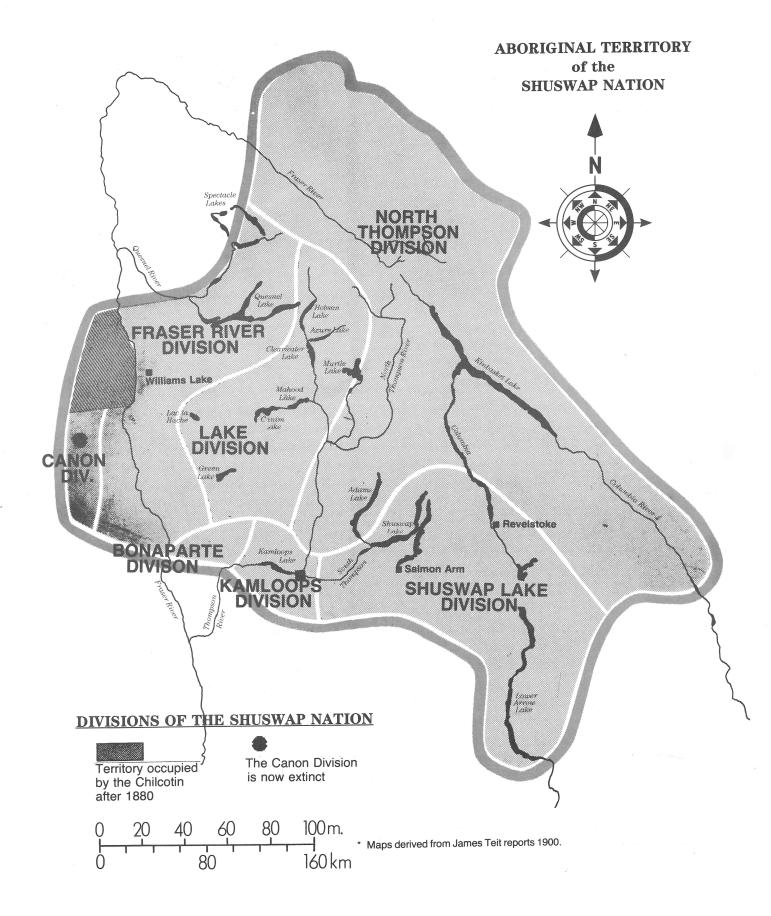
Before the arrival of the Europeans, the Shuswap people lived as bands, separate and independent of one another, but united by a common language and many similarities of lifestyle. The only anthropologist to study the Shuswap people, James Teit, divided them into seven general groups, or divisions. These divisions identify people living near one another and sharing the same fishing, hunting and gathering areas. The divisions included from three to seven bands.

The Fraser River division, or the "people of SLemxulax", includes those people who lived along the Fraser River Valley, south from High Bar to Soda Creek at the northern-most point. Their territory extended west of the Fraser River for thirty miles and north to Churn Creek. Their western boundary met that of the Cannon division, Chilcotin and Carrier people. Their area joined the Bonaparte people's along the Bonaparte River, to the southeast. In the east, their border with the Lakes division people was Green Lake and Lac La Hache. Included with this division were the Shuswap people living on Quesnel lake, to the north. The Fraser River people had villages at the following locations: Soda Creek; Williams Lake or Sugar Cane; Alkali Lake; Dog Creek; Canoe Creek; Empire Valley; Big Bar; High Bar and Clinton.

The Canon division, or the "people of SetL", occupied the area west of the Fraser River from Churn Creek to Riske Creek, where it met with territory occupied by the Chilcotin of the Chilcotin River. Their territory extended west to Hanceville and east to Big Creek. Bounded on the north, east and south by the Fraser River division, they shared the hunting and gathering territories with them. The Canon people had villages at Riske Creek, north of the Chilcotin River bridge, south at the Chilcotin River and near the mouth of the Chilcotin River.

The Stietamux, or people of the Interior Plateu, were referred to as the Lake division. They occupied the territory between the Fraser River division and the North Thompson division, with their main village at Canim Lake. They fished all of the large lakes within their area, including Lac La Hache and the Clearwater lakes. They hunted in the north, to Quesnel Lake and the Caribou mountains opposite the Yellowhead Pass. To the south their area met with that of the Bonaparte and Kamloops people, along the Bonaparte River. Their villages included Lac La Hache, Canim Lake and Green Timber which was on a lake near the head of the Bonaparte River.





