Shuswap History:

A Century of Change

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Introduction

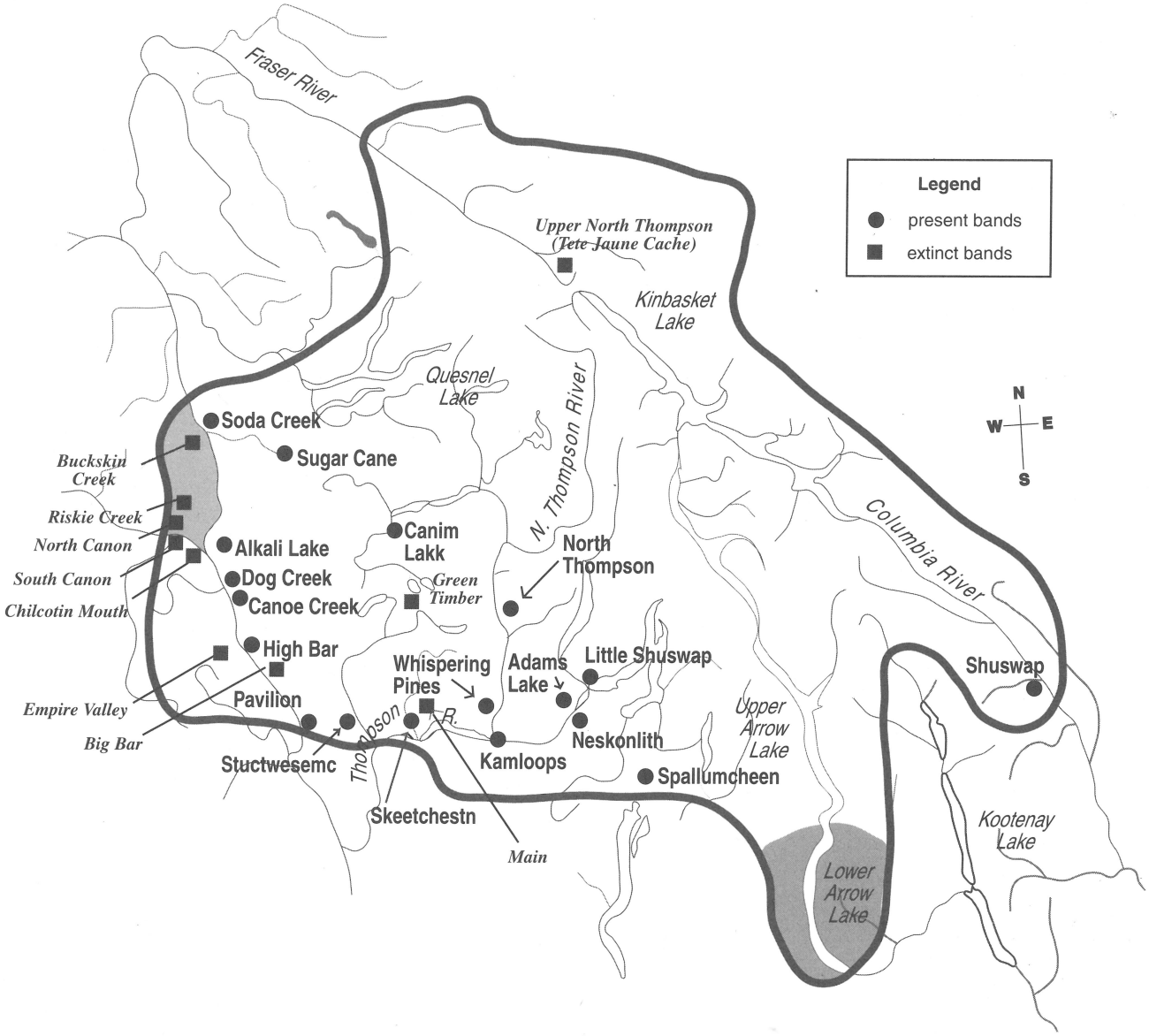
The booklet Shuswap History—A Century of Change is the result of years of research and writing. The original draft manuscript was written by Annabel Cropped Eared Wolf as part of a series of essays on Shuswap history. The focus of the series was outlined by Secwepemc Cultural Education Society Curriculum Committee. The research was carried out by Monty Palmantier, Peter Michel and myself.

We believe that to understand Shuswap issues, it must be appreciated that all of today's events have their roots in history. A bibliography is included that lists the written resources of information.

I would like to thank all the people involved in the publishing of this book.

Robert Matthew

Shuswap Goods and Everyday Items—Before and After Contact



Map based on James Teit, 1909

At the time of contact with Europeans, the Shuswap occupied a vast territory. It extended from the Columbia River Valley to west of the Fraser River and south to the Arrow Lakes. Shuswap Territory covered about 180,000 square kilometres.

Shuswap Culture Before Contact

The Shuswap used local materials and their own skills to obtain everything they needed. Food, clothing, shelter, tools and other essential everyday items came from their local environment.

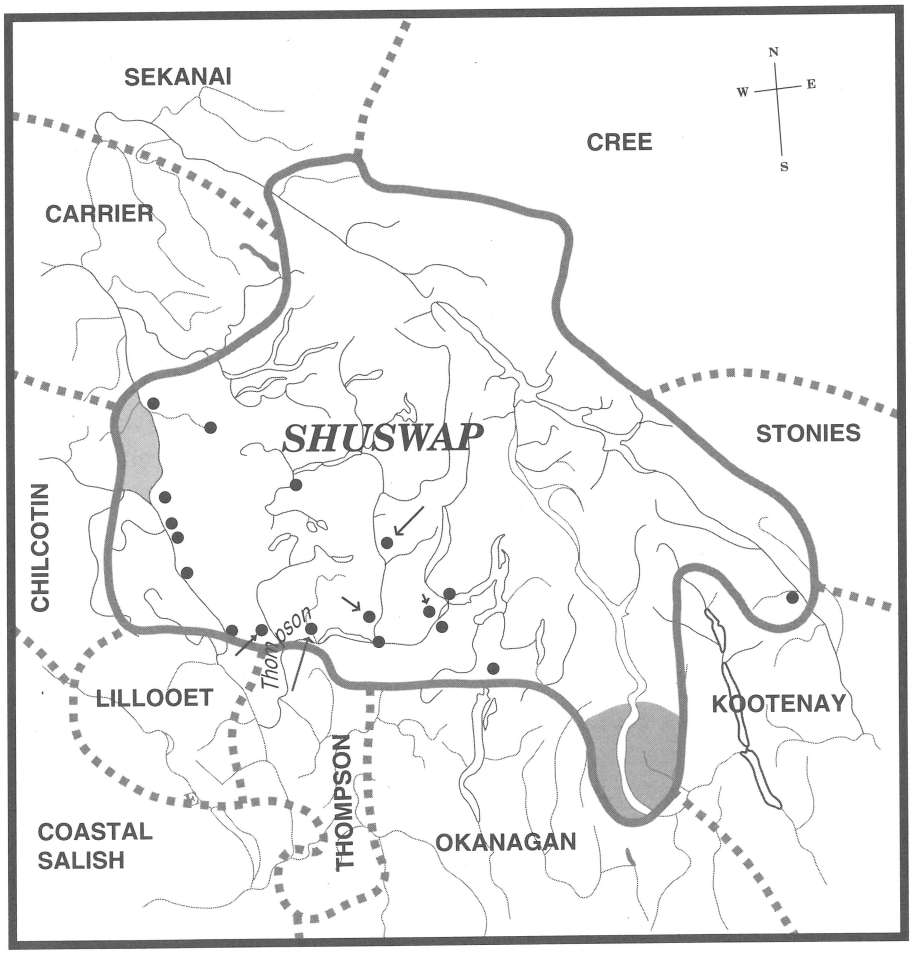
The Shuswap economy was based on fishing, hunting and trading. The lakes and rivers provided an abundance of fish, particularly salmon and trout. A variety of fruit and other plants supplemented the diet. Elk, moose, caribou, deer, mountain sheep and mountain goats was plentiful. A number of animals were important for their furs: the fox, bear, wolf, cougar, beaver, ermine, marten, wolverine, otter and marmot. The loon, Canada goose, duck, eagle, hawk, woodpecker and owl were common. Ducks and geese were important for food. The feathers of other birds were used for decorations.