The Lake division was bounded on the east by the Texqokallt people, or the North Thompson division, who occupied the valleys and mountains along that river. Hunting and fishing they ranged east to Adams Lake, which bounded them from the Shuswap division people. They hunted north to Canoe River and the headwaters of the Fraser River, where their territory met with that of Sekani people. Bands of the upper area lived east of the Rockies, at Jasper House where they intermingled with Cree and Iroquois people who lived in the region. A southeastern band, the Kinbaskets, occupied both sides of the Columbia River, north to Golden, bordered by the Shuswap Lake division in the west and the Stoney people to the east. The southern North Thompson people moved south, to Louis Creek, where their territory met that of the Kamloops people. This division had main villages at the "salmon place", on the upper North Thompson, at "red trees", fifty miles north of Kamloops on the North Thompson, and opposite Toby Creek on the Columbia River. (Iroquois worked in the Shuswap area for the Hudson Bay Company).

The Kamloops division, or the StkamlupepsEmux, included the people who lived at the confluence of the North and South Thompson Rivers, and those who lived west to the Bonaparte River. Their territory included the Deadman's Creek area to the west and extended south to Stump Lake, where it bounded the territories of the Thompson and Okanagan people. Villages were located at Kamloops and Deadman's Creek.

Eastward, the Sxstelln, or Shuswap Lake division, occupied the area surrounding the upper South Thompson, Shuswap Lakes and the Spallumcheen River. Their land met the Okanagan territory to the south at Salmon River. They moved north to Adams Lake and to the Columbia River above Revelstoke, approaching area used by the Kinbaskets of the North Thompson division. They moved east to Mabel Lake, Sugar Lakes and Upper Arrow Lake, hunting as far as the eastern side of Lardeau and Nakusp, where their territory was bounded by the Kootenai people. In the west, they included the people of the Chase area, bordering here with the Kamloops people. The villages were located on Little Shuswap, at the southern outlet of Adams Lake, in the Spllumcheen valley near Enderby, and on the west of Lower Arrow Lake.

The ZaxtcinEmux, or "people of the low valley", make up the Bonaparte division. They include the people who occupied the Bonaparte River valley, in the areas of Cache Creek, Hat Creek and Loon Lake. They meet the Kamloops division in the east, the Lake division and Fraser division to the north, and the Lillooet and Thompson people to the west, beyond their territory at Pavillion, where they used both sides of the river for their salmon fishing. They had villages at Pavillion, on the Bonaparte River around Loon Lake, and along the Thompson, north of Ashcroft.

### Traditional Lifestyle & Customs of the Shuswap People

The majority of the Shuswap people lived a nomadic lifestyle, moving from place to place as foods became available in different areas. The Shuswap people had to devote a great deal of their lives to satisfying their basic needs, but they did so very successfully, developing a unique culture that was totally self-sufficient. This manner of living required a great deal of knowledge about their surroundings, the workings of nature and the skills of the generations that had come before them. To live comfortably in their environment, the Shuswap people had to develop as capable and strong individuals. Every aspect of the traditional Shuswap society was directed toward this goal: to create knowledgeable, responsible and independent people, who could look after all of their personal needs and be aware of the needs of the whole Shuswap people.



Leadership Among the Shuswap People

Amongst most Shuswap bands, one individual was an hereditary chief, gaining his position as the eldest son of the chief before him. Sometimes another son or male relative of the former chief was chosen as the new chief if he had better leadership qualities than the eldest son. The chief was not given special privileges, but was responsible for ensuring that all members of the community had food, and was the one who dealt with individuals from outside the band, on behalf of the band. He took on a leadership role at celebrations or ceremonies, but did not greatly influence the day to day life of the people in a Shuswap band. If members broke the rules of the society, the chief was in charge of dealing with them, but could also take advise from the elders of the community in handing out discipline. The chief's most important role was to oversee the welfare of the band.

Leadership hunting, fishing and war was decided by ability. The best hunter was given the job of leading the hunt; the best warrior the war party; and the best fisherman might take charge of planning where and how the fishing would proceed. But the leadership did not make their decisions alone. Councils were often held, which involved the elders of the community. Leadership in these areas could easily change, as new people showed their skills. With the leadership came the responsibility of ensuring that food or booty taken was properly divided among the people involved.

Another important member of the band was the Shaman, or Indian doctor. The Shaman was specially trained in the medicines of the Shuswap people and gained special powers through training from knowledge passed down from previous Shamans (usually a relative). The special skills of the Shaman were called upon in times of trouble or need (i.e. - sickness, poverty, etc.). He would take part in special ceremonies to help people in the face of famine, drought, war or illness.

The elderly of the Shuswap people also played an important leadership role. In council, their voices were listened to carefully and their expert skills in all areas were relied upon to help in making critical decisions and to help in the training of the young. They continually shared the knowledge of the Shuswap people throughout the ages in the stories they told and retold to their large extended families or whole bands during the long winter evenings or around the fires at group gatherings. They were highly respected and well cared for as they aged.

There were no classes among the Shuswap people. Even the Chiefs or Shaman had no special priviledges, although they were highly respected. Slaves remained as slaves only until they married a member of the band, but could not become Chief. The children of slaves were full members of the band, and could possibly become Chief.

### Customs Relating to Birth, Childhood, Training, Marriage and Death

### **Birth and Childhood**

Mothers were assisted in giving birth by mid-wives, who were paid for their services in skins. The newborn child was bathed immediately in warm water and had a daily bath until he or she could walk. The day after the baby's birth, the father gave a feast. The new baby was carried in a birch bark baby basket, wrapped in marmot and rabbit skins, with a soft buckskin blanket to hold him firmly in place as he was carried on his mother's back or hung nearby her workplace or inside the winter home, where he could observe his surroundings.

Young children were given the freedom to move about their environment without limitations, but were also encouraged to help with the many jobs that had to be done to secure and process food and make clothing. They learned a great deal about their past while listening to the stories of the elders throughout the winter evenings. They learned about the beliefs of their people by observing the songs and dances, and joining in the ceremonial celebrations that took place each year. The older people of the band were willing to share information they possessed with the young people, showing them the many skills that would have to eventually be mastered by each child.

### **Training in Youth**

As each child reached puberty, they began a strict training, to act as their entry into the adult world. For both boys and girls, this period began with a four day fast, to help the young people prepare themselves for their new life. All young people in training had older relatives as trainers, who watched over them and helped them during their training.

The young girl in training lived in a cone-shaped lodge, slightly apart from the other people of the band. She wore a headband of inner willow bark and a robe that was painted red. At her ankles or knees she wore dew-claws of fawns and carried her birch basket at her waist. Around her neck she carried a scratcher and a drinking tube. Sometimes her scratcher was held by the knots of hair, which also held her comb, that were secured behind her ears.

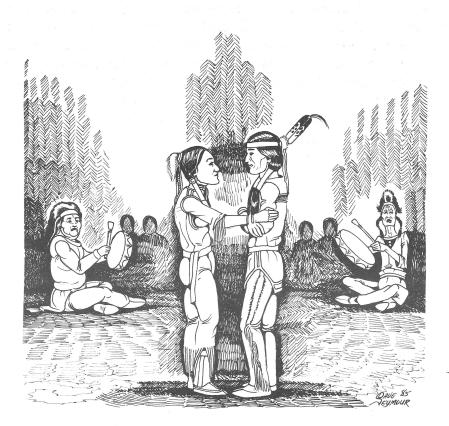
Throughout the training period the young girl took part in many activities that prepared her for life as an adult Shuswap woman. She practised work on buckskin, mat-making, basketry, root-digging and cooking. She prayed to Day Dawn for strength, health, endurance and ability in her work. Her days and nights were spent working toward expertise in all the things she would be expected to do as a woman. She left the articles in trees or at crossroads in the trail near her lodge, so that they could be seen, but she could not be seen by others than her trainers. It was during her training that a girl received her guardian spirit, which would be her protector throughout the rest of her life. After about one year, if her progress was judged successful by her trainer, the girl returned to the band a woman, and could then marry. But she had to remain in training and could not return to the people until she received a guardian spirit.

A young man trained for the same kinds of strengths, but did not live away from the band constantly. He spent his time away at intervals, and built his own sweat house for cleansing during training. By setting himself tests of strength, speed, accuracy and endurance he practised the skills needed for hunting, fishing and war. Outside the training youth's sweathouse hung the feathers of the largest bird he had shot. The youth also prayed to find a guardian spirit which would help him in the kind of life he found himself most suited for.

Training boys had scratchers and drinking tubes and wore the red painted robes for part of the training period. They wore dew-claws of fawn at their knees or ankles. The boy's training ended when he had acquired a guardian spirit. It could last up to several years, but until the training was completed, the boy could not be regarded as a man.