There was also some trading with other tribes. "The northern bands served as middlemen between the other Shuswap bands and the Chilcotin. The northern bands bought products from both groups and sold them at a profit."[1] The Soda Creek Band traded with the Carrier, while the bands in the North Thompson Division had contact with the Plains, Cree, Stoney, Kootenay and Iroquois. (The Iroquois were paddlers from the fur trade who had settled in the Interior.) The bands in the Kamloops Division and the Shuswap Lake Division traded mainly with the Okanagan. The Stuctwesemc and the Pavilion bands did their trading with the Lillooet and the Thompson.

In trade, the Shuswap obtained dentalium shells, woven goat's hair blankets and belts, snowshoes, dressed animals skins, buffalo robes, wampum beads, roots, bark and baskets. In exchange, they traded dried salmon, salmon oil, baskets, paint, deer skins, shells and rawhide bags to other tribes. By the early 1800s, European items were added to the staples of the trade. These included iron, copper, brass, glass beads, horses and firearms.

In the winter, the people lived in the kekuli, a circular underground home built along the riverbank. A pit was dug 60 to 90 cm below ground level. Then a cone-shaped framework of poles was erected over the site and covered with grass, cedar bark and earth. In the warmer seasons, the Shuswap put up a portable mat lodge similar in size and shape to the teepee of the Plains Indians. Sometimes bark or fir boughs were used in place of tule mats. Bedding was made from the skins of deer, sheep or goats. Fine brush and grass made pillows. Blankets were made from softened bearskins and other fur robes.

Baskets were used for cooking, root gathering and berry picking. These were usually made of coiled cedar roots, of birchbark or of woven spruce, balsalm or poplar bark. "Baskets were decorated with dyed and undyed split goose and swan quills."[2] Bags made of animal hides and skins were also used for storing and carrying food, household goods and personal items. Cups were made from birch bark, and spoons were carved from the horn of goats or mountain sheep. Stone pestles and hand hammers were used to grind berries and other foods.



Courtesy Department Library Service/American Museum of Natural History

Neg. No. 42930 (Photo: H.I. Smith)

Salish woman dressing a deer skin.

Shuswap clothing was made from hide and fur. The men wore leggings, breechcloths, shirts or jumpers. Shirts were decorated with feathers, dyed hair tassels, buckskin fringes, horsehair and quills. The rest of the clothing was worn plain. Sometimes robes were dyed with natural colours. Women also wore shirts and leggings as well as skirts and dresses. Women's buckskin dresses were worn belted or loose, and decorated with quills, bone beads, shells and elk teeth. All the Shuswap wore fur coats, capes, caps, mittens, socks and leggings for added warmth in winter. Bone was used to make awls and needles for sewing, and sinew made strong thread.

Footwear was made from the hide of deer, elk, caribou, moose. Moccasins were usually plain but occasionally embroidered with dyed quills and horsehair. Woven sage brush or rushes and sturgeon skin were sometimes used to make shoes and sandals.

The Shuswap also wore headbands and head gear. Those worn by warriors, shamans and chiefs were decorated with feathers, shells and ermine pelts. "Belts, ribbons and garters were common, and were decorated with teeth, tassels and feathers."[3] Combs were made out of gooseberry wood and a shrub called pursh. Other accessories included earrings, necklaces, breastplates and nose ornaments. Worn by both men and women, these were made of dentalium shells, bone beads, wampum beads, copper, animal teeth, claws, quills, feathers and seeds.

The Shuswap travelled mainly by canoe or on foot. Most canoes were made from the bark of spruce and white pine. Some canoes were dugouts, made out of cottonwood logs. When travelling by land, the whole family carried their goods in bags made of caribou leg skins or of babiche (narrow strips of rawhide woven together). The carrying bags were supported by a buckskin strap around the forehead.

In hunting, traps and snares and bows and arrows were important. Bows were made from juniper wood. Bow strings were made from sinew. The bow was usually stained and then decorated on the hand grip with quills and with the tail feathers of the red-shafted flicker. Arrowheads were usually made of rocks such as basalt, obsidian, agate and quartz. Sometimes bone, horn or beaver teeth were used instead. Shuswap arrows had a distinctive streak of red paint down half their length. Wolverine and fisher skins were popular in the making of quivers. The bow and arrow was the main weapon in defence and war. Other weapons were tomahawks, spears, knives, clubs and machetes.

Glossy basalt, obsidian, jasper, agate and quartz were worked into spear points, knife blades and tomahawk heads. Serpentine and jade made excellent clubs, axeheads, chisels, adzes, skin

Interior Salish Dugouts.

BCARS PN 350

scrapers, and blades for knives and daggers. Antler from elk, caribou and deer were also used for these tools. Whetstones and files were made of sandstone or gritstone.

Prior to European contact, the Shuswap relied solely on local materials and craftsmen. With these, they produced their clothing, homes, household goods, furnishings, canoes and all the tools they needed to maintain their communities.