During their training, young men and women painted on the rocks near their lodges or on the mountains nearby. These paintings showed items and creatures that had been seen in dreams or that the training person had made or shot while training.

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**Marriage** 

The young people could marry once they had completed their training and were considered adults. Girls usually married between the ages of thirteen and twenty-three. Men married from about ages twenty-two to twenty-five. Sometimes, marriages were arranged, resulting in a young girl marrying a man twenty to thirty years older than herself, after she had completed her training. Both men and women could choose their own mate and let their choice be made public in a variety of ways, to lead to a marriage.

Marriage by betrothal was common. The marriage proposal would be in the form of presents given to the girl's parents, but actually shared among all her relatives. The presents were often delivered by an older relative to the girl's home. The intention to marry could be announced at a gathering, by the young man or his relative, and gifts presented to the girl's family at that time. Sometimes, the girl's family began the betrothal, by approaching the desired man's family with the suggestion of marriage between the young people. If the marriage was agreeable to the families, and the young people involved, the young man visited the home of the girl for several days. After many days, the young couple was announced as married and usually returned to the home of the boy's father but could choose to live with either parents. This final visit was sometimes accompanied by feasting and the exchange of gifts between the parents and children, which eventually became the property of the in-laws. When a proposal of marriage was refused all gifts were returned.

Another method of choosing a marriage partner was by touching at a ceremonial celebration. During the ceremonial dance the chief announced that it was an opportunity for choosing a

### Death

The dead were buried along with some of their personal possessions. These items might include the knives and weapons, gambling sticks, and always included all of the person's moccasins. A grave pole was placed above the grave. On it were placed more pesonal items or gifts from friends. The relatives of the dead cut their hair and the children of a dead parent wore a buckskin thong around their right ankle. The mourning period for the dead lasted one year. After this time a feast was held by the dead's relatives to repay all the friends who had prepared the dead or assisted the grieving family. The family was then considered no longer in mourning and they returned to their normal roles in the community. After this one year the name of the dead could be passed on to another relative.

Warriors' bodies were burned, so that the enemy would not be able to get them. The warrior sometimes sang his song as he was dying.

### Warfare

The Shuswap people sometimes confronted their neighbours in warfare. They met with the Okanagan, Lillooet and Thompson people on their south and west borders. They fought against the Chilcotins west of them, joining forces with the Carrier people against them. These wars were sometimes fought to gain fishing territories or hunting areas. They were also fought to avenge death resulting from an attack. Slaves were taken from the enemy, but these people gained full membership in the community upon marrying a Shuswap person.

The Shuswap divisions joined forces against their enemies to ensure success in war. A band could call upon relatives, gained through marriage between families of the villages, to assist in a defence against the enemy or to avenge a death with an attack on the enemy. So it was that the Kamloops and Bonaparte people joined forces against the Okanagan. The Fraser River and North Thompson people fought together against the Cree and Thompson. The North Thompson people had help from the Fraser River, Soda Creek and Kamloops people in fighting the Sekani.

### Shuswap View of the World

The Shuswap people believed that the world was made good to live in by the all powerful "Old One" with the help of Coyote. The original story, told and retold by generations of Shuswap people, explained how the earth was made ready for Shuswap people.

The Shuswap people lived in close contact with nature and their actions showed appreciation for nature's bounty and respect for her creatures. At the First Fruits ceremony, when the first Saskatoons were picked, the people showed appreciation for the abundance of fruit that would help supply their winter needs. When game was taken, the hunters took time to show reverence for the animal which was to feed them.

During his or her training each Shuswap person found a guardain spirit from among the animals, articles or elements in their world which was thereafter a protector or helper to that person. During the winter ceremony each sang the mystery song of their guardian spirit. A person carefully studied everything about his guardian spirit, so that he could imitate the skill of it or use other kinds of knowledge gained from it to live a more successful life. It was also during training that the young Shuswap person learned the many prayers and rites which were to be used to show respect for the world and its creatures.

Respect and remembrance for the dead was shown by a ceremonial dance held each year. The Shuswap people practised this ceremony to keep in touch with the world beyond and to help their dead reach the spirit land. Everyone took part in these dances which were led by the Chiefs. During this dance people received visions and prophecies about the future. (This could possibly be the Ghost Dance of the Shuswap people.)

All councils and many ceremonies began or ended with the smoking of the pipe. Everyone was in a circle and the pipe was passed in the directon of the sun's passage. The smoking of the pipe was a preparation for the discussion or celebration to follow. When going into war, the warriors passed the pipe in the opposite direction, to show that they were going to face an enemy.



### - Seasons of the Shuswap People

The Shuswap seasons revolved around the seeking out of food as it became available, according to the time of year. By late fall, however, the coming cold to the interior plateau was what dictated the major activity. It was at this time that the First Moon marked the beginning of the Shuswap year.

First Moon, or Pelxaluxten (going in time) was when the people moved into their winter homes. It was also the time when the deer rut, so that some hunting was being carried out at this time as well.

The time of the First Moon was about October or November, by our present calendar. At this time the Shuswap people from all over the area moved into their winter villages on the rivers. It was here that the people's caches, both above and underground were located and had been filled with bounty of their summer and fall work. Here too, along the banks near the village, appeared the sweathouses of the people, where they could regularly cleanse themselves, both physically and spiritually.

The Fraser River people and Canon people, never having roamed far from their villages, were settling into their well established winter dwelling places. Along the Shuswap lake, Canim Lake, the South Thompson, the North Thompson, and the Bonaparte River valleys, people were building or re-building winter dwellings that would keep them comfortable throughout the coming winter. When the people had all moved into their winter homes the hunting chief would call the men to hunt elk or deer in the nearby hills. The hunters would travel in small groups and call the male game with bone calls or by imitating them, attracting the animals to them. The meat brought into the village was shared among the families of the hunters and dried above the fires of the winter homes, to be later added to the caches which held large supplies of winter food.

During this moon the telling of stories would begin, to shorten the long evenings that were part of the winter season. Precious chunks of dried strawberry or saskatoon cake could be enjoyed as the elders of the families spent hours telling the stories of their ancestors to the younger members. Young children would drift into sleep to the sound of their grandparent's voice recounting the tales and truths of the Shuswap way of life.

The Second Moon or Pestiteqem, was the time of the first real cold and around November-December of our present year. At this time the people were well settled for the winter. The men continued to go out on hunting trips alone or in small groups, bringing back more deer for drying and eating fresh. The women and children helped to set traps and snares for small animals near the village site, catching rabbits and other small animals. The food for a day of trapping might be a

dried cake of meat and berries and some dried salmon.

The women were also taking the skins from storage and beginning work on the winter clothing and all garments needed for the coming year. Many hours were spent by the women, sewing together by the light of the fire. Each day the women and children collected wood to keep the house fire burning and water from the lake or river, for cooking and cleaning. The constantly burning fire would warm the stews of deer meat and berry cake mixed with deer grease, or soups thickened with black tree lichen.

Perhaps during this month a group of young would plan a visit, to a neighbouring village. One way of making such a visit was for the visitor to lower into his host's home, a bundle, as he announced from outside, "I am letting down". He and his friends were then invited to enter and eat with the host family. When they left, they would leave the bundle which contained food to replace that which they had eaten during their visit. This practise made it possible to join friends without making one's presence a burden on their precious winter food supply. Such visits could also take place between members of the same village.

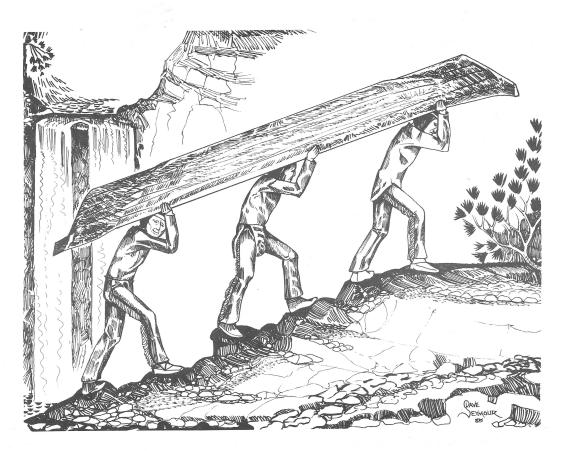


The Third Moon or Pelkutlamin, was when the sun turns, or about December-January. This was usually the coldest moon of the year. During this month the Chief of the band directed the men as they went in large groups to hunt the deer in their mountain habitat. They would drive the deer into the valleys and shoot them in large numbers to take back to the village to replenish the supply of food to the people. During this month the men and their families could fish through the ice and the rivers and lakes, for trout and white fish. Small game snared now would yield soft, thick fur for a child's robe or a grandmother's cap. The women continued to spend many hours, working side by side, sewing for the coming season.