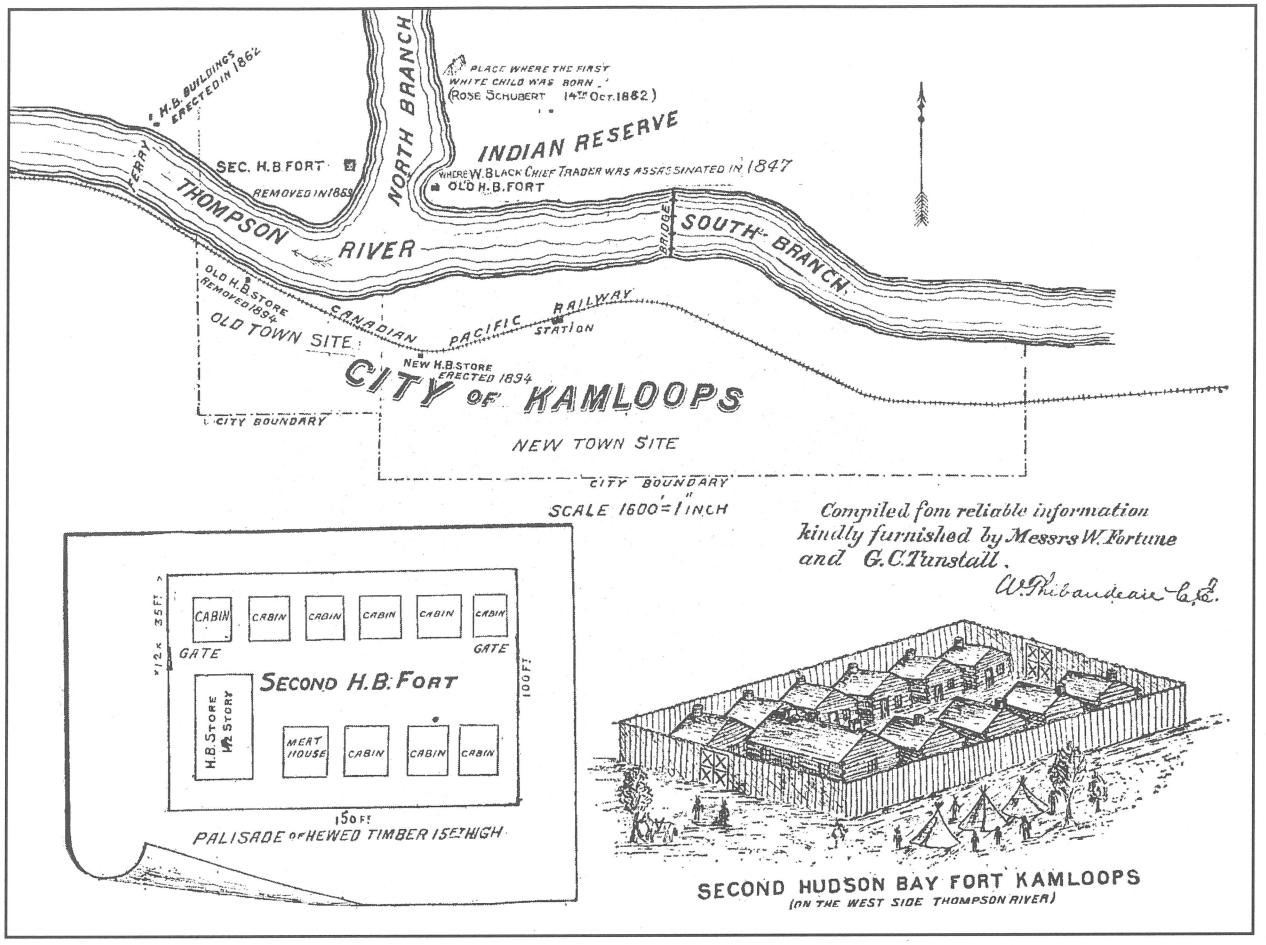
The Fur Trade

North America had an abundance of beaver with their fine fur pelts. Beaver pelts, used to make beaver felt hats and other items, brought high prices in Europe. The fur trade became a large-scale industry. As the beaver became trapped out in eastern Canada, the fur trade pushed westward. Transportation costs increased as the fur trade moved further inland.

Between 1793 and 1812, the North West Company began to explore west across the Rocky Mountains. Alexander Mackenzie was seeking a river route to the Pacific to reduce the high cost of transporting furs across the continent. In 1793, he met the Shuswap and gave them presents of beads and tobacco. The personal safety of the explorers and the success of their explorations depended entirely on the goodwill and support of the Indians. Wherever they travelled, they gave gifts to the Indians and relied on Indian guides to win the support of each Indian nation they encountered.

Simon Fraser was another explorer with the North West Company. In 1808, he successfully followed the Fraser River down to the Pacific Ocean. He could not have travelled through the Fraser Canyon without the aid of the Indians. He relied on their knowledge of the area, their skills and their supply of food and suitable clothing. Near Williams Lake River, he ran into some rough spots and was forced to portage part of his load. At Soda Creek Canyon, he met some Shuswap who helped him. "Xlo'sem, the chief from Soda Creek, agreed to serve as a guide."[4] He took Mackenzie through Shuswap land safely into Lillooet territory.

Both Mackenzie and Fraser found that Indians in the Interior already had some European items of trade such as copper, brass, iron and glass beads. These trade items had reached the Interior from the Pacific Coast as different Indian nations traded with one another. The Shuswap had received these European items from the Lillooet and Chilcotin



Map of Kamloops, figures of Second Hudson Bay Fort Provincial Archives of B.C.

At the same time, American fur-trading companies were advancing north into the same territory. David Stuart and Alexander Ross were independent traders with the Pacific Fur Company. David Stuart, two French Canadians and an Indian reached the Kamloops area in 1811 by way of the Okanagan. "Stuart's group spent the fall and winter at Kamloops."[5] Finding beaver plentiful and the Indians eager to trade, they returned in 1812. They built a small fur-trading post called Fort She-waps on the south bank of the Thompson River junction. A few weeks later, Joseph Laroque built a fur-trading post for the North West Company. This post, called Fort Kamloops was northeast of the river junction. In 1813, the North West Company bought out the Pacific Fur Company.

The Kamloops post was used by all the surrounding Shuswap bands and neighbouring Indian nations. Every year the traders gave tobacco to each of the Shuswap chiefs. The traders encouraged the chiefs to get their people to trap many furs and to be friendly and helpful to the traders.

In 1821, the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company joined together. The name of the Hudson's Bay Company was kept. The fort at Kamloops was called Thompson River Post. Another fort was built in Shuswap territory that same year. Fort Alexandria was built on the banks of the Fraser where Alexander Mackenzie first met the Carrier and the Shuswap bands. The northern Shuswap bands began to trade at that post, but they still made occasional trading trips down to Kamloops. The Upper North Thompson Band and the Shuswap Band in the Columbia Valley were encouraged to trade at Rocky Mountain House east of the Rockies. Because of the attacks on them by the Assiniboine, Iroquois and Metis, these bands usually preferred the fort at Kamloops. In 1851, Little Fort was built for trade in the North Thompson River area. There was not enough trade, and the fort was soon abandoned.

First the explorers and then the fur-trading posts brought European goods directly to the Shuswap. The Shuswap traded beaver pelts and other furs. In return, they received a variety of goods that became part of their culture. The Shuswap gained guns, ammunition, war clubs, axes, traps, pots, pans, kettles, tobacco, Hudson's Bay blankets, red and blue flannel cloth, beads and a few food staples.

By 1825 the fur trade was on the decline. There were fewer furs for the Shuswap to trade. This decline was caused by overtrapping as well as by natural changes in the beaver population. As beaver became more scarce, the Shuswap trapped more marten and other small fur-bearing animals.

Even though the fur trade declined, the trading post at Kamloops was kept open as a stopover for fur brigades. It also became a stock-raising centre. The horses were used in pack trains that took furs to the coast for shipment overseas. Fort Alexandria was mainly used as a storage depot for goods going north from Kamloops to Stuart Lake and Fraser Lake. The HBC posts continued to trade furs until the 1860s, but the fur trade was never as important as it was between 1812 and 1827.

Changes in Shuswap Culture

During the fur trade, many European items were used by the Shuswap. Some of these replaced locally made items and some were used in addition to Shuswap items. These changes were more noticeable in bands living near the trading posts. Bands farther away did not use as many European items.

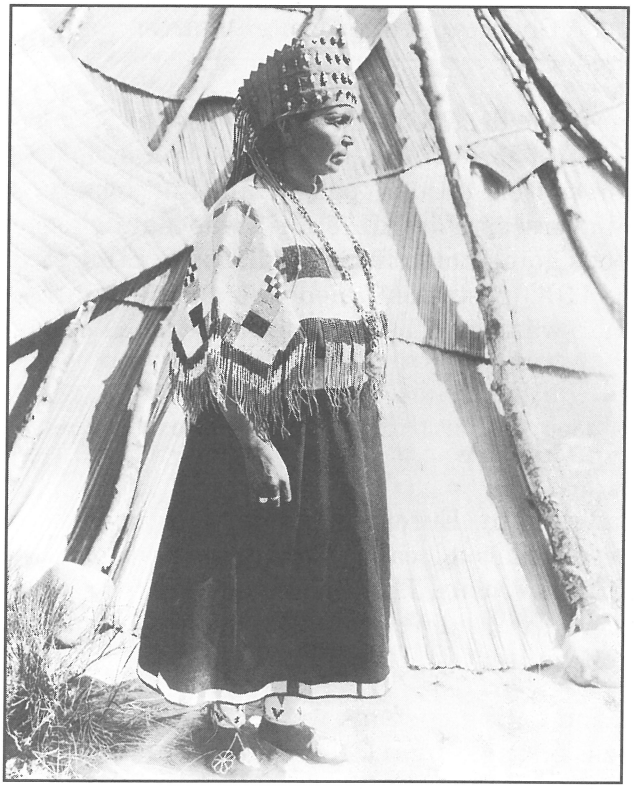
The Shuswap diet and eating customs were changed by the new goods. Rice, potatoes, beans, sugar and tea were added to the

Shuswap diet of fish, meat, berries and roots. European dishes, utensils and cookware eventually replaced baskets and Shuswap cutlery.

Homes were also changed, but not completely. The log cabin replaced the winter underground kekuli before 1858. However, summer lodges of tule mat and bark were still being used in 1900. Some families also liked the store-bought canvas tents. Scaffolds, cellars and sweathouses remained well into the 1900s.

The Shuswap people liked the quality and beauty of the Hudson's Bay blanket. These blankets were used as robes or made into coats and other items of clothing. Blankets were also used with their Shuswap bedding, eventually replacing mats and skins.