This may have been the month of winter feasting, when the hunters returned with fresh meat. All the people of the village gathered in a large home and the youths sang their mystery songs or the best song they received from their guardian spirit. Or a feast might occur simply because a family had a large supply of food, whereas others had little. This family would invite everyone to join them in a feast to share their food.

The Fourth Moon, or Peskapts, was the spring winds month, which would be January-February of our year. During this month, the people would continue to trap and snare small animals. They could still fish through the ice for fresh fish. But the stored food supplies would be greatly reduced by the early spring month. It might be during this month that the lone hunter would rise before dawn. He would eat a preserved berry or berry and meat cake, and, wearing his deer skin robe, leave for the mountains where the deer or elk were wintering, taking only his weapons. He might hunt high in the mountains until he had found a deer, and would drag it home over the snow to be shared with his family and neighbours; a welcome change from dried food being eaten day to day. At this time of year a family with a well stocked cache might be visited by the chief who would inform them of a family in need. Those with less would then be cared for, in a way which would not embarrass them and the family who had been helped would look forward to better times when they could prepare a feast for their neighbours in repayment for the help they had received. If supplies were very low the chief might call upon a group of the people to forage for rose hips and black tree lichen in the area beyond the village.

By this time of year many new clothes would have been prepared from the stored hides and the new hides would be prepared by tanning. The people would be looking forward to the new growth of spring.



The Fifth Moon, or Pesxuxem, little summer month, which was about February-March, was the time when snow was disappearing from the lower grounds. By the end of this moon some of the people were moving out of their winter homes. This would have been the month when the winter stores reached their lowest. Fishing through the ice would no longer be safe by the end of this month. But the people would be looking forward to moving out into their digging, hunting and fishing areas. They might be beginning to slice huge rounds of cottonwood, spruce or cedar from the trees, to shape into canoes in readiness for travel on the lakes and rivers. The women would perhaps have been busy sewing and repairing the storage bags and tumplines that would be used as they began travelling from place to place gathering roots, shoots and berries. Now deer hunting could be done in the mountains on the crust. The successful hunter would have been a welcome sight in his village and the food of his kill enjoyed by all.

Then would come the excitement of moving out of the villages. Households would gather all of their possessions and prepare to move into the gathering areas, at the slightly higher elevations.

By the end of this moon the women were out with their digging sticks, digging under the dead stems of balsam root for the tender shoots which had just begun to grow underground. These, most plentiful in the drier regions of Shuswap territory, could be taken home and offered fresh to children and the elderly, as the first fresh source of vitamins in many months.

The Sixth Moon, or Peltekeliaiten, was the time when the snow disappeared from the higher ground and grass began to grow; March-April of our months. Mats of tule or bulrush were constructed or repaired to be ready for use on the summer dwellings. At this time family groups moved to their own camps in the traditional gathering places. They first dug into the ground to collect the chocolate tip shoots. Soon it was time to dig the bulbs of chocolate lily, yellow bell and lavender lily and enjoy them fresh or steamed. It was also time to take the sap scrapers to the yellow pine and collect the sweet cambium and sap for the nourishment it provided. The people continued to have some fresh meat in their diet.

This was the time for collecting the roots of cedar and spruce, and the bark of the birch tree for making new baskets for use and trade. Large strips of birch bark were peeled from the bigger trees and folded inside out, until they were to be made into baskets. Many metres of spruce and cedar root were uncovered and cut off, to be split and coiled for later use. Many items were stored at family caches, since not all personal items could be carried as the families moved about their territory.

The Seventh Moon, Peltepantsk, was called the mid-summer month. This was about April-May, and the time when people fished trout in the lower lakes. Late in this month, the fish began moving into the streams and could be caught in traps or on lines in the large lakes. Hunting continued to be successful, as the deer moved out of their wintering areas on routes well known to the Shuswap people. They could snare, trap and hunt them at their drinking and eating places in large numbers, supplying their families with fresh meat and a new source of clothing material.

It was the month when gathering began in earnest. During this month the stems of cow parsnip (Indian Rhubarb), balsamroot and fireweed were collected before they flowered and were eaten fresh or thrown into meat stews and soups as flavouring. Water parsnip bulbs were collected and prepared, as wild carrot, with its spicy flavouring. Some people collected the Indian potato in large numbers at this time and stored it underground, fresh, in a cellar, where it would keep for several months. It was at this time that the cambium of lodgepole pine was collected and eaten or dried for storage. Black cottonwood cambium and buds were eaten fresh. Strengthened and revitalized by

a healthy diet of nutritious food, the Shuswap people began to plan for major trips throughout their territory, to meet old friends, and to trade goods.