Shuswap clothing was changed by the cloth and blankets received in trade. The women made these into dresses and leggings, which they decorated with beads, dentalia and animal teeth. European glass beads replaced Shuswap bone beads and decorations of bird quills and horsehair. Beadwork was now in fashion and beads were available in a number of colours. The Shuswap no longer needed to prepare natural dyes. By 1860 coloured silk thread replaced the use of beads in embroidery. By 1900 there was very little beadwork. Eventually the women began to wear cotton dresses and shawls and to use silk handkerchiefs.



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Woman in traditional dress.

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Traditional dress, Hudson's Bay blanket made into a robe.

Men's clothing also changed. Their leggings, shirts, robes, coats, mittens and socks were now made from red and blue trade cloth. Coloured woollen sashes replaced traditional belts. However, men wore traditional styles until the 1850s. Then men began to wear more blue jeans, cotton shirts, cloth coats, vests and cowboy hats. Among the items shipped from Langley to the Interior in 1852 were 1,680 shirts, 850 pairs of trousers, and a few beaver felt hats and vests.

Some items did not change. Moccasins were worn throughout the contact period by both men and women. Moccasins were still popular in 1900, when James Teit, the ethnologist, visited the Shuswap. Teit also noticed that bone needles and awls were still being used. They had not yet been replaced by manufactured items.

The Shuswap received new jewellery from the traders. Earrings, bracelets and rings of brass or copper were introduced. Shuswap jewellery made of local materials was still used as well. Three hundred gross of brass finger rings were shipped to the Interior from Langley for trade in 1855.

The shape of the traditional Shuswap pipe changed after the introduction of European twist tobacco, which became very popular. The original Shuswap pipe was tubular, similar to the cigar holder, and was suited for the texture of tobacco used. After contact, pipes were made with upward bowls to hold the finely cut tobacco. They were made from soapstone, buck antler or bearberry root. By 1900, store-bought wooden pipes were common. Elaborately decorated pouches for the storage of pipes and tobacco also became popular during this period.

The horse was introduced to the southern Shuswap around 1780 through trade with the Okanagan and Thompson tribes. The horse greatly improved land travel. For example, goods were transported on horses with panniers instead of carried by people with tumpline and basket. The use of the horse created the need for a whole array of accessories, all made from local materials. Pack saddles were made from cottonwood, and cruppers from buckskin padded with deer hair. Riding saddles had horns made from antler. Stirrups were made of wood or sheephorn. The crupper or collars were beaded. Cinches were woven of deer hair. Rings and hooks were made of antler. Horsehair and rawhide were fashioned into halters, bridles and ropes.

There is record of muskets being used in war by the Shuswap as early as 1815. Guns and ammunition were fairly common throughout the Shuswap territory by 1840. As they became more common, guns gradually replaced the bow and arrow. European-made war clubs were introduced, but the people preferred their own handmade pipe tomahawks, spike-ball clubs and machetes. The Shuswap tried using iron to make arrow points, spear points and knives, but iron did not last as well as the local materials. Trade knives, however, became popular and replaced the handmade item. Net twine eventually replaced twine made from Indian hemp. This was used to make nets, snares and fish lines. Steel traps replaced traps made of leather strips as the demand for fur pelts increased.

The fur trade brought some exciting changes to the Shuswap culture. The Shuswap borrowed items that were useful. They were creative in changing other items to suit their culture. Some European items had no parallel in traditional Shuswap culture. Then the people used local materials and their own ingenuity to produce similar items. For instance, riding gear—from the saddle to every ring and hook—was made from local raw materials.

The fur trade also brought the Shuswap into greater contact with neighbouring tribes. There were cultural changes in this way too. Shuswap clothing, accessories, art design and homes were

influenced by the Plains Cree, Iroquois, Okanagan tribes and the Indians on the Pacific Coast.

SCES Archives

Bone awl (top three & needles (bottom three).

At first, the Shuswap people were able to control their involvement in the fur trade. They chose the kind of items traded because their large numbers and independence gave them some power. They mainly chose items that were useful within their own culture. Blankets and cloth were made into traditionally styled clothing. The handles of copper kettles made excellent tools for carving on stone, bone or antler. In some cases, the Shuswap decided that local materials and methods were better. For example, the durable bone awl and needle were still in common use in 1900, as were moccasins.

Without the cooperation and support of the Shuswap, the early explorers and traders would not have had any success in exploring and trading within Shuswap territory. Their personal safety depended on the goodwill of the Indians. The traders also relied heavily on the Indians to supply them with food and to assist them with running the posts. The fur trade could be successful only if the Indians were willing to participate. Poor returns at Fort Kamloops were blamed on the Indians' lack of cooperation. The traders there constantly feared for their safety. They complained about the attitude of the Shuswap. The Indians exercised a fair amount of discretion about their role in the trade.

The Shuswap, however, could not keep control of their involvement in the fur trade. They became dependent on European weapons, food supplies and raw materials for clothing and tools. As the area became trapped out, the Shuswap used salmon and venison to obtain the trade goods they depended on. As early as 1822, traders reported that the Indians were starving. With poor salmon runs and decreases in wild game, food shortages were not uncommon.

The fur trade was the beginning of drastic changes that eventually eroded the culture and independence of the Shuswap Nation. During the fur trade, the Shuswap had some independence and self-sufficiency. As the trade ended, they could not survive without some of the trade goods. This left the Shuswap open to the forces that followed the fur trade—the miners, settlers, missionaries and colonial government. The Shuswap were displaced from their land, their culture was eroded, and their political rights and freedoms were restricted.

Economic, Social and Political Changes after Contact 1800 — 1858

BCARS 13415

Cultures change in response to changes in the natural environment or as a result of contact with other cultures. Sometimes this process of dealing with a changing environment or new culture takes place gradually. Then the society has more control over how it responds. It can choose some new materials and ideas and blend them with its own. It can reject others. Such gradual changes can enrich the culture and make it easier to adapt to future changes.

The fur trade brought many changes to the Shuswap way of life. At first, the Shuswap people borrowed selectively from the Europeans way of life and gradually adapted to the new culture. All too soon the pace and tone of European contact with the Shuswap changed. While some aspects of Shuswap life were enriched, the Shuswap people suffered important, basic losses as a result of contact with Europeans.

The following sections look at changes in the Shuswap economic, social and political life after contact with explorers and fur traders and until the Gold Rush in 1858. During this time, many bands lost some of their economic self-sufficiency. A new political authority was imposed upon them. Many of the social values and the traditional customs, however, were still strong.

Prior to European contact, each Shuswap band had economic, social and political systems. These had developed over time and were functioning smoothly to take care of the needs of band members. The extended family was the basic unit that provided food, protection, education and discipline. Everyone was assured of physical, moral and emotional support within this comprehensive and well-defined system of mutual exchange. The band provided a further supportive network. If a family did not fulfil its responsibilities, other band members would provide shelter and assistance. These practices of sharing made sure that every individual was taken care of in times of need.