The Eighth Moon, PelkakaldEmex, was the time when the saskatoons ripened. This month, May-June, found the Shuswap people enjoying all the fruits of summer in their territory. The saskatoon was the first of the many berries that they gathered and enjoyed in their area. After the chief announced the time to gather the first berries, the women all gathered at the opening picking spot and picked until all the berries had been collected and preserved. They then moved as large groups, from one patch to another, as instructed by the chief, who helped to ensure that everyone knew where the berries were ripe and guided the people to these areas. Sometimes people from different divisions joined together to pick in the most abundant berry patches. Many Shuswap people travelled to the excellent patches in the area surrounding Clinton. This berry picking trip could be combined with the yearly gathering of Shuswap people and their neighbours at Green Lake, in the Lake division area, for celebration and trading.

Many games took place as part of the Green Lake gathering. It was also a time when the chiefs might hold a dance which would allow the opportunity for "touching", and thereby choosing a partner. Here many shared the song and dance given to them by their guardian spirits. The days could be spent in lighthearted competitions and trading, while the evenings might sometimes be involved with serious council among the elders and leaders, where the pipe was smoked and passed in the direction of the sun for guidance and to show respect.

The Shuswap people brought many items to be traded. They traded away dried salmon, salmon oil, deer skins, marmot robes, baskets and hazelnuts to their neighbouring tribes. In return, they received bitter-root, Indian hemp bark and buffalo robes. They took moose skins from the Carrier people. From the Thompsons they got roots, salmon, Indian hemp woven baskets, parfleche and wampum beads. They traded for salmon, woven baskets, goat hair robes and deer skins with the Lillooet people.

Through the summer season, the Shuswap people would have travelled greatly among their divisions. They used the rivers within their territory to move swiftly from place to place, and walked long distances over land to communicate with their neighbouring tribes. Although the language from group to group differed, they used sign language to express themselves and developed a common language, the Chinook Jargon, to talk to each other (a trade language).

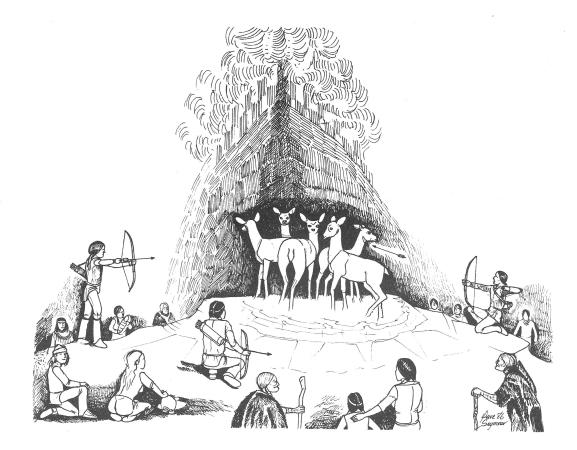
The Shuswap of the Upper North Thompson, Shuswap Lake and on the Arrow Lake were the most isolated, and the Kamloops people travelled most widely. They met with the Shuswap Lake people, the North Thompson people and the lower Fraser River people of High Bar and Clinton. The North Thompson people moved south to meet the Kamloops people, and also met often with the Lake division people and the Iroquois and Cree who lived to the northeast. The Pavillion and High Bar people came into regular contact with the people of Lillooet as they fished the Fraser River. The people of Kamloops and Bonaparte met often with the Thompson people to their west. The Kamloops, Spallumcheen and Arrow Lake people came into contact with the Okanagan people. The Upper North Thompson band saw the Iroquois and Cree. The Soda Creek people were in touch with the Carriers and the Canon division with the Chilcotins. The Canon division were a great trading people, often acting as the middle-man between the northern groups and the other Shuswap people.

The fairly regular intermingling between Shuswap villages and between Shuswap and non-Shuswap people resulted in intermarriage and a resulting extension of ties, since kinship ties were important to the Shuswap people.

In the Ninth Moon, Peltemelik, the autumn month, the salmon arrive. This month, July in the present, would have been a time when the southern Shuswap people began to harvest their abundant salmon fishery. But other activities would still have been going on for most other Shuswap people. It was a time of berry ripening all over Shuswap country. The delicate wild strawberries were being gathered. If they were plentiful enough, they were dried and stored. Blackcaps, gooseberries, squaw currant, soapberries and thimbleberries might have been ripening, and these were collected in large numbers to be preserved.

This would have been a month of travel, from one berry patch to another. Families would have gone to the higher elevations to dig huge quantities of yellow avalanche lily, and dried them for winter use. The eastern people, on the Columbia would have collected a good supply of blue camass for storage, as the men hunted along the familiar travel routes of elk and deer. The bulbs of the tasty, flavourful wild onion would be gathered in huge quantities, savouring the fresh soups and being dried in great numbers for winter use. Fishing trout at the mouths of streams and at their outlet from the the lakes would have been a regular activity. The awareness of coming winter, and the need to prepare for it would have been evident in the strings of drying roots and mats of drying berries spread around the small family encampments along the lakes and streams of the middle elevations.

In the Tenth Moon, Peltxelelx-TEn, the people fished salmon all month. This moon, about August of our months, was the time that people spent a great deal of time on the rivers within their areas, fishing for sockeye and spring salmon. This was when the people were thinking about the long winter months ahead, and the racks and racks of drying fish were ensuring that they could eat comfortably and nutritiously throughout that winter. But it was at this time too that they collected more of the ripening fruit of saskatoon and soapberries in the mountains. Near their fishing grounds they could now find the hawthorne, dwarf huckleberries, blueberries, blue elderberry, Oregon grape, and red-osier dogwood berries, which could be added to their winter supplies or eaten fresh as a change from their regular diet of fish.



In the Eleventh Moon, Pelxetcikenten, the people cached their fish and left the river to hunt. In the September month, the drying of salmon was completed for some of the Shuswap people. Not all the people had so short a salmon season. The people of the Canon could continue to fish for some time yet, and the Kamloops and Shuswap Lake people could catch the Adams Lake salmon run much later. But for many the fishing was over for the year, and it was time to do some hunting and the last of the season's gathering. The people moved into the mountains, where the whole band might at times be engaged to surround a group of animals, such as elk, sheep or deer, on a mountain top, where they could be shot in large numbers. Some of the time was spent collecting the cinquefoil root in the mountains, and the ripening kinnikinnick and huckleberries. The huckleberries were preserved in great numbers for winter use. At the lower levels the women collected fairy bell and false Solomon's seal berries toward the end of this moon. Along the hillsides, the useful balsamroot now yielded its seeds which could be used fresh or act as needed protein when taken out of storage in the winter. During this time too, the people collected mushrooms which they strung on Indian hemp lines to dry or threw them into the soups made from the game they killed on their hunting trips.

The balance of the year was called Pelwellsten, or fall time, and during this October-November season, the people travelled into the mountains and took meat for winter. They gathered ripe cranberries which they pitted and dried, and the ripe soapberries fell from the branches onto their mats and could be boiled or eaten. Thistle roots were taken and preserved. Huge supplies of tiger lily root were roasted on storage in the winter caches. The men hunted for deer in groups, and the meat was dried in the heat of small huts built for this purpose or above the sweathouse fires. Many marmot were shot or snared for their meat and their furs.

Perhaps the people would pass through one of the areas where red ochre was found, along the east side of Adams Lake or in the Rocky Mountains, and collect it for use as decoration on clothing

and other articles. Any travellers who passed through the Arrowstone hills at the head of Cache Creek would have stopped to collect the precious basalt needed to restock the supply of arrow and spear heads.

As they travelled the women and children would have sought out the caches of squirrels and taken their supplies of hazelnuts, Douglas fir nuts or white bark-pine nuts. They would have collected them from the trees as well, eating them fresh or roasting them in the ashes for a tasty "peanut" treat. If they were found in large amounts they were added to the winter storage supply.

By late in this moon, the people would have descended from their mountain hunting territories laden with the goods which they had gathered and supplied themselves within their last outing of the year. They would re-group along the lower lakes and the major rivers at the site of their last winter village. Sometimes, the people of one band would make their home at a new site, which might be chosen because of its nearness to a better food, water or wood source. But it would be a time of readiness, with every family's cache full to over-flowing with a winter food supply. The families who had been separated throughout the busy summer were reunited for a time, and could visit often as they worked, and gathered in ceremony to renew their beliefs.

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# 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

For years the Shuswap bands have struggled to recover their heritage and

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

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.

restore it to its true role as the foundation of their nation.

European contact.