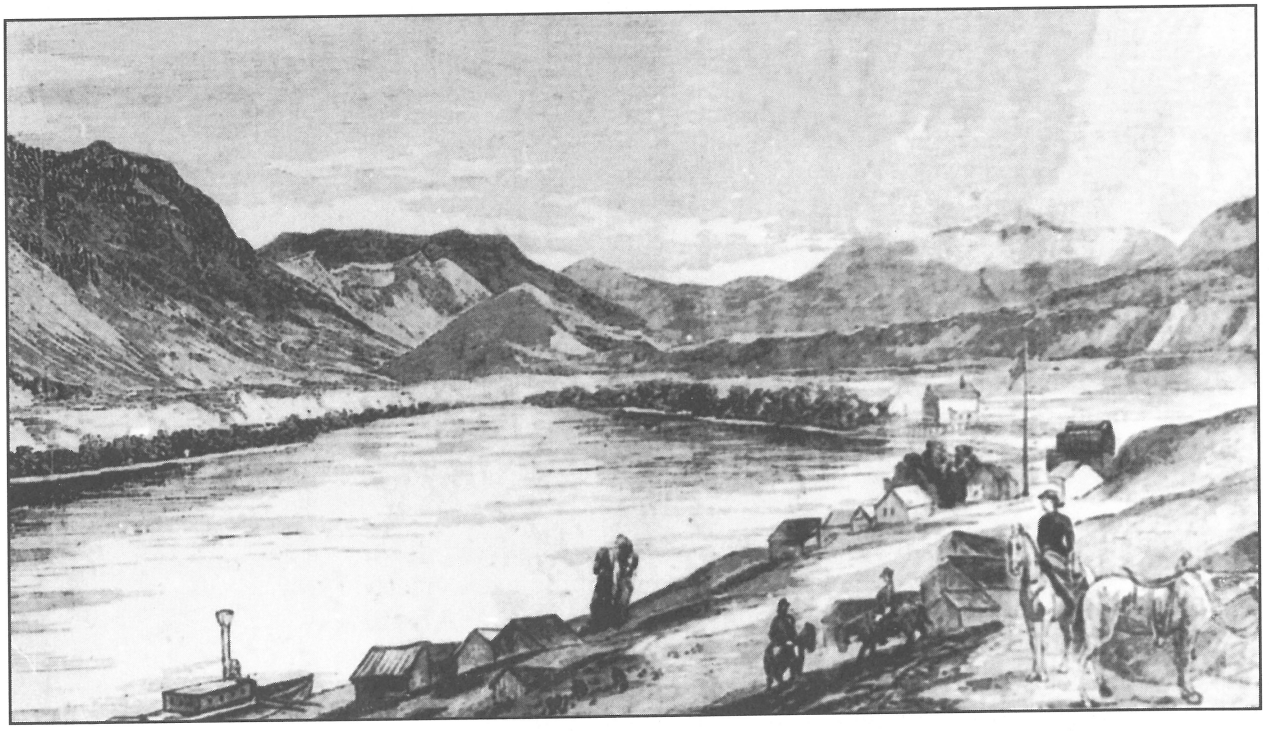
"Each band had a hereditary chief. This position was passed down from father to son. Additional leaders with special skills were selected to oversee hunting trips, war expeditions and ceremonies."[1] A band selected a leader who supported the ideal qualities upheld by the group. The leader would have to be strong, kind, wise, courageous, intelligent and generous. The people were involved in decision

making. Heads of families discussed important issues and reached a consensus about what action to take. A leader may have only offered advice, but because of the people's faith in that person's judgement, the leader's advice was probably followed. If the people became dissatisfied with a leader they had chosen, they would select a new one. In this system the people kept the authority. This ensured some equality in rights, opportunities and treatment.

Economic Changes

The Indians of the Interior first received European trade items through their trade relationships with the Lillooet and the Chilcotin. Later, Simon Fraser and David Thompson explored into the Interior. Trading posts were built, such as Rocky Mountain House in 1799. Many of the Shuswap bands then became directly involved in the fur trade. "In 1811, David Stuart and Alexander Ross of the Pacific Fur Company visited Kamloops, Shuswap Lake and Arrow Lakes. These fur traders reported that there was an abundance of beaver and that the Indians were willing to trade."[2] In the next 40 years, posts were built at Kamloops (1812), Alexandria (1821) and Little Fort (1851), all within or close to Shuswap territory. After 1821, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) had the exclusive right to trade in the region.

Sketch of Kamloops Village.



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The usefulness of the trade goods was an incentive for the Shuswap to trap beaver. "Tobacco was particularly popular, no doubt because those using tobacco became addicted to it. Tobacco also had special ceremonial significance in many Indian cultures."[3]

In return, the fur traders wanted high-quality beaver pelts. These were used to make beaver felt hats and other clothing. The European demand for the beaver pelt soon led to the near extinction of the animal in eastern Canada. Trade moved westward in search of new resources. Thus, the Shuswap became involved in international trade to meet the demands of the European market.

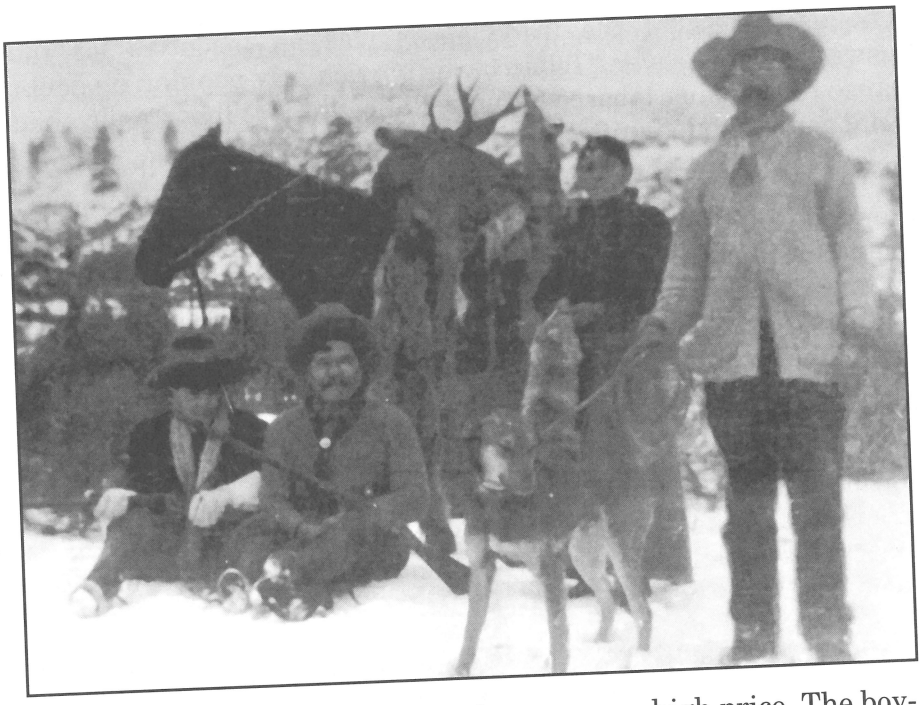
The fur trade had a great effect on traditional Shuswap life. More time was spent trapping. As a result, the Shuswap had less time for traditional hunting, fishing and food gathering. There is some evidence that the trapping period was extended in order to obtain more beaver. This extention was a violation of traditional conservation measures.

"Fifteen years after the establishment of a trading post at Kamloops, the beaver was near extinction in the area."[4] The post, however, remained open for trading. It also served as a stopover for the fur brigades bringing furs from the north to the coast. Horses were also raised at Kamloops to provide fresh horses for the pack trains.

As a result, the Shuswap began to trade food and provisions to supply the trading posts and the fur brigades. The Shuswap now had to hunt and fish to obtain enough food for their own needs and to barter the trade goods they needed.

The larger settled population—Shuswap and traders—had a greater demand for food. In addition, horses competed for the range land used by wild game. The wild animal population declined. By 1825, elk were becoming scarce. Archibald McDonald of Thompson River Post at Kamloops reported in 1827 that the Indians were becoming alarmed over the disappearance of animals in the region. Reductions in wild game and poor runs of salmon created economic hardships for the Shuswap. There was also a lot of pressure on the Indians to trade their catches of salmon. If they did so, they experienced extreme food shortages between December and February. There were several years between 1822 and 1859 with reports of starvation.

The Shuswap and other Indians were aware of the economic pressures on their people. Some tried to stop the changes, but it was too late. In September 1854, Chief Nicholas an Okanagan chief, and Chief Adam of the Upper Lakes, attempted to boycott the trade. They sent word to the different Indian bands in the Interior not to trade at Kamloops unless the prices were lowered. In February 1852,



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Hunter with a deer.

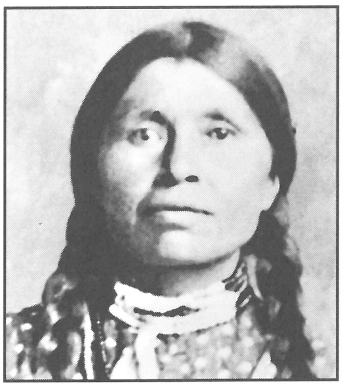
one blanket was worth 100 dry salmon, a very high price. The boycott failed to lower prices because the Hudson's Bay Company got salmon from other tribes.

By the 1850s, the Shuswap had adapted some European items into their culture. For example, in 1855 an order was shipped to the Interior. It included 3,288 yards of assorted fabric and an additional 241 pieces of cloth. The shipment also contained 1680 shirts, 850 pairs of trousers, 220 blankets, 16 dozen assorted knives, 55 dozen assorted files, 800 axes, as well as frying pans and kettles. Some of these items may have been used by employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, but most of them have been intended for the Shuswap.

The migration of the Shuswap to the Columbia Valley may be linked to the fur trade. In 1927, Moses Kinbasket related that his grandfather from near Shuswap Lakes area was the first Shuswap to settle permanently in the Columbia Valley. The Kinbasket family had visited the Columbia Valley since before 1820. In the 1850s, Pierre Kinbasket discovered good hunting in this area and returned to settle there. It is possible that the demand on the dwindling numbers of game and fur-bearing animals led Pierre Kinbasket to settle permanently in the Columbia River Valley.

The fur trade changed the economic life of the Shuswap. Traditionally, the main occupations were hunting, fishing and gathering roots and berries. When the fur trade started, the

Shuswap worked as trappers, couriers and guides. Later, the fur brigades needed them as packers and provisioners of food supplies. "The Shuswap also worked as casual labourers in the maintenance of the forts and as gardeners in the potato fields. In addition, they tended livestock and harvested food crops and hay."[5] Although the Shuswap people had become dependent on European trade goods and the trade economy, they were cultivating skills and gaining knowledge about the way of life that would eventually replace the fur trade.



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Moras Kinbasket, daughter of Chief Kinbasket.

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Rose Kinbasket, daughter of Chief Kinbasket.

Social Changes

In traditional Shuswap society, all of the land and hunting grounds were considered tribal property. Although each band had its common hunting, trapping and fishing areas, other Shuswap bands were welcome to use them. The demand for furs, however, created competition for trapping areas. Other tribes also brought different ideas about property and land use.

Some Shuswap elders told Teit about one of these conflicts. About 1830, the Fraser River bands north of Dog Creek tried to set aside a large part of the northern hunting grounds as the sole property of certain families. This caused some friction among the bands. The bands in the Lake and North Thompson divisions avoided the area. The Lower Fraser River bands refused to acknowledge the claim and continued to hunt there. The northern bands then tried to restrict their exclusive rights to trapping, but they did not succeed. They finally withdrew their exclusive claim.

Among the Indians along the Pacific Coast, the potlatch was an elaborate ceremony rooted in the culture. It served religious, economic and political purposes. "The potlatch was also a feature of Chilcotin and Carrier cultures that at first only existed among the Fraser River and Lake Divisions. By 1880, potlatches or gatherings had spread to the Kamloops, Skeetchestn, Pavilion and Stuctwesemc bands."[6] "Particular songs and dances were performed, a feast was served, and gifts were given to the guests. The Shuswap potlatch appeared to resemble Shuswap ceremonies already in existence."[7] "Potlatch" was used by James Teit, but "gathering" is a more accurate term. It was a recreational and social event. These gatherings probably also reaffirmed the Shuswap belief system and provided a means of redistributing the wealth among the Shuswap bands. Thompson and Okanagan Indians were guests at some of these feasts. This exchange probably enhanced trade relations and political alliances.

Family life also changed with the fur trade. "The Hudson's Bay

Company had a policy that encouraged traders to take Indian wives in order to establish rapport with the Indians."[8] The Indian wives served as interpreters and intermediaries. They were likely successful in getting the Indians to act in the interests of the Company. These unions probably followed the Shuswap marriage customs of betrothal and the presentation of gifts. However, they no doubt brought men into Shuswap families and communities who did not understand or support traditional Shuswap beliefs, customs and values. In some cases perhaps the husbands introduced conflicting values and practices that were disruptive to Shuswap society.

Even when both husband and wife were Shuswap, the fur trade altered family life."The men sometimes spent all of the fall, winter and spring hunting and trapping in distant areas."[9] Women had to assume greater responsibilities in child rearing, training and obtaining food.

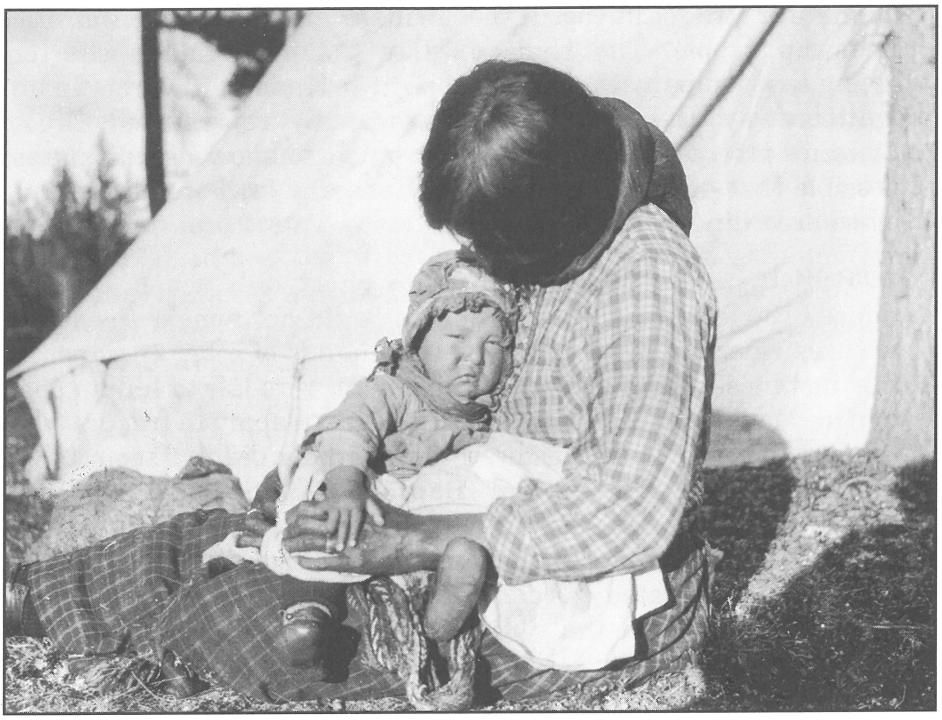
Shuswap society and the principles it was founded on underwent many changes, particularly among the bands of the Canyon and Fraser River divisions. The remaining Shuswap bands seem to have limited their cultural borrowing. They adopted practices that paralleled or complemented existing Shuswap customs and values. Direct influences by the traders during this time were limited. The Indians were left to conduct their community life as they chose. Many of the customs such as spiritual practices, puberty rites, and birth, death and naming ceremonies continued.

Political Changes

The traders exerted influence over the Indians through various measures in order to advance the fur trade. Some of these practices disrupted Indian political life and eventually displaced Indian forms of government.

"Through gifts and persuasion the fur traders tried to win the support and cooperation of the Indians. The Hudson's Bay Company sent out an annual gift of tobacco to each Shuswap chief with the message that the chiefs continue to trap as much as possible, cooperate with the traders and refrain from war."[10]

In eastern Canada and on the prairies, the Hudson's Bay Company gave a suit of clothing to the chiefs. Known as a



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Mother with child.

"Captain's Suit, it was styled much like a British military uniform. These gifts not only won the friendship of the chief but also enhanced his status in the eyes of his fellow Indians."[11] A chief who seemed to be more important might remain in the people's favour longer. By helping to keep the same chief, the traders would continue to have a profitable trade relationship with a particular band. With the traders' support, a chief may have been able to exert more authority over his followers than he would have otherwise.

The fur trade created a new type of leader, one skilled in dealing with European traders. These leaders, perhaps by necessity, adopted values and character traits contrary to tradition. One would expect that fundamental changes in the character of leadership or changes in allegiance would create tensions and instability within the community. Historical records, however, do not have specific references to such incidences among the Shuswap.

Relations with other tribes were affected by the fur trade. There were increased disputes not only among the Shuswap bands, as we have seen, but also with neighbouring Indian nations. "In 1822, Chief Trader John McLeod, upon arriving at Kamloops, found himself in the midst of war between two of the Interior Indian nations. Chief Factor Donald McLean, complained that in 1859 trade at Kamloops was being affected as the Indians were trapping very little because they were afraid to venture into each other's territory."[12] The tribal boundaries had become more marked and were being more actively enforced.

The fur trade imposed the British justice system on the Shuswap people. The Hudson's Bay Company had a charter giving the Company the exclusive right to trade in the area. In an indirect way, the Hudson's Bay Company represented Great Britain's interests. The Company wanted to show as quickly as possible that any Indians breaking Company laws would be punished according to British justice.

"British justice was brought into effect only when Indians injured the traders or their property. It did not appear to extend to cases where Indians suffered at the hands of other Indians. In this instance, restitution and punishment were left to Indian custom and laws. Nor did British justice seem to apply to traders who injured Indians. The Hudson's Bay Company did not seem to be concerned when the trader Baptiste Montiningra shot an Indian"[13] Yet the Hudson's Bay Company persisted until it captured Kikoskin, who killed Chief Factor Samuel Black. "The Company confiscated goods, kidnapped a child, and offered a reward to persuade the Shuswap to turn in Kikoskin."[14] The Company showed how serious is was about making Indians obey the law.

The Shuswap probably recognized British justice only gradually. It is unlikely that this new form of justice was accepted by all of the Shuswap. It appears to have brought forth strong feelings of resentment and resistance. "After the murder of Black, Indians pillaged the traders' property and harassed them on their trips to the Fraser for salmon and on trade expeditions."[15] "Even though the post at Kamloops was rebuilt with a palisade surrounding it, the Indians attacked it at least twice."[16] These incidents of Indian violence toward the traders seem to indicate that some of them felt resentful and were resisting the growing power of the Hudson's Bay Company over their lives.

Gradually the traders were exerting control over the political lives of the Shuswap. The fur trader's free enterprise emphasized the individual and competition—ideas that conflict with the traditional Shuswap system of mutual support. Influences from other Indian cultures also made changes to Shuswap life. Adjusting to these new influences, the Shuswap developed new ideas about territorial boundaries and land ownership.

The quality of Shuswap leadership does not appear to have been affected by the fur trade. Existing information suggests that most chiefs have struggled to preserve Shuswap rights and land titles since contact with the Europeans. The erosion of Shuswap authority over their own lands and people started with the Hudson's Bay Company imposing British justice on Shuswap people. This was the most insidious and fundamental political change that occurred from 1800 to 1858.

Summary

In beginning of the trade relationships, the traders were eager to win the friendship of the Shuswap in order to establish trade and to ensure their own safety. They did not attempt to interfere in the communities or to alter the culture. For a short time, about 1811 to 1822, both Indian and trader benefited from each other. As the trade in beaver declined and the Shuswap began to trade salmon and other food, the traders were still dependent on the Shuswap. The Shuswap, however, were also becoming dependent on the traders and their European goods.

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When we look at relationships between the Shuswap and the fur traders, it is difficult to understand both points of view equally. The Shuswap people did not leave a written history of the period of contact. We have only the journals and correspondence of the traders to recreate how the Shuswap got along with the Europeans. James Teit, who interviewed some Shuswap elders between 1900 and 1904, also provides some information. Oral sources today have not revealed any new information.

The Early Days of the Fur Trade

"The first European to meet the Shuswap was Alexander Mackenzie of the North West Company. He was searching for a river route to the Pacific. In 1808, Simon Fraser travelled further down the Fraser River than Mackenzie did and met the Soda Creek Indians. Teit reports that the Indians believed the Europeans to be transformers, mythological beings or cannibals."[1] Such beings are prominent in Shuswap legends. The Shuswap may have thought of the Europeans in that way when they first heard about their arrival on the coast. Shuswap legends refer to the "the Old One", who, like Coyote, was a creator and a teacher. Legends say the Old One left the people after completing his mission, with a promise to return. The Shuswap may first have thought that the Europeans were the Old One and the powerful beings that accompany him. This view no doubt changed as more information about the Europeans and their trade items reached the Interior.

"The explorers noted that many of the Indians showed apprehension or hostility at meeting them. The Shuswap at Soda Creek, however, assisted Simon Fraser and took him down the Fraser to the Lillooet. Fraser was impressed with the Shuswap. He described them as friendly, serious, honest and industrious."[2]

"In 1811, David Stuart and Alexander Ross, traders with the Pacific Fur Company, visited the Shuswap at Arrow Lakes, Shuswap Lake and Kamloops. He found them to be friendly and willing to trade."[3] The next year, he built Fort Shuswap at Kamloops. The surrounding Shuswap bands and other Indian nations welcomed the traders. About 2,000 Indians came the post, and Stuart

had not brought enough items to trade. "So popular were his goods that he was able to get 20 beaver pelts for his last piece of cloth."[4]

In the early days of contact, the Shuswap appeared willing to extend their friendship to the newcomers. They supported a trading post within their territory. They could then easily obtain useful ready-made items and raw materials. The Shuswap no longer needed to travel far to trade their furs. A post within Shuswap territory enhanced their status and influence with neighbouring bands and Indian nations.

We have few records left by the Pacific Fur Company or the North West Company, which took it over. We do know that the Indians continued to participate in the fur trade. "From 1817 to 1822, beaver pelts received at Kamloops rose from 1,600 to 2,900."[5]

Indian Relations with the Hudson's Bay Company

The North West Company merged with the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in 1821. The HBC kept better records, and it is these writings that are useful in reconstructing Shuswap perceptions of the traders. Many references to Indians do not specify Shuswap, but there were at least 10 Shuswap bands located within a 160 km radius of Kamloops. The Indians in the Interior shared a common experience, so we can probably assume that the Indian attitudes and hostilities mentioned in the HBC journals were typical of the Shuswap.

In 1822 the fur returns at Kamloops were beginning to show a decline. "Elk were scarce by 1825."[6] "In 1827, the beaver was thought to be extinct. The Indians were becoming alarmed over the disappearance of the animals they depended upon for sustenance."[7] "There is report of an outbreak of whooping cough, causing the death of some children in 1827."[8] "That same year, Indians around Fort Alexandria were dying of starvation, and some of these were probably Shuswap."[9] "Reports for 1827 tell of starvation among the Shuswap near Kamloops."[10]

"The Hudson's Bay Company considered the Shuswaps troublesome and arrogant. The large Indian population was considered a threat. To deal with potential problems, the post at Kamloops (Thompson River Post) employed as many as 18 to 24 men. Governor George Simpson wanted to close the post because of its high cost. In addition, Simpson thought that if the Indians had to travel to Rocky Mountain House to trade, they would become humble and more cooperative."[11] "The fort was not closed, but it was burned in 1826, apparently by the Indians."[12] A clerk wrote in 1827

about the "troublesome disposition" of the Indians in the past. He mentions that they have now much improved.

It is apparent that the Shuswap were, as early as 1825, feeling the impact of economic changes brought about by the fur trade. They were experiencing food shortages when hunting and fishing were poor. They were also unable to buy the cloth, and clothing, and other trade goods they needed. The traders saw "arrogance" and "troublesome dispositions," but these were undoubtedly a justified reaction to starvation and illness. The Shuswap must have been disillusioned about the fur trade. What had at first appeared to be exciting and prosperous later created disruption and hardships. The traders had been seen as friends and possible allies by the Shuswap. They later were seen as the cause of serious illnesses and economic problems.

"By the 1840s there was not only continued economic crisis, but also the growing dominance of the Europeans, as represented by the Hudson's Bay Company. The Hudson's Bay Company was determined to impose British justice on the Indian people. When Kikoskin killed Samuel Black in 1841, he believed that Black was to blame for his uncle's death. The Company used a number of different tactics, including intimidation, harassment and bribery to force the Shuswap to hand over Kikoskin."[13] The traders' determination and ruthlessness showed that the Company was serious about applying their laws to the Indians.

"Black's murder created tension and mistrust between the Shuswap and the Company. The traders stopped trading ammunition to the Shuswap for some time after the incident."[14]

"Between 1841 and 1843 there are many references to traders being threatened and their goods taken by the Indians. In 1841, John Tod wrote that his men at the Kamloops fort would not be going out to collect salmon as the Indians had been shooting the traders' horses."[15]

"In a letter to Governor Simpson in December 1841, Donald Manson, manager of the fort at Kamloops, wrote about relations with the Indians. He reported that the Shuswap and the other Indians were now in pretty good order and seemed to be well disposed toward the Company."[16] Manson reports that it had not been uncommon for the Indians to draw their knives on Samuel Black. They also used to insult and rob Black's men. "Manson reports other examples of abuse to the traders. Manson, like Simpson, believed the Indians needed proper management and a firm hand so that they would be peaceful and would serve the purposes of the Company."[17]

The actions of the Indians shows that they did not always share this view. In August 1842, a party of HBC employees was robbed of a gun and a horse by the Indians. Then in February 1843, William Norwick, the man in charge of Fort Alexandria, was killed by an Indian. The Indian was shot by the staff before he could escape. In recording the incident in his journal, John Tod feared further bloodshed. The new fort at Kamloops was finished in 1843. As a response to the growing hostility with the Indians, the new fort was built with a palisade. Even so, the Indians made attempts to capture the fort.

Incidents in the 1840s show the growing power of the Hudson's Bay Company over the Indian people. The Indians' dislike of this power no doubt gave rise to increased acts of violence. They seemed to be using harassment and plunder to show the traders their dissatisfaction with the trade. When the Company attempted to be fair and punish only the offenders and not the entire band, some of the chiefs were impressed. They may have counselled tolerance, helping to restrict Indian aggression to sporadic cases of harassment and plunder.

Many of the Indians must have realized that the fur trade did not benefit them. Their role in the trade was merely to serve the needs of the Company. The Company does not appear to have felt any responsibility for the problems of the Indians. Indeed, some of the traders appeared to regard the Indians with contempt.

The end of the fur trade and the spread of European diseases brought great hardship to the Shuswap. "Between November 1842 and January 1843, John Tod's journal includes three separate references to illness among the Indians. The illness, characterized by a swollen throat, was prevalent in the area. This disease may have been diphtheria. In the winter of 1843 there were reports that the Indians were starving again."[18] "Father Demers of the Oblates visited Kamloops that winter. He spent two days preaching to 400 Indians who had gathered to meet him in the bitter cold at the fort. John Tod implies that the Indians believed that Father Demers could save them from starvation."[19] The Indians' eagerness to meet Father Demers shows how desperate they were to find a solution to their problems.

"In 1851 there was another poor run of salmon. Both the Indians and the traders had a hard winter. The Indians not only refused to trade salmon but also pillaged the traders, who seemed to regard this as a nuisance."[20] The same year, an HBC employee killed one of the Shuswap Indians up the North Thompson River. The following year, Indians reportedly killed one of the HBC men. Relations between the two groups had not improved, but Indian

hostilities did not seem to be taken as seriously as they were in the 1840s.

In 1854, the trade in furs began to pick up. Fur returns in 1855 were termed the best in the area in a long time. Trade goods were still very expensive—one blanket cost 100 salmon. In 1855 the Indians attempted to boycott the trade in an effort to get the prices lowered. Paul Fraser, Chief Trader of the post at Kamloops, was confident that Chief Nicholas and Chief Adam would not succeed in their boycott. They had tried a boycott the previous year and failed. Once again the boycott failed. The two attempts showed that the Shuswap still wanted to have some control over the fur trade. It was, unfortunately, too late.

Summary

Initially the Shuswap viewed the traders as a friends and allies. The Shuswap thought the fur trade would increase their material wealth and well-being and perhaps even enhance their political status and power. As beaver were depleted, the fur trade declined. The Shuswap began to experience economic hardships and diseases. Their initial friendliness and peaceful co-existence with the traders were replaced in the middle of the 1820s with suspicion and resentment. The traders became victims of Indian threats, and the Shuswap refused to cooperate in the trade. In the 1840s economic conditions worsened and it was obvious that the traders wanted to dominate the Indians. The resentment of the Indians and their rejection of the traders resulted in more serious and frequent acts of aggression. In response to these hostilities, the traders became more determined to show the Indians their power and bring them under control. The traders still depended on the Indians to provide services to the fur brigades. So the Company attempted to be fair, though firm, in its dealings with them.

By the 1850s the Shuswap had lost much of their economic autonomy and were more under the power of the traders. Starvation and disease had resulted in many deaths. The smaller population was left in a weak position. In addition, the traders were becoming less dependent on the Indians as they started farming and raising stock. The traders' influence over the Indians grew because the Indians still required trade goods. The Indians tried to resist the pressures of the traders by refusing to trade salmon unless their prices were met. They retaliated against injuries inflicted on them by the traders. The Indians, however, did not seem to pose much of a threat to the traders anymore. The relationship that was mutually beneficial and peaceful in the beginning became unbalanced, with suspicion and anger on both sides.

Footnotes

Shuswap Goods and Everyday Items - Before and After Contact

1. Teit, J. (1909) The Shuswap Memoir Of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. 1. Part 7 New York: G.E. Stechert p. 535.
2. Ibid. p. 478.
3. Ibid. p. 506.
4. Ibid. p. 449.
5. Favrholdt, Kenneth (1989) Kamloops Meeting of the Waters An Illustrated History, Windsor Publications, Ltd. Burlington, Ontario p.12.

Economic, Social and Political Changes after Contact 1800-1858

1. Teit, J. (1909) The Shuswap Memoir Of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. 1.Part 7 New York: G.E. Stechert p. 569.
2. Johnson H. (1937). Fur Trading Days at Kamloops. The British Columbia Quarterly, Vol. 1, p. 283.
3. Hudson's Bay Archives B97, Kamloops Report 1827.
4. Johnson, H. (1937) p. 77.
5. Hudson's Bay Journals, Thompson River Journals 1841-43.
6. Teit (1909) p. 574.
7. Ibid. p. 583.
8. Begg, A. (1894) History of British Columbia from the Earliest Discovery to Present Time,Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson p. 121.
9. Teit (1909) p. 518.
10. Ibid. p. 575.
11. Ray A.J. (1974). Indians in the Fur Trade: their roles as hunters, trappers and middlemen in the lands southwest of Hudson Bay, 1600-1870, Toronto, Ontario University of Toronto Press.
12. Johnson, H. p. 174.
13. Hudson's Bay Journals, Thompson River Journals, 1850-52 .
14. Ibid. 1850-52.
15. Hudson's Bay Journals, Thompson River Journals 1841-43; Hudson's Bay Company Archives,D5-7, 1842.
16. Johnson, H. p.180.

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1. Teit, J. (1909) The Shuswap Memoir Of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. 1.Part 7 New York: G.E. Stechert p. 449.
2. Ibid. p. 470.
3. Harvey, A.G. (1945). David Stuart, Okanagan Pathfinder and founder of Kamloops, TheBritish Columbia Quarterly, Vol. IX. p. 283.
4. Johnson H. (1937). Fur Trading Days at Kamloops. The British Columbia Quarterly, Vol 1, p. 172.
5. Ibid. p. 174.
6. Teit (1909) p. 579.
7. Hudson's Bay Company Archives. B.97/c/1.1827.
8. Ibid.
9. Akrigg, G.O.U. and Helen B. (1977). British Columbia Chronicle 1847-1871. Gold and Colonists, Vancouver: Discovery Press. p. 244.
10. Hudson's Bay Company Journals, Thompson River Journals, 1841-43 p. 178.
11. Merk, Frederick. ed. George Simpson's Journal, Fur Trade and Empire. Remarks connected with the fur trade in the course of a voyage from York Factory, 1842-25, Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968, pp. 22 & 51.
12. Hudson's Bay Company Archives. DS/7 1842 fos. 346-8.
13. Ibid.
14. Hudson's Bay Company Journals, Thompson River Journals, 1841-43
15. Ibid. 1841-43.
16. Ibid. 1850-52.
17. Hudson's Bay Company Archives. DS/7 1842 fos. 346-8.
18. Hudson's Bay Company Journals, Thompson River Journals, 1841-43
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid. 1850-52.

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